

HILDEGARD of BINGEN

SCIVIAS

TRANSLATED BY
MOTHER COLUMBA HART AND JANE BISHOP

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Cover art: MOTHER PLACID DEMPSEY, a Benedictine nun of the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut, is also a sculptor, painter, graphics designer and book illustrator. Regarding the cover and inside illustrations she says: "Doing art work for this volume became a unique personal experience in which I was struck by three things. First, I realized there has existed for centuries a body of illustrations of the Visions that are traditionally ascribed to St. Hildegard's 'direct supervision.' Despite their obvious differences in style, which suggest not merely different artists but entirely different historical periods, they have enjoyed a long history of commentaries by various spiritual writers and important scholars, including, in our time, Dr. Carl Jung. Recognizing their unique value in terms of tradition and their own intrinsic aesthetic beauty, I chose to represent them here in all their clarity and forthrightness. In so doing, I came to appreciate that, in a very real sense, they do proceed from her 'direct supervision.' Secondly, I came to understand directness and supervision as the marks of St. Hildegard, who looked upon the mystery of nature and mankind with the radical and comprehensive 'eye' of Faith, that is, through supernatural 'seeing' or, as one may say, through 'Super-Vision', and this is what I have tried to express on the cover. Thirdly, I realized that her 'Super-Vision' includes the hidden bringing together of many persons to share and creatively carry out that Vision. In this regard I wish to express my debt to her and, through her, to the Abbess and members of my own community, to Sr. Mary Charles, R.S.M., Dr. John Farina, children's book illustrator Mercer Mayer, and to Jeanne Parr."

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Translators of this Volume

MOTHER COLUMBA HART, O.S.B. was graduated from Smith College in 1924 *summa cum laude*, having studied under Eleanor S. Duckett and Howard R. Patch. She remained for the M.A. degree in English and continued graduate work at Radcliffe and Harvard in romance philology, Middle English, and Latin paleography under John L. Lowes, John S. Tatlock, and Charles H. Haskins. She earned a second M.A. at Radcliffe in 1926. After European travel she studied French while living in Paris for two years, and later translated *Ouvrons la Bible* by Roger Poelman (*How to Read the Bible*, New York: Kenedy, 1953, and London: Longmans, 1955). Her first original book, *Mary of the Magnificat*, had come out in 1942 (Sheed & Ward). The work of translating from the Latin *The Exercises of Saint Gertrude* (Newman, 1956) brought to her attention the dearth of information about Gertrude's life and suggested research on thirteenth-century women, especially the Flemish mystics. Thus she discovered Hadewijch, some of whose letters she presented in *The American Benedictine Review* (1962). Her translation from the Latin of William of Saint Thierry's *Exposition on the Song of Songs* was begun at this time and appeared in Cistercian Fathers Series (1970). In 1972 Mother Columba contributed to *The American Benedictine Review* another article on medieval women "Consecratio Virginitatis: Thirteenth-Century Witnesses." In 1980 she brought out a volume in The Classics of Western Spirituality Series, which may well be considered her masterpiece, the translation of *The Complete Works of Hadewijch*.

At 86, Mother Columba has retired from active research for publication and remains a beloved elder and resource person in her Benedictine community of the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut, where she has been a member for forty years.

JANE BISHOP received her B.A. from Vassar College and her M. Phil. and Ph.D. from Columbia University. After a precarious few years as an adjunct professor at Barnard College, Pace University, Iona College, the New School for Social Research and Manhattan College, she is now Assistant Professor of Ancient and Medieval History at The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina. Dr. Bishop has written articles for *Trends in History* and the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, and "Bishops as Marital Advisors in the Ninth Century" for *Women of the Medieval World*, ed. Julius Kirshner and Suzanne Wemple (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1985). She was a founding member of the Institute for Research in History, which unfortunately became defunct in 1989. Dr. Bishop's specialties are Byzantine and papal political and social history, which makes Hildegard's mysticism a holiday from her main preoccupations. She is now seeking a publisher for her book *Pope Nicholas I and the First Age of Papal Independence*.



CHRIST'S SACRIFICE AND THE CHURCH

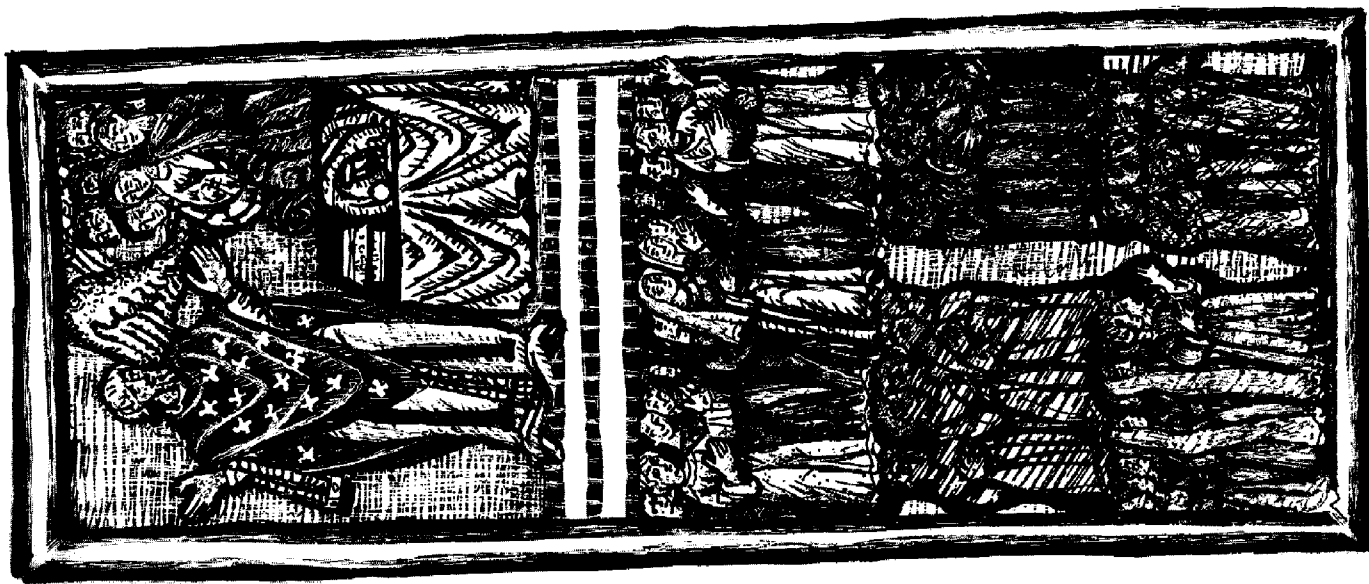
VISION SIX
Christ's Sacrifice and the Church

And after these things I saw the Son of God hanging on the cross, and the aforementioned image of a woman coming forth like a bright radiance from the ancient counsel. By divine power she was led to Him, and raised herself upward so that she was sprinkled by the blood from His side, and thus, by the will of the Heavenly Father, she was joined with Him in happy betrothal and nobly dowered with His body and blood.

And I heard the voice from Heaven saying to Him: "May she, O Son, be your Bride for the restoration of My people; may she be a mother to them, regenerating souls through the salvation of the Spirit and water."

And as that image grew in strength, I saw an altar, which she frequently approached, and there each time looked devotedly at her dowry and modestly showed it to the Heavenly Father and His angels. Hence when a priest clad in sacred vestments approached that altar to celebrate the divine mysteries, I saw that a great calm light was brought to it from Heaven by angels and shone around the altar until the sacred rite was ended and the priest had withdrawn from it. And when the Gospel of peace had been recited and the offering to be consecrated had been placed upon the altar, and the priest sang the praise of Almighty God, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," which began the mystery of the sacred rites, Heaven was suddenly opened and a fiery and inestimable brilliance descended over that offering and irradiated it completely with light, as the sun illumines anything its rays shine through. And, thus illuminating it, the brilliance bore it on high into the secret places of Heaven and then replaced it on the altar, as a person draws in a breath and lets it out again; and thus the offering was made true flesh and true blood, although in human sight it looked like bread and wine.

And while I looked at these things, suddenly there appeared before my eyes as if in a mirror the symbols of the Nativity, Passion and burial, Resurrection and Ascension of our Savior, God's Only-Begotten, as they had happened to the Son of God while He was on earth. But when the priest sang the song of the innocent Lamb, "O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world," and prepared to take the Holy Communion himself, the fiery brilliance withdrew into Heaven; and as it closed I heard the voice from thence saying, "Eat and drink the body and blood of My Son to wipe out Eve's transgression, so that you may be restored to the noble inheritance." And as other people approached the priest to receive the



THE FOOD OF LIFE

sacrament, I noticed five modes of being in them. For some were bright of body and fiery of soul, and others seemed pale of body and shadowed of soul; some were hairy of body and seemed dirty in soul, because it was pervaded with unclean human pollution; others were surrounded in body by sharp thorns and leprous of soul; and others appeared bloody of body and foul as a decayed corpse in soul. And all these received the same sacraments; and as they did, some were bathed in fiery brilliance, but the others were overshadowed by a dark cloud.

And when these mysteries were finished, as the priest withdrew from the altar the calm light from Heaven, which, as said, had shone round the whole altar, was drawn up again into the secret places of Heaven. And again I heard the voice from the supernal heavens, saying to me:

1 The Church was joined to Christ in His Passion and dowered with His blood

When Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, hung on the tree of His Passion, the Church, joined to Him in the secret mysteries of Heaven, was dowered with His crimson blood; as she herself shows when she often approaches the altar and reclaims her wedding gift, carefully noting with what degree of devotion her children receive it when they come to the divine mysteries. Therefore you see the Son of God hanging on the cross, and the aforementioned image of a woman coming forth like a bright radiance from the ancient counsel; and by divine power she is led to Him. For when the innocent Lamb was lifted up on the altar of the cross for human salvation, the Church suddenly appeared in Heaven by a profound mystery, in purity of faith and all the other virtues; and by the Supreme Majesty she was joined to the Only-Begotten of God. What does this mean? That when blood flowed from the wounded side of My Son, at once salvation of souls came into being; for the glory from which the Devil and his followers were driven out was given to humanity when My Only-Begotten suffered temporal death on the cross, despoiled Hell and led the faithful souls to Heaven. Therefore, in His disciples and their sincere followers faith began to increase and strengthen, so that they became heirs of the celestial Kingdom. Hence that image raises herself upward so that she is sprinkled by the blood from His side; and thus, by the will of the Heavenly Father, she is joined with Him in happy betrothal. For when the strength of the Passion of the Son of God flows burningly forth and rises to the height of the celestial mysteries, as the perfume of spices diffuses itself upward, the Church, fortified by that strength in the pure heirs of the eternal Kingdom, is faithfully joined by the high Father's decision to the Only-Begotten of God. How? As a bride, subjected to her bridegroom in her offering of subordination and obedience, receives from him a gift of fertility and a pact of love for procreating children, and educates them as to

their inheritance. So too the Church, joined to the Son of God in the exercise of humility and charity, receives from Him the regeneration of the Spirit and water to save souls and restore life, and sends those souls to Heaven.

Therefore she is nobly dowered with His body and blood; for the Only-Begotten of God conferred His body and blood in surpassing glory on His faithful, who are the Church and her children, that through Him they may have life in the celestial city. How?

2 God conquered the ancient serpent by His Son's humility, not His power

By giving His body and blood to sanctify those who believe; and so the Heavenly Father delivered Him up to the Passion for the redemption of the peoples and conquered the ancient serpent through Him in humility and justice. He did not want His Son to conquer by His power and strength, for God is just and does not will inquiry, as the Psalmist declares, saying:

3 Words of the Psalmist

"Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, or stood in the way of sinners, or sat in the seat of the pernicious" [Psalm 1:1]. What does this mean?

God is the Father of all the bliss and happiness of His creatures and shows many and various signs in them; and the Incarnation of His Son dripped with the sweet taste of delight, for in Him the heavenly virtues built many mansions through which humanity can return to the supernal Kingdom, which is darkened by no shadow of death. And thus the strongest powers of virtue were shown to be in the Heavenly Father, for it was He through His Only-Begotten who slew death and broke Hell; and on the last day He will make the world anew and better.

Therefore, He has not, through any wavering of His heart, wandered away into the paths of the evil spirits, who forsook the truth and seized on the lie. How? They wanted to use the lie to divide the truth. How? By trying to overthrow the Ancient of Days, Who was before days and hours began; and by yearning to make a partner for Him of the ancient serpent, who before time began was not. But that could not and should not be, for there is one God. And therefore the Devil is a liar, for he withdrew from God and forsook life to find death. And so, indeed, God did not stand in the path that sinners walk; He condemned Adam's choice and did not love his sin, but when he was seduced by the Devil He drove him from Paradise. And He did not reign in any seat of wicked power, as does the whole human race, which is bound up with death and sits in its shadow because it arrogantly deserted

the truth. What does this mean? That God did not oppose either devilish presumption or human disrespect by His power or cast them out by His strength. Why? If there were two fighters, one stronger than the other, surely the stronger would show the weaker how much more he was capable of, conquering and confounding him and not yielding to him in any way. But God did not act thus; He resisted the work of iniquity by supreme goodness, sending into the world His Son, Who in His body brought back His lost sheep to Heaven with great humility. How? The blood that came forth from His body appeared in Heaven as soon as it flowed from His open wounds, pleading that the salvation of souls should be granted. How? Every creature who lives in the Son of God shows that through His Passion and death lost humanity was restored to life. How? Because the Only-Begotten of God, Who is life, offered Himself for His Passion on the altar of the cross for the redemption of the human race; and, as you have truly heard proclaimed by the voice from Heaven, in that place He chose the Church as His Bride, to be a mother to the believing peoples to restore salvation and by spiritual regeneration send them without stain to the celestial realms.

- 4 The growing Church offers her dowry to God and shows Him the sacraments

But as that image grows in strength, you see an altar, which she frequently approaches, and there each time looks devotedly at her dowry and modestly shows it to the Heavenly Father and His angels. For when the Church, as mentioned, suddenly increased in strong and blessed virtues, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the mystical altars were sanctified by the deep longings of the faithful, as is clearly shown to you. And the Church, with steady purpose, turns her footsteps there by example and devotedly offers her dowry, which is the body and blood of the Son of God, to the Creator of all in humble obedience, in the presence of those living and burning lights who are the citizens of Heaven. Why is this? Because as the flesh of My Only-Begotten came into being in the pure womb of the Virgin Mary, and then was delivered up for human salvation, so now His flesh, augmented by the incorrupt purity of the Church, is often given to sanctify the faithful.

- 5 Analogy of gold

For, as the goldsmith first unites his gold by melting it in the fire, and then divides it when it is united, so I, the Father, first glorify the body and blood of My Son by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit when it is offered, and then, when it is glorified, distribute it to the faithful for their salvation.

- 6 When the priest approaches the altar, the angels bring a brightness there

Hence when a priest clad in sacred vestments approaches that altar to celebrate the divine mysteries, you see that a great calm light is brought to it from Heaven by angels. For when he who has the charge of souls is girded with the sacred cincture and approaches the life-giving table to immolate the innocent Lamb, at once the great light of the heavenly inheritance drives away the darkness, shining with the help of celestial spirits from the secret places of Heaven. And it completely illumines the plan of sanctification, for here is the food of the soul by which believers are saved. How? Because the Church in the voice of the priest seeks her dowry, which is the body and the poured-out blood of My Son, in order to be fit for blessed childbearing in saving souls; for when that precious blood was poured out she was increased by a great multitude of peoples. And so then I, Who am the unfailing Light, illumine the place of that consecration with My holiness, to the honor of the body and blood of My Only-Begotten.

- 7 In the sacrament of the altar God remembers His Son's Passion

For when the priest begins to invoke me on the sanctified altar, and I consider that My Son offered Me bread and wine at the supper of death just before leaving the world; then I see that My Son did this in the hour of His death, as he was about to perish on the wood of the cross, so that when the blessed offering of the holy sacrifice is offered to Me by a priest I might always have His Passion in My sight, never blotting it from My sharp vision. For He too offered Me bread and wine in the outpouring of His blood, when He cast down death and raised up humanity.

- 8 Why in the sacrament bread, wine and water are offered

But because He Who went into and came out of the cloister of virginal purity was not of human nature but of divine power, the flesh of My Only-Begotten can be produced by consecration from wheat bread and His blood from grape wine mixed with water, as I have shown through My faithful servant the prophet Joel, saying:

- 9 Words of Joel

“And the floors shall be filled with wheat, and the presses shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust and the

canker-worm and the rust and the caterpillar have eaten, My great host which I sent upon you; and you shall eat in plenty and shall be filled, and praise the name of your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall not be confounded forever" [Joel 2:24-26]. What does this mean? Through the miraculous arrangement of God the floors of the faith of the believing Church will be filled with all good things. For I will make the grain of the wheat into the body of My Son, though for their true salvation, to call My faithful back to their rightful land, I will also make adversities abound, through which for My name's sake they will crush the desires of their flesh. And likewise I will transform the juice of the grape for them into the blood of My Only-Begotten and give them the oil of mercy. How?

I will restore to you in another form, changed into salvation for you, that time consumed by the locust of forgetfulness in ignorant unbelief in a round of vanities, when villainies first arose among the children of Adam; they forgot the fruitfulness of My justice, as a person forgets his necessary food after he has put it in his stomach, and in their impiety they tore apart My justice as the locust gnaws the fruit. How? When the locust of negligence with slothful mind destroys the utility of good fruit, the canker-worm of foulness also wraps itself around it in filth; for people like this wrap themselves in the filth of idolatry and other schisms, and probings into diabolism, and magical arts, and the search for auguries in the Creator's creatures as to future happenings in human life, and vile deeds of murder and fornication, and feed on them as the canker-worm feeds on mud. How? Wherever the canker-worm of shame cherishes the stench of filth, the rust of bitterness will consume the metal of shining faith; and these people, opposing God's justice, labor to obscure it, as rust is wont to take away the beauty of metals. How?

Where the rust of biting speech stains the brilliance of good deeds, there also the caterpillar of harmful actions will rob the flourishing green crops of their usefulness; for these people cast away in wicked malice such noble virtues as simplicity, chastity and virtuous constancy, illumined by the Holy Spirit in fresh beatitude, and try to destroy them as the caterpillar destroys the crops. But in all these things My exceeding strength is declared, which in its great power conquered the opposition of the Devil when I sent it among you for your salvation. How?

I the Father sent My Son into the world, physically born of the Virgin, that through Him I might redeem you from the perdition of death; so that I might dwell in you and you in Me, since My own Son underwent the Passion and gave you His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. Hence you shall eat this sacrament devotedly for your salvation and feed blessedly upon it; and thus, through the oil of My mercy, the hunger of your souls' perdition shall be satisfied. For My Son brought you penitence as a medicine for your wounds,

and My Son's Bride was adorned with all justice and truth. And therefore you shall faithfully praise My name; for I am one God in true Trinity, and I govern you and display My wonders in you, miraculously snatching you from the power of the Devil. And therefore, My people, whom I have brought forth so wonderfully from the jaws of Hell, shall not be confounded by death in the eternity that is to come.

10 God does not leave the priest until he has completed the mystery
 And you see that *the calm light shines around the altar until the sacred rite is ended and the priest has withdrawn from it*. For that light is an eternal sight, and shows itself by miracle with great brightness until the mysteries of this hallowed office are finished and the dispenser of the sacred rites, having completed them, withdraws from the holy spot. Why is this? Because it is fitting that the Divine Majesty manifest Its power most fully in these blessed rites, and because as long as a person remains within these things that belong to God, God's help will never leave him.

11 When the mystery of the sacrament begins, an unknown light shines on it

And when the Gospel of peace has been recited and the offering to be consecrated has been placed upon the altar, and the priest sings the praise of Almighty God, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," which begins the mystery of the sacred rites, Heaven is suddenly opened and a fiery and inestimable brilliance descends over that offering. For when the fresh and living breath of the royal kiss has been given, and the fruit of noble life, which is to be sanctified and purified, has been put as a stone into God's wall, and the messenger of truth utters the sweet sound of the threefold invocation of the Lord of Hosts in praise of the Creator of all and thus begins the mystery of the shining dawn, the Incarnation of the Son of God in the Virgin; then suddenly the glorious tabernacle opens on the mystery of the sacrament, and an inconceivably calm and lofty brilliance shines down. *And it irradiates [the offering] completely with light, as the sun illumines anything its rays shine through*; in the power of the Father the holy heat so strikes the sparkling circle of that oblation that the radiant splendor wholly enters into the thing it falls upon. What does this mean?

The Bride of My Son offers the gift of bread and wine on My altar with a most devoted purpose. How? To remind Me in faithful memory by the hand of the priest that in this same oblation I delivered up the body and blood of My Son. How? Because the sufferings of My Only-Begotten are seen perpetually in the secret places of Heaven; and thus that oblation is united to

My Son in My ardent heat in a profoundly miraculous way and becomes most truly His body and blood. And thence the Church is quickened with blessed strength.

- 12 The divine light bears the oblation on high and makes it flesh and blood

For, thus illuminating it, as was said, the brilliance invisibly bears it on high into the secret places of Heaven; for that fiery brilliance, which streams through and illumines the sacrament, bears it upward with invisible power to those places mortal eye cannot see. And then it replaces it on the altar, for with gracious condescension it sweetly puts it back upon the table of sanctification; as a person draws in a breath and lets it out again, when by the wonderful arrangement of God he draws into himself the breath that makes him quicken and live, and then, also that he may live, expels it. And thus the offering is made true flesh and true blood, although in human sight it looks like bread and wine; for God is truthful and without illusion, and His sacrament also is firmly fixed on high where no one can throw it down, and is true flesh and blood without deception. For, just as a soul truly exists within flesh and blood while a person is alive in body, so too this mystery exists within bread and wine when it is worshipped in the true celebration and appears before people. And as the blind human eye cannot fully see God, so too a person cannot physically perceive these mysteries; as a person sees another's body but not his soul, so also a person can see the bread and wine but not the sacraments. Why is this?

The calm light that shone over the body of the Son of God when He was buried in the tomb, and raised Him to life again from the sleep of death, also shines on the altar over the sacrament of the body and blood of God's Only-Begotten, covering it from human sight so that people cannot see its holiness except as bread and wine, the form in which the oblation is placed on the altar. In just this way the Divinity that was in the Son of God was so concealed from people by His Humanity that they could see him only as a human being, living with them as a human being even though He was without sin. What does this mean?

I, Who created all things, benignly accept the oblation when it is offered to Me by the Church at the hand of the priest; for as Divinity displayed its wonders in the womb of the Virgin, it shows its secrets also in this oblation. How? Because here are manifested the body and blood of the Son of God. How?

- 13 Analogy of ointment and sapphire

That oblation, by the power of God, is invisibly borne on high and brought back again in an instant, and so warmed by the heat of the Divine Majesty that it becomes the body and blood of God's Only-Begotten. People do not perceive this mystery with their bodily senses; it is as if someone encased a precious unguent in simple bread and dropped a sapphire into wine, and I then changed them into a sweet taste, so that in your mouth, O human, you could not taste the unguent in the bread or the sapphire in the wine, but only the sweetness—as My Son is sweet and mild. What does this mean? The unguent symbolizes My Son, born of the Virgin, Who was anointed with precious ointment. How? He was clothed with holy humanity, which is a precious unguent, pouring so sweetly over the deadly wounds of humans that when they turn back to Him they will no longer putrefy or stink with Adam's perdition. And the sapphire symbolizes the Divinity in My Son, Who is the Cornerstone; He is meek and humble, for he did not grow from the root of human flesh begotten by a man and a woman, but was miraculously incarnate by My fire in the sweet Virgin, and therefore his body and blood are sweet and delightful for believers to take in.

- 14 Why humans cannot take this spiritual gift in visible form

But you, O human, cannot take this spiritual gift visibly, as if eating visible flesh and drinking visible blood; for you are filth of filth. But, as the living spirit in you is invisible, so also the living sacrament in that oblation is invisible and must be received invisibly by you. For, as the body of My Son came about in the womb of the Virgin, so now the body of My Only-Begotten arises from the sanctification of the altar. What does this mean? The human soul, which is invisible, invisibly receives the sacrament, which exists invisibly in that oblation, while the human body, which is visible, visibly receives the oblation that visibly embodies that sacrament. But the two are one, just as Christ is God and Man, and the rational soul and the mortal flesh make up one human being; and so a person who contemplates Me in right faith receives the sacrament faithfully to make him holy. What does this mean?

My Son was miraculously born from the most pure Virgin, whose body was untouched and never burned in the sweetness of lust, for the virginal vessel in which I willed My Only-Begotten to be incarnate was the purest possible. Thus I did not permit this sweet Virgin's vessel to melt in fiery ardor, since in it My Son miraculously took on a human body.

15 Offered by a faithful priest the oblation becomes Christ's body and blood

But the Blessed Virgin heard true words of consolation from the angel in secret, and believed; she uplifted the sighs of her soul and said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to your word" [Luke 1:38]. Thus she conceived the Only-Begotten of God. This indicates that the priest who is performing this office must invoke with his words Almighty God, faithfully believing in Him, offering Him in devotion of heart a pure oblation and speaking the words of salvation in the service of humility; then the Supernal Majesty will receive this oblation and transmute it with miraculous power into the body and blood of the Holy Redeemer. How? As My Son miraculously received humanity in the Virgin, so now this oblation miraculously becomes His body and blood on the altar. Therefore this sacrament is wholly perfect, being invisible and visible, as My Only-Begotten is wholly perfect, Who is invisible as to His Divinity and visible on earth as to His Humanity.

16 Analogy of a chick and a butterfly

For as a chick emerges from an egg, or a butterfly springs from a cocoon, and the living creature flies away while the thing it came from remains, so also in this oblation the truth that My Son's body and blood are there must be held by faith, though the oblation appears to human sight as bread and wine.

17 In the sacrament of the altar Christ's mysteries appear as in a mirror

And therefore, while you are looking at these things, suddenly there appear before your eyes as if in a mirror the symbols of the Nativity, Passion and burial, Resurrection and Ascension of our Savior, God's Only-Begotten, as they happened to the Son of God while He was on earth. For, as you see in a true vision, the mysteries of Him Who came to earth to save humanity—His birth from the Virgin, suffering on the cross, burial in the tomb, rising again from the dead and ascension into Heaven—shine brightly in the sacrament of the altar, since when God's Only-Begotten lived for a time among people in the world, these things happened to Him in His body by the will of the Father for the redemption of the human race. What does this mean? Before My eyes it is manifest that My Son suffered in the world for the love of humanity, for the Nativity, Passion, burial, Resurrection and Ascension of My Son slew the death of the human race. Hence these mysteries shine before Me in the

heavenly places; for I have not forgotten them, but they will appear before Me in great brightness like the dawn until the end of the world. What does this mean?

18 When the Lord's Prayer is said Christ's Passion will move God to mercy

Until the world ends I will see in that Passion all who will believe in it or reject it. For it will always shine before me, as long as people are obliged to recite what My Son taught His disciples to say in praying to God: "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" [Matthew 6:12]. What does this mean? You Who have all things in Your power, look upon the outpouring of the blood that was shed for the human race, and forgive us, who are children of transgression, the debts we should have paid you but have not because of the baseness of our hearts. What does this mean?

We have not fulfilled what we promised in baptism, for we have transgressed Your precepts and thrown away our innocence, just as Adam in paradise disobeyed you and spoiled the garment of innocence. But because You are kind, do not punish us according to our wickedness, but forgive us our transgression according to Your loving-kindness; as we also who are transgressors, although we have much malice in us, for fear and love of our Savior forgive those who wrong us for the injuries they have done us. How? There are those who should love us because we are human, but instead trouble us, failing to love You and ignoring Your precepts. But we do not persecute them, as they deserve for their malice toward us; we contemplate Your just judgment and do not swiftly avenge ourselves on them, so that You too, O God, Who are just and good, may be gracious to us.

Hear, then, O human! As long as you need help, and as long as you can succor others, My Son's Passion will appear before Me in mercy, and His body and blood will be consecrated on the altar to be received by believers for their salvation and the purgation of their crimes. For when My Only-Begotten was in the world in the body, His body was physically sustained by wheat and wine; and therefore His body and blood is now consecrated on the altar in the oblation of wheat and wine, that the faithful may be refreshed in soul and body. For My Son miraculously redeemed humanity from Adam's perdition and now mercifully absolves people from the daily evil into which they often lapse. For whatever My Son suffered physically in His body for the redemption of humanity appears when the oblation is consecrated; and My will is not to hide this, for I draw His elect on high to the heavenly places, that through them His body may be perfected in its predestined members.

19 The oblation never appears as flesh except by miracle in great necessity

Thus I miraculously show all these mysteries in that oblation, since when it is placed upon the altar the oblation becomes the body and blood of My Son; but it appears in human eyes to be bread and wine, for human frailty is so delicate that people would shudder at receiving bleeding flesh and trickling blood. For, as long as a person is mortal, he cannot contemplate Divinity. And therefore the mystery that is the whole of Divinity is for humans covered with obscurity, and they perceive it invisibly; namely, that My Only-Begotten, being immortal, dies no more. And so, O human, I give you His body and blood in the oblation of bread and wine, so that by true faith you may perceive by that which is visible that which is invisible. And by divine power you receive this sacrament with true certainty, yet so that it is not visible to you, except in cases of great necessity; it has sometimes been shown to My elect at times when they were in great affliction. And I do all these things to be loving and helpful to humanity. But, though every creature is subject to My precepts, you, O human, are always rebellious against Me; so you are blind and deaf. Yet you cannot rebel against Me. Do I not do what I will without your seeing it? You do not see with your physical eyes or hear with your physical ears how I send a human soul into the body and how I take it out of the body; but your soul will understand Me when it has left its mortal body. And so also I give the body of My Son to be eaten and His blood to be drunk, and I do this by My power, O human, without your seeing it.

20 As the song of the Lamb is sung the faithful communicate for their good

Therefore, as you see, when the priest sings the song of the innocent Lamb, "O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world," and prepares to take the Holy Communion himself, the fiery brilliance withdraws into Heaven; for as that minister announces the praise of Him Who in His mild innocence bore the wickedness of humanity, and opens his inmost heart and his outward devotion to these mysteries, the unconquered serenity that is here showing its power withdraws itself into the supernal secret. And as Heaven closes, you hear the voice from thence saying that believing and faithful people should eat and drink with true devotion the body and blood of their Savior, Who for them suffered temporal death, to wash away the contamination our first parents brought into the world when they transgressed God's precept; so that those people, cleansed from this transgression, may be faithfully restored to the rightful inheritance that by obstinacy they had lost.

For, as the Only-Begotten of God gave His body and blood to His

disciples at the Supper, so now on the altar He gives His flesh and His blood to His faithful ones, donating it for human use, as a person does when he has finished the work he wanted to do. For the Son of God, fulfilling the precepts of His Father, offered Himself for people's salvation and gave His body and blood to be eaten and drunk for their sanctification, as the Bridegroom declares to his friends in the Song of Songs, saying:

21 Words of Solomon in the Song of Songs

"Eat, my friends; drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved!" [Song of Songs 5:1]. What does this mean? Eat in faith, you who through holy baptism have come to My friendship; for the spilled blood of My Son has purged you from Adam's fall, and as you chew the true medicine in the body of My Only-Begotten, the repeated deeds of crime and injustice you have done will be mercifully wiped out for you. And also drink in hope from this Vine, which has brought you out of eternal punishment; receive the cup of salvation, that you may firmly and strongly believe in that grace by which you have been redeemed, for you are bathed in the blood that was shed for you. And be inebriated with love, you who are so dear to Me, and flow with brooks of Scripture so that you will know best how to break away from carnal desires; and then I will awake in you splendid virtues pleasing to Me and give you the blood of My Only-Begotten. He Himself gave this sacrament to His disciples, as is written in the Gospel:

22 The meaning of the Lord's words to His disciples about this mystery

"And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and when He had blessed it, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take and eat: This is My body.' And He took the chalice, and when He had given thanks He gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Drink of this, all of you. This is My blood of the New Testament, which will be shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. And I say to you: I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the Kingdom of My Father'" [Matthew 26:26-29]. What does this mean?

When the Son of God celebrated with His disciples that consummation by which He was to pass out of the world, no longer, as before, living among the events of the world but enduring the Passion of the cross in accordance with His Father's will, with supreme devotion He took the bread in remembrance of His body for human salvation. With all His longing He reminded His Father how He came forth from Him and wanted to return to Him, and prayed Him to consider whether it was possible, because of the weakness of

His flesh, for the chalice He was to drink to pass from Him; but this was not to happen. And therefore He blessed that bread in remembrance of the sweat of His body; for in the anguish of His Passion, as He submitted to His Father's command and was willing to die on the cross, He gave His body and blood to His disciples, so that they would not forget His example.

And he broke it for them; for that Passion was hard for His body to bear. But nonetheless He obeyed His Father and conquered cruel death by the death of His body; and so He showed that His body and blood were also to be given to believers in Him in the mystery of the oblation.

And He gave it to His disciples for true salvation, that they too might do such things in His name as He was doing for love of them; thus He was saying in a gentle voice, "You who humbly wish to follow Me, take with ardent love this example I leave you, My Passion and My works I have done at My Father's command, when He sent Me to teach and to manifest His Kingdom; and eat faithfully what I give you, for it is My body." What does this mean? "Eat My body, for you must imitate My works in your spirits and your flesh, whenever the Holy Spirit inspires them in your hearts, as a person swallows the food he is sending to his stomach; as you and all who wish to keep My precepts should follow Me in My works, so too you should eat My body."

And then the Son of God, taking for salvation the saving cup, gave thanks to His Father; for when the blood poured out from His side, grace was given to believers that was so strong that it conquered the ancient serpent, delivered lost humanity and strengthened the whole Church in faith. How? The Savior in the sweetness of His love gave His precious example to all His faithful, summoning them with gentle inspiration by saying, "Drink with confidence from this saving cup, all you who desire to follow Me faithfully, that for love of Me you may chastise your bodies by privation and restrain your blood by toil, and deny yourselves to strengthen the Church; even as I submitted Myself to the Passion, and shed My blood for your redemption, not thinking of the tenderness of My flesh but thirsting for your salvation. For this blood, which is shed for you, is not that blood of the Old Testament, which was shed in shadow, but My blood of the New Testament, which was given for the salvation of the peoples. How? I Who am the Only-born of My mother, the Son of the most pure Virgin, shed My blood on the cross to redeem people who contemplate Me by faith. And as I then gave it for the deliverance of the human race, so now I give it on the altar for humanity, to cleanse those who faithfully receive it.

"For in the Supper of My Passion I gave you My body and My blood to be eaten and drunk; and so now you may do the same on the altar in memory of Me. Therefore I unfold the truth and say to you, my faithful followers: I will not again drink this cup of anguish in this oppression I now suffer from

the Jews until that day when I rise from the dead and Death is overthrown, and I bring in the day of salvation. Then I will drink with you the cup of your redemption and show you who are Mine your new reason for rejoicing: that the perdition of the ancient crime is taken away, and the Kingdom is opened to you that My Father has prepared for those who love Him. What does this mean? That by My death, which I suffered on the cross, you will know the salvation of souls; and when I ascend after My Resurrection, you will receive the Spirit, the Comforter, and you will newly understand true doctrine. And then for My name's sake you will endure many tribulations, and I will endure them with you; not because I will suffer any miseries in the body after this, as I did when I was in the world in the body, but because you will endure them in My name. Therefore I will endure them with you, since you are in Me and I am in you."

And thus, as was said, you who faithfully believe in Me shall receive the body and blood of My Son to wipe out your sins, so that, gladdened by this sacrament, you may attain supernal strength, as My servant David exclaims by My burning will, saying:

23 Words of David

"The earth shall be filled with the fruit of your works, bringing forth grass for cattle and green crops for the service of people, that you may bring forth bread out of the earth, and wine may rejoice the human heart; that faces may be gladdened with oil, and bread strengthen the human heart" [Psalm 103:13-15]. What does this mean?

O God, Whose magnificence is above everyone, by the faith that is the fruit of virtue in Your wisdom, and by which You are truly known, Man shall be filled; one who adheres to faith shall end the hunger of unbelief by taking the way of justice, though he had not known the truth before and had fainted from a dearth of rectitude. Now he will fulfil his mind's contrition by doing good works and offer to the simple, knowing their weakness, an example of humility. He will grow and flourish in virtue and show in abundant security a fertility of true righteousness, by which he will serve those who now long for earthly things. For he will labor to be useful to them, and by his services of support and defense lead faithful souls to heavenly joys, as do all who in their strength and protectiveness firmly defend those whom they are set to guard. And these works prevail in people by Your will, O God, so that when they are adorned with these virtues You may miraculously give them, out of the fruit of the pure fertility of the earth, the body of Your Son; as Your Only-Begotten, coming in the body out of the womb of virginal chastity, mercifully gave the bread of life to those who believe in Him.

And You perform a further miracle: that the blood of Your Only-Be-

gotten, which was shed for the salvation of souls, gladdens the internal strength of people, their souls, by remitting their sins. How? Because, as once the body of Your Son was offered on the cross for the redemption of the human race, so now his flesh and blood are consecrated on the altar for the salvation of those who believe. And when this is miraculously accomplished in Your will, then this sacrament will gladden the face, which is to say the Church, sprinkling it with the oil of mercy. For those who believe and embrace mercy with joyous faith appear beautiful in the eyes of the Lord; and when the Salvation of the world hung on the cross and mercifully delivered humanity from the snare of the Devil, He also generously freed people from the bonds of sin, that they might faithfully believe in God with joyful and sincere hearts and never cease with devoted ardor to help the wretched.

And the faithful should burn in this love, so that the bread that offers life to its tasters may strengthen the minds of those who are wavering in inconstancy; and thus the purpose of their hearts may not decline to evil, but ascend in strength to that which is life.

24 This cleansing sacrament is to be worshipped by all up to the last

This bread is the flesh of My Son, which is obscured by no shadow of sin and clouded by no stain of iniquity, so that they who receive it are bathed with heavenly light in soul and body and cleansed by faith from their inner uncleanness. And therefore let there be no doubt about this most sacred flesh; for He Who formed the first man neither from flesh nor from bone is certainly able to produce the sacrament in this way. Therefore, O virginal Origin, You arise, grow, spread out and produce a great branch with many shoots from which to build the heavenly Jerusalem, beginning not in a man's semen but in a mystical breath. You are bound by no stain of sin at Your beginning, but developed in miraculous virtue, for You arose in an unplowed field, a flower so excellent that it will never wither from any accident of mortality, but in full freshness will last forever. Wherefore this sacrament of Your body and blood must be worshipped in the Church in a true service, until the last person to be saved by the mystery appears at the end of the world. For it comes from the secret mind of God to bring salvation to believers, as David testifies, saying:

25 Further words of David

"And He commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of Heaven, and rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them the bread

of Heaven. Man ate the bread of angels; He sent them provisions in abundance" [Psalm 77:23-25]. What does this mean?

From the heights of Heaven the Celestial Father showed this to the patriarchs and prophets in the power of His glory and in the secrets of His mysteries to prepare human minds; for in the Holy Spirit they truly foretold His Son, and in the precepts of the Law, the blood of goats and other demonstrations they miraculously foreshadowed Him to the people. And thus, opening the sweetness and affection of His heart in mildness and burning charity, He sent them His Son, that through Him they might be refreshed from the hunger of unbelief and fed on heavenly things that would satisfy their faith and give them the fullness of happiness and beatitude. And so, when the Supreme Father sent those blessed refreshments in abundance of spiritual joy, through the humanity of the Son of God Man received that bread with whose sweetness the angels of Heaven who contemplate God can never be sated. And therefore let the faithful faithfully listen:

O you faithful people, who are the fruits of the Church! Listen and understand your souls' remedy, by which you are not children of the Devil but heirs of the celestial Kingdom; and consider how I, the mild and benign Father, have surrounded you with the manifold happiness of your salvation. Pay heed therefore to the goodness of your Father, by Whom the thing that will save you has been arranged, for though you are vile ashes the Humanity of My Son still implores for your salvation. How? My Son was born of the incorrupt Virgin, who knew nothing of any pain, but remained in the fresh purity of her integrity, like grass that flourishes in verdant glory when the dew falls on it from Heaven.

26 Why bread is offered in the sacrament of the altar

And because it was from the pure Virgin that My Son took on flesh without sin, it is fitting that His flesh should now be made from that fruit which is without the sap of bitterness. How? The grain of wheat is the strongest and best of all the fruits there are; it has in its stalk no sap or pith like other trees, but its stem rises to a spike that leads to the fruit, and it never produces bitter juice either in heat or in cold, but yields dry flour. So too the flesh of My Son was dry, with no filth of the human pollution that produces the human race through the lustful embraces of a man and a woman. Not so was My Only-Begotten born, for He came forth in verdant integrity as the stalk brings forth the clustered grains of wheat. For as a stalk of wheat, flourishing without pith, produces dry grain at the end of its pure spike, so too the Blessed Virgin, conceiving without male power, brought forth her most holy Son in simple innocence. He drew from His mother no sap of sin,

because she conceived Him without the pith of a man; as the stalk gives no sap to the grain, because it flourishes not by the pith of a tree but by the sun and rain and gentle breeze. So the pure Virgin brought forth her Only-Begotten in sweet chastity, not because of a man but because she was overshadowed by the power of the Most High and imbued by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, though the Virgin herself originated in the will of a man and a woman, she did not thus bring forth her Son, but without the will of a man bore in her wholeness Him Who came from Heaven, true God and purest Man. As she bore Him in her virginity to be pure and stainless, now the bread that is truly consecrated as His flesh and is pure in its integrity should be received by the faithful in purity of heart and without any element of contradiction. This I predicted to the children of Israel, as by My will it is written:

27 Words of Moses

"Remember this day in which you came forth out of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage; with a strong hand has the Lord brought you forth out of this place, so look that you eat no leavened bread" [Exodus 13:3]. What does this mean?

You who wish to be imitators of My Son, turn your eyes from death to life and keep in mind the salvation of that Day which is My Son, Who trampled death and gave life, so that you went forth from the wretched exile of perdition; you threw off the thick darkness of infidelity and tore yourselves away from the house of the Devil, to whom Adam's transgression had given you. Turn your eyes from earthly to heavenly actions, for by divine power I the Lord have led you out of evil; I Who rule over all with such strength that no obstacle can stand against My might, but I sharply penetrate all things. So through My Son I have snatched you from the place where you shamefully lay in your wickedness, serving death by your infidelity instead of doing good works.

And now that you are freed in My Only-Begotten from that oppression, go from strength to strength and take care not to admit into your consciences the infidelity, which does not strengthen but bitterly weighs down your heart. What does this mean? Do not follow the arts of the Devil or the other fictions people devise for themselves, corrupted by philosophers, pagans and heretics; but imitate My Son as a mirror of faith, Who delivered you from the prison of Hell when He gave Himself for you to the suffering of the cross. And, that you may more carefully follow in His steps, strengthen your hearts with the celestial bread, and so with faithful devotion receive His

body. For he came from Heaven and was born of the sweet and pure Virgin, and, by suffering for you on the cross, gave you His very self; so that now you may receive the sweet and pure bread, which is His body, consecrated on the altar by divine invocation, without any bitterness but with sincere affection, and thus escape from humanity's inner hunger and attain to the banquet of eternal beatitude.

28 Why wine is offered in the sacrifice of the altar

And in the wine that comes from the vine I also will show wonders, making it by the same invocation the sacrament of His blood. What does this mean?

The blood of My Son flowed from His side as the grape drips from the vine. And as the grape is trodden by feet and is crushed in the winepress, and sweet strong wine flows out to strengthen human blood, so too when My Only-Begotten in the sweat of His agony was bruised by blows and scourges, and pressed to the wood of the cross, noble and precious blood issued from His wounds and sprinkled the believing peoples with life-giving freedom. And the grape is unlike other fruits, which can be eaten out of hard shells, while people usually suck grapes rather than eat them; so too My Son was different from all other people in the matter of sin. For they are weighed down by wickedness and subjected to passions, while My Only-Begotten, miraculously born of the chaste Virgin, lacked all contamination of sin. Therefore, and because the grape is so delicate in texture, I will that wine should be consecrated as the blood of My Son.

For as wine flows out of the vine, so My Son went forth from My heart; and My Only-Begotten too was the true Vine, and many branches went forth from Him, for in Him the faithful have been planted who through His Incarnation are fruitful in good works. And as that liquor comes out of the sweetest and strongest fruit of the vine, all merciful and true justice appears out of the Incarnation of My Son, and all who faithfully seek Him find these virtues in Him. How? Those who faithfully cleave to Him are made by Him green and fruitful, so that they bring forth noble fruits of virtue; as He too, being sweet and mild, brought forth precious offshoots in holiness and justice and cleansed those who believed in Him from every stain of infidelity, as is written of Him in the Song of Songs:

29 Words of the Song of Songs

"A cluster of grapes of Cyprus is my beloved to me in the vineyards of Engedi;" [Song of Songs 1:13]. What does this mean?

30 Why water must be present with the wine in the sacrament

But note clearly also, O human, that in this consecration water must be mixed with the wine, because blood and water issued from My Son's side; His Divinity is understood by the wine, and His Humanity is seen in the water. And thus, since there is both Divinity and Humanity in Him, there must be water and wine in that consecration; for as the wine symbolizes His Divinity, the water indicates His Humanity, which is pure and clean without the admixture of the blood of a man. For My Only-Begotten, the fountain of living water, when He came into the world for human salvation cleansed people by the regeneration of the Spirit and water from the ancient sin of Adam and transported them to Heaven, as it is written:

31 Words of Wisdom

"I, like a river channel and like an aqueduct, came forth from Paradise" [Ecclesiastes 24:41]. What does this mean? God strengthened Man with the faculty of reason and gave him many mystical gifts; breathing the breath of life into him, by reason he exalted him. But then he was seduced and was falling into death; so I, the Son of God, came to free him, flowing forth in the beauty of the stream of abiding charity and issuing in an outpouring of true and unailing purity. I came forth from the secret place of celestial delight so that humanity, which was perishing because of its guilt, might be mercifully snatched from perdition. How? By pouring out for its sake in the agony of the Passion the unoffending blood of supreme innocence. How? When Adam transgressed and was expelled from Paradise, because he was guilty his blood was driven to overflow with anguish, and in that anguish was diluted and mixed with watery sweat. And thus water is present in human blood through sweating.

Therefore, O human, as the Only-Begotten of God began to be distressed in His body, when He willed to suffer for the human race, His blood came forth in drops of sweat; and later, when He hung on the cross, water flowed with blood from the wound in His side. And therefore, in the sacrament where the mystery of His Passion is celebrated, water must be present with the wine, because water and blood flowed from the wound in the Son of God's side. But in that sacrifice the wine must be more abundant than the water; for blood surpasses the liquid that dilutes it, just as milk exceeds the watery substance that moistens it. So let those who celebrate this mystery do so in the way that was shown them, as the people exhort who speak by My inspiration in the words of Wisdom, as it is written:

The Son of God, Who saved me the exile by His Passion, also mercifully gave me in His Resurrection the cup of life. How? As a cluster of grapes of Cyprus has in itself a strong fullness of drink, so too the excellence that is in God's Only-Begotten has in itself an unailing magnitude, so that the Son of God will never be exhausted, but will always give the drink of life to those who thirst. For He is the Savior of Life. And we, who formerly fell short, now are strengthened by the manifestation and the knowledge of the true holiness of good works; and through Him we eat the food of life and go on through knowledge of God to life. In the Old Testament we endured great hunger and were unable to rise to salvation, for it was shadowed and did not show the full explanation but displayed many different meanings. But now we are satisfied, for we drink in Him the saving cup, tasting Who God is in true faith; Whom we cannot see with the outer and carnal vision, but Whom we have within by spiritual understanding, as strong wine shows its power in people's veins, though the people do not feel it but only know that it is within them.

And so the Bridegroom of souls is the cluster of grapes of Cyprus, Whose fruit will not fail. How? A blind man who has come in through the door asks for his sight. How? The person who did not have the vision of faith attains to faith and enters by the squeezing of the winepress into the dew of the blood of Christ. How? Just as we have life in our souls through His commands, so too we receive cleansing in our bodies through His gift; for we were born in Adam's transgression and are unclean, but in Christ's blood we are sanctified. Hence the betrothed soul says of Him in the Holy Spirit, "My Beloved, Who is sweet and lovable to my heart, is to me like strong wine in the full sanctification of His blood. For though I am unclean in that I am planted in flesh, as a vineyard lies in thorns when it is as yet uncultivated, He, the Fountain of Salvation, mercifully washes sinners clean of their stains and gloriously sanctifies them in His secret mysteries. As He came sweetly forth from the heart of His Father, He now sweetly displays His blood as wine; and as He was miraculously born of the Virgin, so His body is miraculously manifested in bread, for He is the cluster of grapes that will never suffer defect or loss."

And by the will of the Father He is trodden on the altar as if in the winepress, so that Man, who cannot subsist by himself, may not fall in his frailty and weakness. For as human blood is replenished by drinking, humanity is sanctified by the blood of the Son of God. And as people must refresh themselves by drinking lest their blood without watering dry up, so wine must not be lacking for consecration as the blood of the Son of God, but in the sacrament of that mystery will always be upon the altar.

32 More from the Book of Wisdom

"Come, eat My bread, and drink the wine that I have mixed for you" [Proverbs 9:5]. What does this mean? You who wish to lay aside folly, come out of that ignorance which makes you disdain God, and that defilement which sent you into exile, and return into the pure place that is yours, shown to you in the mirror of faith in the fountain of living water; and with gentle devotion eat My bread, not sown in the field by a man or given growth by the earth, but issuing from God and remaining in Him. For as bread is eaten but earth is trampled, so the Son of God Who is the Living Bread excels the children of humanity; for the Son of God is steadfast in the power of His Divinity, while the children of humanity are unbalanced due to the weakness of their flesh. The Son of God, while physically in the world, did not have in His flesh any weak tendency to sin; for as a fire which bakes bread dries it and leaves no soft moisture in it, so the Only-Begotten of God, conceived by the mighty fire of the Holy Spirit and born of the chaste Virgin, had no contamination of sin in His body. And as bread nourishes people, the Son of God nourishes believers in faith, for He is the strong fruit that shall never fail.

Therefore, O ye faithful who eat this bread, drink also with pure purpose this wine, which is devoid of every uncleanness and which never enters that state of futility in which corruption devours noble innocence and turns it to poison.

33 Adam began with pure blood but his sin turned it to impure filth

When he was created, the first man was pure in this respect: He was not divided within himself but was pure in flesh and blood. But after he committed his transgression, he was ruined, and always after that poured out his blood in stinking and unclean adultery. For he had cast away his innocent honor, and therefore his blood lost its red color and was perverted in the act of conception into the liquid of pollution. In that liquid there is no form, until blood is engendered again; that blood takes on a new form, and after its beginning lies dormant, until it comes to its full strength and is secretly quickened to sensation. And then clean flesh and blood appear again, purified from poison, until it is struck by harmful heat, which produces the scum of uncleanness. But the Son of God was pure in respect to all these things: He had clean flesh and blood and was never touched by harmful heat, so that He remained in a holy and honorable state of verdant chastity, never profaned by contamination. But when He was in the agony of the Passion, He poured out water with the blood from His side; for blood is not poured out without water, but their proportions are such that the blood thickens the water rather than the water diluting the blood.

34 Those who take Christ's body and blood are most sweetly vivified

Therefore, you who wish devoutly to worship God because you love salvation, receive this cup of sanctification; I have so tempered it for you with mild forgiveness that you will never feel harsh punishment. For in the supernal Son there is both Divinity and Humanity, and through His Passion you are delivered from death and quickened by His body and blood, so as to have a part in the eternal habitation. But I, Who am the Beginning and the End, again say to you, O human, that My noble Son is the flower of roses and lilies of the valley, born of the chaste Virgin who brought Him forth in wholeness, and that birth was such as to appease Me for the wickedness of the first parents of the human race, who by their transgression provoked Me to wrath.

Therefore, when I see My Son's body and blood daily consecrated on the altar in My name, and you, O human, being sanctified by that sacrament, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, I always contemplate that birth. For when the priest does his office as is appointed him, invoking Me in sacred words, I am there in power, just as I was there when My Only-Begotten, without discord or stain, became incarnate. Thus His body was pure and sweet and all-holy; and they who now faithfully receive His flesh and blood will be so sweetly enlivened that they will never be despised or rejected. As it is written in the Song of Songs:

35 Words of Solomon

"Who shall give you to me for my brother, sucking the breasts of my mother, that I may find you out of doors and kiss you, and no one will despise me?" [Song of Songs 8:1] What does this mean? With groans and devotion and with sure faith the people of the Church say, "Who will be merciful and give me, a miserable human in tribulation, You, the Bridegroom of the Church?—You, Whom I name my brother because of Your Incarnation, and Who sucks the mercy and truth that nourish humanity from the Divinity, which is my mother in my creation, giving me life and growth?" What does this mean? "The nourishments of the Church too are full of Your grace, for You Who are the Living Bread and the fountain of living water make her fully abound in the sacrament of Your body and blood. And this You do that I may surely find You out of doors, knowing that You are the Son of God in Heaven but seeing You as a man on earth, for my mortal eyes cannot perceive You in Divinity; and that I may find You in the bread and wine of the divine mystery, the sacrament without deception or artifice. And thus I may kiss You, for You were incarnate for my salvation, and You now make me a

sharer in Your body and blood; no creature that is subject to You and follows Your precepts can despise me now for being a rebel against Your commands and opposing You, for You came into the world for my sake and have given me Yourself.”

36 At the priest's invocation at the altar the sacrament is perfected

Now therefore, O human, as you see, when the sacrifice has been offered at the altar and the priest begins to invoke Me in those words appointed for him by the Holy Spirit, verily I say to you that I am there in My burning heat, and with full will I perfect that sacrament. How? To effect this mystery I extend over this offering My ardent charity at the moment when the priest invokes Me and remembers that My Son blessed bread and wine in the agony of His Passion as the sacrament of His body and blood, giving them to His disciples that they might do the same for the salvation of the people. Truly I say to you that there will never be an invocation over such an offering in remembrance of My Only-Begotten without the mystery of His body and blood being perfected in it; though the carnal eye cannot see it, as long as it is mortal dust, except by the perception of humble and devoted faith. How? As a bird sees that an egg has been laid in its nest; it eagerly flies to cover it and nurtures it with its warmth until the chick emerges; and then the shell remains, and the chick flies away. What does this mean?

When the offering of bread and wine has been laid on the altar and dedicated to My name in memory of My Son, I the Almighty miraculously illumine it with My power and glory and transform it into the body and blood of My Only-Begotten. How? By the same miracle through which My Son took on a body from the Virgin, the consecrated oblation becomes His flesh and blood. How? As when My Son lived in the world with people, He was also with Me in Heaven; and so now, living with Me in Heaven, He also remains with people in earth. But this is a spiritual and not a physical phenomenon.

37 God exercises the power of His will in every creature as He wishes

I the Father am present to every creature and withdraw Myself from none; but you, O human, do withdraw yourself from creatures. For instance, when you look into water, your face appears in it, but your reflection can exercise none of your powers, and when you turn away you no longer appear in the water. But I do not appear to creatures thus changeably; I am present to them in a true manifestation, never withdrawing My power from them but doing in them by the strength of My will whatever I please. And so too I truly

display My majesty in the sacrament of the body and blood of My Son, and wondrously perform My miracles there from the beginning of the priest's secret words until the time when that mystery is received by the people.

38 The Mass may be said from the first to the ninth hour as necessary

And this priestly office may be done for the faithful from the first to the ninth hour of the day, according to the time made necessary by the habits of the people; for Adam arose in the morning and was seduced in the ninth hour, and the Passion of My Son began at daybreak and was completed in the ninth hour, when He expired on the cross and overcame Death by His death. And the Church stood by My Only-Begotten in that place and received her wedding gifts; and these must now be celebrated by the children of the Church.

39 All must communicate fasting except in danger of death

But this office of sacrifice is to be celebrated by the priests with empty stomachs and not in repletion, lest the digestion of the food destroy spiritual desire; spiritual feasting should precede physical refectio, thus honoring the spirit and reviving the body. For this sacrament is to be received with spiritual desire, not with carnal greed, and therefore it should be taken fasting and not after a meal except in an emergency, if a person is thought to be about to leave the world. My Son gave His body and blood to His disciples around the end of the day and brought them the morning of true life; and at the end of the world, death will pass away from temporal humanity, and the elect will shine like the sun in My Kingdom.

40 God raised fallen Man and not the Devil because Man was tempted

Thus My Only-Begotten in His Resurrection drew the souls of the just out of Hell and restored the human race to eternal life, which the reprobate angels lost when without temptation by another they chose death; for they were seduced by no other tempter but themselves, since they had in themselves no taste of sin as a human has in his weak body. Therefore, Man, who was physically weak and seduced by a tempter, was restored to life by the Uplifter; but the Devil, who had not been hampered by a body, was left in his perversity. And Man was given true and salutary refreshment in receiving the body and blood of My Son; invisibly revived in soul by this sacrament, he can arise and manfully resist his invisible adversary.

- 41 In this sacrament not quantity but holiness must be considered
- But let those who receive this sacrament in greater or lesser quantity understand that the receivers of more and of less have received the same amount of power, for the sacrament consists not in quantity but in holiness. It saves those who receive according to their faith, as is written of the manna:
- 42 Analogy of the manna
- “And the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more and some less. And they measured by the measure of an omer, and the one who gathered more had nothing over, and the one who gathered less did not lack; but each had gathered according to what he could eat” [Exodus 16:17-18]. What does this mean? The children of election, who ardently desire to see God, long for the supernal sacrament as has been commanded them, and as their teachers instruct them they gather it in their hearts. And in their souls they scrutinize it as they have learned to do; but in their secret hearts one person has more devotion and another a lesser resolve, and in their thoughts they measure by the measure of what they feel in their souls. They determine how much faith in God they have, which is not divided but remains whole, and think about the degree and kind of devotion with which they receive the body and blood of their Redeemer. So this sacrament will not be holier for the one who receives more of it, or of lesser effect for one who receives less of it; but it will illumine the recipient according to his faith. Therefore, O human, it need not be taken in great quantity, for our mighty God is present as much in a small offering of this mystery as in a great one; so let those who receive it take care only that they have God, the Three and One, in their hearts with firm and perfect faith. And let each of the faithful collect the powers of his soul with sincere and righteous heart, as his capacity for faith permits, and beware of searching into Divinity more exaltedly or profoundly than his senses or thought can grasp, but do it soberly as the Holy Spirit teaches; let him be subject to the fear of the Lord, since Man is only poor ashes.
- 43 What is on the altar is the true body and blood of Christ
- But do not doubt, O foolish people, that this sacrament which is thus manifested to you is the body and blood of My Son. Remember from what I created the flesh and blood of Adam—from earthly mud. How, then, does it seem to you: Is it easier for Me to make the flesh and blood of My Son from this oblation, or to make Man from the mud of the ground? A man pours forth semen from his blood, and a woman receives it; what else do they add?

Nothing at all toward the formation or the body of the little baby; and who then forms the person in its flesh and bones and marrow and its beautiful face but I, the Father of all? But the father and mother have no power to make or create the little baby, except to send forth their blood in burning lust; after that they have no role in forming it. Can you see how it is done, when you cannot perceive the methods?

But you say, O human, “I do not see that this oblation is flesh and blood the way I see that a person is body and blood.” To which I answer: You saw My Son in His body and blood when He was mortal on earth, as He is now immortal in Heaven; so you cannot see Him now with bodily eyes. Nor can you see how His flesh and blood are consecrated on the altar in a sacrament that exists for the glory not of a priest but of My Only-Begotten, Who did the office in the Supper with His disciples. As long as you are mortals, you cannot see Me in My glory; and so also with your physical eyes you cannot physically see the flesh and blood of My Son, because you cannot perceive that which is invisible, but with your mortal gaze can take in only that which is visible.

- 44 In the sacrament three things must be offered in honor of the Trinity

This sacrament must be offered to Me in three forms. What? Bread, wine and water, for the honor of the Trinity. If any of these three is lacking, the Trinity is not truly worshipped, for the Father is understood by the wine, the Son by the bread, and the Holy Spirit by the water. Thus one who offers wine without bread or water worships the Father but denies the Son and Holy Spirit; one who gives bread without wine or water holds the Son but casts away the Father and Holy Spirit; and one who uses water without wine or bread heeds the Holy Spirit but refuses the Father and the Son. One who gives wine and bread without water holds the Father and the Son but casts away the Holy Spirit; one who offers wine and water without bread worships the Father and the Holy Spirit but denies the Son; and one who uses bread and water without wine heeds the Son and the Holy Spirit but denies the Father. Therefore, let no division take place in this sacrament, as I, remaining undivided in Three Persons, am One Indivisible God; in the same way that thought, will and deed are in one human being, and without them that person is not.

- 45 A priest who neglects, refuses or forgets to offer these must be punished

But if there is a defect in the sacrifice, so that either bread or wine or water is left out of it, truly the one by whose neglect it happened will be

liable to grave punishment. If it is done knowingly in negligent apathy, or faithlessly because of doubting unbelief, I will cast the guilty one out of My sight unless he comes to himself and punishes himself with severe penitence. And if it happens unknowingly through forgetful neglect, the guilty one will be answerable to Me for his fault and subject to penance, because he was not acute enough in ensuring that everything pertaining to My sacrifice was there. For when My Son hung upon the cross, nothing that pertained to salvation was lacking there, since He brought salvation to humanity by the outpouring of His blood; and so nothing must be absent in the celebration of His mystery. For this sacrament is the all-holiest sanctification, and so this flesh and this blood must be received with all faith and devotion.

46 How the body and blood of Christ should be distributed to the people

But let not anyone who receives this sacred flesh refuse to take the blood of the mystery too; for My Son is pure above all things and a mirror of virtue, and so His noble blood must be received. An exception is made if the recipient is weak in mind, and the priest fears the danger of spilling; in that case the recipient is given the treatment accorded to the simplicity of children, to whom bread is given and wine is denied. So let the sacrosanct flesh be granted to such a person, but the flowing blood be withheld, lest a greater danger arise from giving it; for the holy flesh is united with the blood and the blood with the flesh in one sanctity. But if the person has enough discernment to keep the mystery safe, when the sacred flesh is given him to eat let him also be given the blood of that flesh to drink.

47 The priest must use the vestments and words instituted by the Fathers

Let the priest who celebrates this sacrament take care to be clothed in those vestments that the early Fathers, instructed by the Holy Spirit, appointed to be worn at this office; and let him take great care to speak those words which the Holy Spirit gave those Fathers for the celebration of the mystery, and not omit anything from them, or go beyond the example of My Son when He took bread and the chalice and gave them to His disciples to eat and drink. One who unknowingly does something wrong in forgetful neglect as to vestments or words pertaining to this office must be corrected by a severe and salutary penance; but if he seeks My mercy he shall find it, for he did not perpetrate the transgression voluntarily in malice of heart. But if one

transgresses knowingly in these sacramental rites, either from mental apathy or from wickedness of heart, I will be offended, and say to him:

48 Words of the Lord to the negligent priest

“You wicked servant, why were you not rightly clothed in the priestly vestment, when your great early teachers instituted it for you in the Holy Spirit, and your spiritual office has the same meaning as the ministry of My angels to Me? And why have you ignored the form of words your fathers bequeathed to you in the Holy Spirit for the consecration of the body and blood of My Son and the salvation and glory of the human race?” And thus he who is guilty of such a charge must answer for it to Me, unless he punishes himself by inflicting on himself a severe penance.

49 The priest who offers the sacrament must take it himself

And let not a priest who offers this feast at My altar withdraw from it fasting himself, but let him receive his soul’s refreshment in the body and blood of My Son. If he knows himself to be weighed down by grave burdens and unworthy of the feast, let him not presume to approach My table or touch My Son unwashed from the filth of his sins; as those people contaminated the table and the glory of the king’s birthday who cruelly cut off the head of the shining light [John the Baptist]. Let the contaminated man therefore show the nature of his sickness to the High Priest, My Son, and accuse himself before another priest who is mortal; the latter will give him the remedy of comfort and penance, and so, purified at last, he may return to his office.

50 The priest at the altar must use the words instituted

But I, the Father of all, will that the secret order of sacred words by which the priest invokes Me at the altar must not be inflated and long, but as the ancient teachers rightly ordained it who taught how to address Me by the Holy Spirit. It should not be multiplied by foolish wisdom, but kept in simplicity of heart, for I delight not in long speech but in the purity of heart of those who seek Me devoutly and embrace Me willingly in burning charity. Everywhere else I give My grace to My elect by the exchange of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but here in this sacrament I show Myself wholly: My Son in Me, and I in Him, and the Holy Spirit in Us, and We in Him, One in Divinity, as the body and soul and powers of anyone make up one living