

The Responses of Pope Nicholas I to the Questions of the Bulgars A.D. 866 (Letter 99)

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Introduction

Since the sixth century, the Bulgars had known intermittent contact with the Christians of the surrounding nations, whether as merchants or prisoners-of-war or through diplomatic relations. During the later eighth and early ninth century, the Christian population in Bulgar lands increased so much that Christians were rumored to have influence at the court of Khan Krum (802-814); they were also persecuted under Khan Omortag (814-31). The Bulgars continued to remain "officially" pagan until the reign of Khan Boris, who came to power around 852.

Several factors may have led Khan Boris to assume a more favorable attitude towards Christianity. First, Christianity offered a belief-system that transcended — at least potentially — cultural or ethnic boundaries and thereby offered a means not only to unify Bulgaria's disparate populations but also to secure legitimacy and respect with Byzantium and the West. The ideology of Christian rulership also enhanced the position of the prince vis-à-vis his subjects including the often contentious boyars. Furthermore, Boris' sister had converted to Christianity while a hostage in Constantinople and may have influenced her brother. Finally, Boris himself seems to have been attracted to Christian beliefs and practices, as evidenced by the seriousness with which he pursued the conversion of his people.

Boris' move towards Christianity seems to have begun in earnest with the opening of negotiations in 862 between himself and Louis the German for an alliance against Ratislav of Moravia. News of the alliance reached the Byzantines and they attacked Bulgaria preemptively, taking advantage of the weakness caused by famine in that year. Boris surrendered in 864 and by mid-865 had probably been baptized. It was around this time that Patriarch Photius (858-67; 977-86) sent Boris a letter in which he instructed Boris on the basic tenets of orthodoxy and exhorted him to adhere to the principles of Christian rulership. Greek missionaries were sent to Bulgaria to speed the process of conversion but within a year, Boris sought to distance himself from the patriarch in Constantinople and sent a legation to Rome to open negotiations with Pope Nicholas I (858-67) about Bulgaria's movement into the Roman sphere of influence. Letter 99, sent back to Bulgaria with Bishops Formosus of Porto and Paul of Populonia as well as a collection of books and liturgical equipment, records the pope's response to

the Bulgarians' questions and problems. Indeed, because of the format of Nicholas' responses, this letter seems to offer a relatively undistorted look at the problems that the Bulgarians themselves thought christianization posed to their culture and the specific aspects of their new faith about which they were curious. It is therefore a priceless document for the study of the process of christianization in the early Middle Ages.

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The Text

Not much needs to be said to your inquiries nor have we considered it necessary to pause long over each question, since we, though God is the author, are going to send to your country and to your glorious king, our beloved son, not only the books of divine law, but also our fitting messengers,¹ who will instruct you concerning the details, insofar as time and reason dictate; to them, as well, we have committed books which we thought they would need.

Chapter I. Now then, at the very beginning of your questions, you properly and laudably claim that your king seeks the Christian law. If we attempted to explain this

¹ Paul, bishop of Populonia, and Formosus, bishop of Porto.

law fully, innumerable books would have to be written; but, in order to show briefly in what things it chiefly consists, one should know that the law of the Christians consists in faith and good works. For faith is the first of all virtues in the lives of believers. Whence, even on the first day there is said to be light, since God is portrayed as having said, *Let there be light*,² that is, "let the illumination of belief appear." Indeed, it is also because of this illumination that Christ came down to earth. Good work is no less demanded from a Christian; for just as it is written in our law, *Without faith it is impossible to please God*,³ so it is also written, *Just as a body without a spirit is dead, so, too, faith without works is dead*.⁴ This is the Christian law, and whoever keeps this law properly, shall be saved.

Chapter II. A person should love the one who receives him from the sacred font just like a father; indeed, since this is spiritual patronage and adoption according to God, by however much the spirit is more outstanding than the flesh, by so much should the spiritual father be more beloved in every way by the spiritual son. For Mark the Evangelist, the disciple of Peter, was also his son because of holy baptism.⁵ If he had not loved Peter as a father, Mark would not have obeyed him in all things like a son. But there is no consanguinity between these men and their children, because the spirit does not know the things which are features of consanguinity: *For the flesh, according to the Apostle, strives against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; they are indeed opposed to one another*.⁶ Nevertheless, there is between them another communion of grace, which should not be called "consanguinity", but should rather be considered "spiritual kinship" (*spiritalis proximitas*). As a result, we do not think that there can be any conjugal relationship (*conubium*) between them, since the venerable Roman laws do not allow a marriage to be contracted between those who are children by nature and those who are children by adoption. Indeed, in the first book of the *Institutions*, when it speaks of marriage, it says among other things: *Some unions have to be avoided. Marriage cannot be contracted between people in the relation of parent and child, for instance father and daughter or grandfather and granddaughter or mother and son or grandmother and grandson and so on up and down the line. A union within these degrees is evil and incestuous. If their relationship as*

² Gen. 1:3.

³ Hebrews 11:6.

⁴ Jac.2:20.

⁵ Cf. I Pet. 5:13.

⁶ Gal. 5:17.

*parent and child is based on adoption, they still cannot marry; You cannot marry a girl who has become your daughter or granddaughter through adoption; and later: There can be no marriage between me and my adopted sister, as long as the adoption stands.*⁷ Therefore, if marriage is not contracted between those whom adoption joins, how much more fitting is it that those whom the regeneration of the Holy Spirit binds through a heavenly sacrament, cease from carnal intimacy with one another? Hence, it is far more appropriate that someone be called the son of my father or my brother whom divine grace rather than human wit has chosen to be my son or my brother, and it is far more prudent to keep ourselves from mixing with each other's bodies because the Holy Spirit has united us in its love than to do so because carnal necessity or the changeable judgment of some corruptible person had joined us to each other.

Chapter III. We shall strive, while avoiding a wordy style, to show you that the custom, which you say the Greeks maintain in their marital unions, recalls in small ways the custom which the Roman Church received in antiquity and still holds in unions of this sort. Now then, our men and women do not wear upon their heads a band of gold, silver, or some other metal when they contract a marriage pact. Instead, after the betrothal is celebrated — which is the promised pact of future marriage made with the consent of both those who contract the pact and those under whose power they are — the betrothed man joins the bride to himself with vows through the finger marked by him with the ring of faith and the betrothed man hands over to her a dowry (*dos*) pleasing to both people along with a document containing this agreement in the presence of those invited by both parties. Then, either soon after or at an appropriate time, namely in order that no such thing be presumed to be done before the time defined by law, both are brought to the wedding. First, they are placed by hand of the priest in the church of the Lord along with offerings which they should offer to God and so at last they receive the blessing and the celestial veil, on the model, namely, of the Lord who, after placing the first people in paradise, said to them: *Increase and multiply*, etc. Tobias, before he had come together with his wife, is also described as having prayed to God with this same prayer.⁸ The person who passes into a second marriage, however, does not receive this veil. When they leave the church after this, they wear crowns on their heads, which are always kept by custom in the church. And so, after

⁷ Justinian I, Institutes I,1,1 & 2 (trans.P. Birks & G. McLeod, p.43). Composed in 533 under the direction of the Emperor Justinian I, the Institutes, which was bound together with the Digest, was intended to serve as an introduction to the principles of law that were explored in greater depth through the assembled cases and opinions contained in the latter volume.

⁸ Cf. Tobit 8:4.

the wedding is celebrated, they are directed to lead their own life with God disposing over the rest. These are the wedding vows, these are the solemn agreements of married people, aside from those which at present do not come to mind. But we do not claim that it is a sin if all of these things do not occur in a marriage agreement, as you say the Greeks told you, especially since so great a lack of wealth usually oppresses people that it offers them no help in preparing these things. And for this reason, according to the laws, the consent alone of those whose union is at issue, is enough [to make a marriage]. Yet if this consent alone is perchance lacking in the wedding, all the rest, even if it is consummated with intercourse itself, is in vain, as the great teacher John Chrysostom attests, who says: *Not intercourse but will makes marriage.*⁹

Now then, since you ask if a man can take another wife when his own wife has died, know that he absolutely can, as the excellent preacher Paul advises, who says: *I do not say to married people and widows: It is a good thing for them if they remain just as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, let them marry*¹⁰ and again he says: *A woman is bound to the law, as long as her husband lives; if her husband dies, she is free: let her marry whomever she wishes.*¹¹ Whatever he decreed concerning a woman, should in fact be understood about a man as well, since Sacred Scripture often speaks about a man, but is understood to speak nonetheless about a woman. For behold we say: *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the impious etc.*, and again: *Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,*¹² passages in which we believe not without reason that not only a man but also a woman is blessed, who does not walk in the counsel of the impious and who fears the Lord.

Chapter III. We consider it unnecessary to explain to you, who are rough and in some ways children in the faith, how many times or days in the course of a year one should abstain from meat. For the time being, on the days of fasting on which one should especially supplicate the Lord through abstinence and the lamentation of penance, one should completely abstain from meat. For, although it is fitting to pray and abstain at all times, one should nevertheless be even more of a slave to abstinence at times of fasting, namely in order that he, who recalls that he has committed illicit deeds, may keep himself on these days even from licit things in accordance with the sacred decretals, namely during Lent, which is before Easter, on the fast before Pentecost, at

⁹ Homilies on Matthew 32.

¹⁰ I Corinthians 7:8-9.

¹¹ I Corinthians 7:39.

¹² Psalms 1:1 & 111:1.

the fast before the assumption of the holy mother of God and the ever virgin Mary, our Lady, as well as on the fast before the feast of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ: these are the fasts which the holy Roman church received in antiquity and maintains. But on the sixth day of every week,¹³ and on all the vigils of famous feasts one should cease from eating meat and should apply oneself to fasting, so that one may truly be able to say with the writer of the Psalms: *Weeping shall last the night, but in the morning shall come happiness.*¹⁴ But if some wish to abstain from meat on other days, they should not be forbidden to do so, because the more tears someone sows in this life, the greater shall their harvest of joy be in the eternal life.¹⁵ Nevertheless, we cannot impose this heavy yoke upon you who are, as we have said, still rough and like children to be nourished with milk, until you come to solid food. Yet, just as we advise you of this for the time being, so we admonish you in every way that you not touch what has been forbidden; for by tasting a mere apple that was forbidden, the first formed people were expelled from the pleasantness of paradise.

Chapter V. Although one should engage in lamentation more on Wednesday than on the other days except Friday, because the Lord had already been buried in a certain way on this day in the heart of the earth, i.e. in the heart of the traitor Judas, when he was planning to betray Him to death,¹⁶ if one of you wishes to eat meat on this day, he absolutely can, unless perchance it is known that this has been forbidden him by a priest, since it is written: *Obedience is better than sacrifice,*¹⁷ or if this day happens to fall among the fast days since Jonathan, after violating the fast imposed by his father by tasting a bit of honey, was sought out by his father in order that his father might kill him;¹⁸ or certainly if the person has constrained himself not to eat meat on this day, since it is written: *Vow and render it unto the Lord your God.*¹⁹ But on the sixth day of the week our taste should be kept from the feasts and fat of all flesh as we recall the Lord's

¹³ I.e. Friday.

¹⁴ Psalm 29:6.

¹⁵ Cf. Ps.125:5.

¹⁶ Cf. Matthew 26:14-16.

¹⁷ Cf. I Kings 15:22.

¹⁸ Cf. I Kings 14:43-44.

¹⁹ Psalm 75:12.

passion and the sorrow of the apostles, unless the Lord's nativity,²⁰ his Epiphany,²¹ or the feast of the blessed mother of the Lord and immaculate virgin Mary,²² or the feasts of the princes of the apostles Peter and Paul,²³ of St. John the Baptist,²⁴ John the Evangelist,²⁵ or of the brother of the bearer of the keys to heaven, namely the apostle Andrew,²⁶ as well as the feast of the blessed protomartyr Stephen²⁷ should by chance happen to fall on this day. For that the holy church and the faithful soul should render the fasts or abstinences that have not be undertaken with an eternal vow on the feast days of the saints, the Lord attests in the gospel when he says: *When a woman gives birth, she is sad; but after she has given birth to the child, she no longer recalls the anguish because of her joy that a human being was born into the world.*²⁸ He calls the holy Church a woman, for just as a woman rejoices in a human being born into this world, so the Church is filled with worthy exultation when a people passes into the life of the faithful that is to come. After laboring greatly and wailing for its birth, it suffers at present as if giving birth. Nor should this seem new to anyone, if he is called "newborn" who has passed from this life; for just as one is said to be born, following the accustomed usage, when the person proceeds from his mother's womb and comes forth into the light, so, too, can a person rightly be called "newborn" who comes into the light of the living once free from the shadows of this world. Therefore, because of this situation, it is rightly maintained by ecclesiastical custom that the feast days of the blessed martyrs and confessors of Christ, upon which they passed from this world to the land of the living, are called "natal days", and their solemnities are not called funerals, as if they were for the dead, but rather the birthdays of those born in the true life. Therefore, if they were born to God, for Whom all live and in Whose hands the souls of the just are placed, when they seem to the eyes of fools to die, their holy mother "no longer recalls her

²⁰ December 25.

²¹ January 6.

²² September 8.

²³ June 29.

²⁴ June 24.

²⁵ December 27.

²⁶ November 30.

²⁷ December 26.

²⁸ John 16:21.

anguish because of her joy that a human being has been born into the world," i.e. into the eternal light. Because she rejoices over his birth, she should consequently not spend her time in any lamentations on this day. Yet in this valley of tears one should always mourn and persist in lamentation until we come to that feast of angels. For although the festival is celebrated in this world, it is but momentary and does not last forever and is scarcely ever completed without sadness.

Chapter VI. You also mention something which the Greeks assert, namely that you should by no means bathe on Wednesday or Friday of the week. In contrast, we offer you who have asked for our counsel, something from a certain Sunday sermon which the blessed Pope Gregory and the apostle of the English nation is read to have preached to the Romans, as our response on this matter. For he says: *It has come to my attention that certain perverse individuals have preached to you that no one should wash on Sunday. And indeed, if someone wishes to bathe out of a desire for luxury or pleasure, we do not grant that this should occur on any day: but if it is done out of bodily necessity, we do not forbid this even on Sunday. For truly it is written: "No one has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it" (Eph. 5:29); and again: "Do not care for the flesh to fulfill its desires" (Rom.13:14). Hence the one who forbids care for the flesh for the sake of desires, indeed grants it in cases of necessity. For if it is a sin to wash on Sundays, the face should not be washed on this day either. But if washing is conceded on this part of the body, why is it denied to the whole body, if necessity demands it?*²⁹ Thus, what this most excellent bishop and most gentle teacher granted on Sunday, which is more venerable than the rest of the days, we do not deny on Wednesday or Friday, though we preserve this distinction, that, if someone wishes to bath out of a desire for luxury or pleasure, we do not allow this to occur on any day, but if it is done because of bodily necessity, we prohibit this on neither Wednesday nor Friday.

Chapter VII. You further inquire, whether a clean or unclean person is allowed to kiss or carry the cross of the Lord when he holds it. [We answer] that for the person who is clean, it is completely permissible; for what is indicated in a kiss if not the love with which someone burns for these things? And in carrying it, what else is expressed if not the mortification or fellow-suffering of the flesh? Indeed, the Lord also ordered him to carry this cross, but in his mind; but when it is performed with the body, one is more easily reminded that it should also be performed in the mind. As the aforementioned bishop explains: *The cross (crux) is in fact named after "torment" (cruciatus) and we bear the Lord's cross in two ways, when we afflict our flesh through abstinence and when we*

²⁹ Gregory I, Register XIII,3.

*consider the need of our neighbor as our own through our compassion for our neighbor.*³⁰

Therefore kiss the Lord's cross when you venerate His passion and out of your love for him, if necessity demands it, be armed with this same thought. Carry the cross, but with the highest reverence and the cleanest body and heart, so that it may never fall from your mind, i.e. that you may both afflict your flesh always through abstinence and consider the needs of your neighbors as your own through compassion. *He who suffers in the need of another, bears a cross in his mind.* On the other hand, we allow the unclean man to carry the cross by no arrangement; indeed it is written: *Let you who bear the vessels of the Lord be clean.*³¹ No vessel of the Lord is more sacred than the Lord's cross, which deserved to bear the Lord Himself. The unclean person is also not permitted to kiss the cross, for by the very fact that he is unclean, he is his own witness that he does not love the mortification of the flesh; therefore he may not kiss what he does not love, lest perhaps it be said of him what the Lord says of the reprobate as a rebuke through the prophet: *This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me,*³² and the Psalmist says: *They have loved him in their mouth and have lied to him in their tongue.*³³ Regarding the relics of the saints, whose bodies have been and are the temples and vessels of God and which the Holy Spirit has used as its instruments for all its good works, when it has so wished, we say these same thing.

Chapter VIII. Therefore, if fitting reverence has preceded and a cleanliness of mind and body accompany it, even during Lent (about which you requested special instruction) you are permitted to carry the Lord's cross when it is pleasing for the cross to be kissed, as long as the above rule is maintained; but then and there especially, when and where the struggles and treacheries of the ancient enemy are particularly feared.

Chapter VIII. You ask whether you should communicate with the body and blood of the Lord every day during greater Lent.³⁴ We humbly pray to omnipotent God and exhort you all most vehemently that you do so, but only if your mind is not disposed towards sin; your conscience does not perchance accuse your mind, because it is unrepentant and unreconciled for criminal sins; and you are not fully reconciled to your

³⁰ Gregory I, Homilies on the Gospels, XXXVII.

³¹ Isaiah 52:11.

³² Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8.

³³ Psalm 77:36.

³⁴ i.e. the forty days before Easter.

brother by your own fault. For we judge that, when someone is bitten by their conscience concerning one of these things, receiving communion weighs him down with a great accusation more than it offers him a remedy. Indeed, according to the Apostle: *He eats and drinks his own judgment.*³⁵ But regarding this and those who in fact enter the church but do not communicate when the offering is made, the sacred canons adequately speak. These canons should be administered by the bishop who is to be ordained for you by our mediocrity with God's support. He then should reveal them to the priests, who hold the keys of knowledge, and make known no less to you the canons regarding the matters which are necessary and not forbidden. In the meantime, only during Lent, which Church custom calls the "greater [fast]," should one communicate every day with the longer service maintained. For one should always spend time in prayer, come together at the sacrifices of the faithful, and recall constantly to mind those words of the prophet in which it is said: *Your will is found on the day of your fast.*³⁶ Indeed if, with the consent of the spouse, one perhaps spends time in prayer with a clean body at some other time as well, how much the more on this day upon which we give the tenths of our flesh to God, we imitate the Lord Himself in abstinence, and we rightly cut from ourselves not only illicit things, but also many things which are allowed, should we not also renounce every pleasure and, in order that we may licitly spend time in prayer, apply ourselves to the chastity of our mind and body!

Chapter X. You wish to know if anyone is permitted to perform any labor on Saturday or Sunday. Concerning this matter the oft-remembered holy Pope Gregory said, while addressing the Romans: *It has come to my attention that certain men of a perverse spirit have sowed some depraved things among you which are contrary to the holy faith, so that they forbid anything to be done on Saturday. What else should I call such people except preachers of the Antichrist, who shall, when he comes, make Saturday and Sunday be kept free from any work? For because he pretends that he died and rose again, he wishes that Sunday be held in veneration, and, because he compels the people to judaize in order that he may recall the exterior rite of the law and subject the perfidy of the Jews to himself. Indeed, as long as what is said through the prophet: "Do not carry burdens through your doors on Saturday" (Jer.17:24) can be maintained, so long was the law allowed to be observed according to the letter. But after the grace of omnipotent God, our Lord Jesus Christ, appeared, the commandments of the law, which were spoken through figures, cannot be kept according to the letter. For if someone says this commandment concerning the Sabbath should be preserved, he may say that it is necessary the*

³⁵ I Corinthians 11:29.

³⁶ Isaiah 58:3.

sacrifices of flesh also be performed, he may also say that the commandment concerning the circumcision of the body should also be retained. But let him hear the apostle Paul saying against him: "If you are circumcised, Christ does you no good."(Gal.5:2) Thus, we understand and maintain spiritually what has been said about the Sabbath. For Sabbath means "rest". But we consider the Redeemer himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the true Sabbath. Also, the person who recognizes the light of his faith, introduces burdens through his gates on Saturday, if he drags sins of concupiscence into his mind through his eyes. Therefore we do not introduce burdens through our gates on Saturday, if we, established in the grace of our Redeemer, do not drag the weights of sin into our soul through our corporeal senses. For our very Lord and Redeemer is read to have done many things on Saturday, so that he reprimanded the Jews, saying: "Which of you does not release his ox or ass on the day of the Sabbath and lead it to water?"(Lk.13:15) Therefore, if Truth itself ordered through itself that the Sabbath not be kept according to the letter, whoever keeps the leisure of the Sabbath according to the letter of the law, who else does he contradict than Truth itself? But on Sundays one should cease from earthly labor and devote oneself to prayers in every way, in order that whatever act of negligence has been committed during the other six days, may be expiated with prayers throughout the day of the Lord's resurrection.³⁷

Chapter XI. You ask whether you should cease from earthly work on the feast days of these apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins. Yes, [you should cease from work] on the feasts of the blessed virgin Mary, of the twelve apostles, of the evangelists and of their precursor, the lord John, of St. Stephen the Protomartyr as well as on the birthdays of those saints whose celebrated memory and feast day shall be held among you by God's favor. It should be clearly known, that one should cease from worldly work on feast days in order that the Christian may be able to go more easily to church, to engage in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,³⁸ to spend time in prayer, to offer oblations, to communicate with the memories of the saints, to rise to imitate them, to concentrate on divine scriptures, and to distribute alms to the needy. If someone, neglecting all of these things, wishes to spend his time only in leisure and turns his licit labors to other vanities of the world, it would be better for him to work with his hands on that day, obeying the command of the blessed apostle Paul, so that he might have something to give to those suffering want, just as the person who, although he says that the Lord ordained that he who proclaims the Gospel, should live by the Gospel,³⁹ nevertheless

³⁷ Gregory I, Register XIII, 3.

³⁸ Cf. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.

³⁹ Cf. I Corinthians 9:14.

does not use this power, but works with his hands lest he burden one of those to whom he preaches the Gospel.⁴⁰

Chapter XII. Because you ask, whether it is permitted to carry out judgment on the feasts of the saints and whether the person, if he deserves it, should be sentenced to death on this same day, you should know that on those feasts on which, as we have shown, one should cease from all worldly labor, we think that one should abstain all the more from secular offices and especially from death. For although both can perhaps be exercised without fault, it is nevertheless fitting that since a person should cling more tightly to the things which are of God, he completely cut from himself the things which are of the world, especially since a person who comes to divine military service (*militia*) should not be implicated in secular business. Furthermore, because of the reverence of so great a festival, it is appropriate that nothing be introduced, unless it is something which bring forth joy, peace and happiness for all. But with this said, the law will teach you sufficiently on which days besides these no secular judgments should be exercised.

Chapter XIII. Among your questions and inquiries, you claimed to request secular laws. Regarding this matter, we would willingly have sent the codices which we thought might be necessary for you at present, if we knew that one of you was able to interpret them for the rest; if we have given some books concerning secular law to our messengers, we do not want them to be left [with you] when they return, lest by chance someone interpret them for you in a perverse way or violate them with some falsity.

Chapter XIII. You also indicated that a certain lying Greek claimed that he was a priest, although he was not, and baptized many in your country. But when, by the inspiration of God, you recognized that he was not a priest, you condemned him to lose his nose and ears and to be killed with the harshest of beatings and then to be cast out of your country. Behold, although you did not know us, there was fulfilled in you what the Apostle proclaimed about some persons, namely that they had the zeal of God but not according to knowledge.⁴¹ To be sure, the fellow acted badly, if he lied, but you showed a zeal in this action which, while pious, was less circumspect. For although he pretended that he was a priest, his simulation nevertheless conferred salvation on a great many. Truly, there have been diverse people who announced Christ in different ways, yet they did not do so for the sake of Christ;⁴² instead, they proclaimed him either

⁴⁰ Cf. I Corinthians 4:12; I Thessalonians 2:9; II Thessalonians 3:8.

⁴¹ Cf. Rom.10:2.

⁴² Cf. Phil.1:15-18.

for some other purpose or any way they liked. Yet the Apostle, who strove as much as possible solely in order that Christ might be proclaimed, did not prohibit these men, because Christ had indeed ordained that he who proclaims the Gospel, should live by the Gospel.⁴³ Therefore, if many people were preaching Christ to acquire earthly comforts, Christ was not at issue, but rather avarice; again, because many preachers of the Gospel were distinguished by the faithful with the great honors, some men therefore preached Christ in order that they, too, might receive the like; but this does not mean that Christ was in their intention, but rather envy. Yet not one of these persons was forbidden so that Christ would not be proclaimed through them; even Judas, who was sent by the Lord among the other apostles, did miracles and proclaimed Christ, and baptized many in His name. And so, as Anastasius, bishop of the apostolic see, writes: *One does not ask, who or what kind of person preaches, but rather Whom he preaches.*⁴⁴

Chapter XV. You also asked whether the people who received their baptism from this man are Christians or should be rebaptized. Now then, if they were baptized in the name of the highest and individuated Trinity, they are clearly Christians, and it is not fitting that they be baptized again by any Christian, because, as the aforementioned apostolic pope Anastasius wrote to his Emperor of the same name, ... *and the baptism, which may be far from a church and have been given by an adulterer or a thief, comes unimpaired to the one receiving the gift: for that voice, which sounded out through the dove, excludes every spot of human pollution and declares and says: "Here is the one who baptizes."* (Jn.1:32)⁴⁵ If baptism comes unimpaired to the person receiving the gift, even though it was given by an adulterer or a thief, why doesn't it therefore stand unimpaired and without need of repetition when some worldly fellow, pretending for I do not know what reason to be a priest, has offered it? Certainly Acacius, former bishop of Constantinople, pretended to be a priest, after he was condemned by Pope Felix. But let's hear what the aforementioned Bishop Acacius said about him; among other things, he said: *When he - namely Acacius - claimed the name of priest for himself, although he had been condemned, the tumor of pride was inflicted upon his own head, because it was not the people, who thirsted after his gift in the mysteries, that was excluded, but rather it was only the soul which had sinned, that was properly liable for the just judgment, as numerous passages of scriptural instruction attest, and this is true because, as that most famous*

⁴³ Cf. 1 Cor.9:14.

⁴⁴ Letter to the Emperor Anastasius, ed. Thiel in Epistolae Romanorum pontificum I, p.622.

⁴⁵ This passage is from the same letter as in n.44.

apostle says, "*neither the person who plants, i.e. catechizes, nor the one who waters, i.e. baptizes, is anything; rather it is God who gives the increase.*"⁴⁶ Hence, *when evil men administer good things, they pile damage not upon others, but upon themselves, and therefore it is certain that no portion of injury shall touch those whom that Greek baptized, because It is He who baptizes,*⁴⁷ i.e. Christ, and again: *God gives the increase;* with "and not man" left understood.

Chapter XVI. You who have thus judged this person may wonder whether you should do penance for this. Clearly, every sin is washed away with penance, which profits only when God's grace accompanies it. For the Lord looked first at Peter and then Peter broke down in tears. Now then, it is obvious that you have committed a sin against that man. First, because, as far as we are able to understand the matter, it was not yet clear that the man was not a priest, and it is written: *Do not judge before the time.*⁴⁸ Second, because although he pretended that he was what he was not, he nevertheless did nothing that is not pleasing to God and his faithful, especially since in this nation, where until that time no right faith, no right religion was practiced, he saw a door divinely opened for him to gain many [for God] and perhaps eagerly desired to lead many people to so great a gift, a desire in which he felt that God mercifully was helping him. Indeed, if David pretended to be raving mad, just so that he could achieve his own safety,⁴⁹ what harm did this man do, who saved so great a multitude of people in such evident need from the power of the devil and eternal perdition? In particular, although he pretended to be a priest, in baptizing people he nevertheless did not do that which only a priest is fit to do in a case of such evident necessity; we therefore believe that he pretended to be a priest, because he felt that you had already been persuaded that the mystery of baptism was only allowed to priests. Third, because, although in this simulation he was truly culpable, in the conversion of so many men, he was worthy of much praise. Fourth, because, although he deserved punishment, the punishment nevertheless should not have exceeded the measure of vengeance; nor should it have heaped upon one person so many and such cruel injuries, since, after his nose and ears had been cut off, expulsion from your country would have been a sufficient punishment for him, instead of the amputation of his members which he experienced at your judgment.

⁴⁶ I Corinthians 3:7.

⁴⁷ I Corinthians 3:6.

⁴⁸ I Corinthians 4:5.

⁴⁹ Cf. 1 Kings (Samuel) 21:13-15.

Chapter XVII. Now then, you have told us about how you received the Christian religion by divine clemency and made your entire people be baptized, and how these people, after they had been baptized, rose up unanimously and fiercely against you, claiming that you had not given them a good law and also wishing to kill you and establish another king; and how you, having been readied against them with the help of divine power, conquered them from the greatest to the least and held them captives in your hands, and how all the leaders and magnates along with everyone of their children were slaughtered by the sword, though the mediocre and lesser persons suffered no evil. Now you desire to know whether you have contracted any sin on account of those who were deprived of their lives. Clearly what was not escaped without sin nor could have happened without your fault, was that a child who was not privy to their parents' plot nor is shown to have borne arms against you, was slaughtered along with the guilty, though innocent. For after the Psalmist said: *I shall not go to my seat in the counsel of vanity and with people who do iniquitous deeds, I have hated the gatherings of the wicked and I shall not sit with the impious,*⁵⁰ says a little while later in this regard, while praying to the Lord: *Do not destroy my soul with the impious nor my life with the men of blood.*⁵¹ Furthermore, the Lord declares through the prophet Ezechiel, saying: *Just as the soul of the father is mine, so, too, the soul of the son: only the soul that has sinned shall perish;*⁵² and a little later he speaks about the father: *But he bore a son, who, when he saw all the sins which his father had done, was afraid and did not do anything like them, he did not eat upon the mountain nor lift his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, he did not violate the wife of his neighbor or trouble the husband, he did not keep surety nor commit robbery, he gave his own bread to the hungry and covered the naked with clothing, turned his hand from the injury of the poor man, did not accept usury and any superabundance, judged my judgments, and walked in my commandments: this man shall not die in the iniquity of his father, but shall live with life. His father, because he falsely accused and did violence against his brother and did evil in the midst of his people, behold he died in his own iniquity. And you say: Why does the son not bear the iniquity of the father? Because his son did judgment and justice, kept all my commandments and carried them out, he shall live in life. Only the soul that has sinned shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son.*⁵³ You also

⁵⁰ Psalm 25:4-5.

⁵¹ Psalm 25:9.

⁵² Ezechiel 18:4.

⁵³ Ezechiel 18:14-20.

should have acted with greater mildness concerning the parents who were captured, i.e. spared their lives out of love for God Who delivered them into your hands. For thus you might be able to say to God without hesitation in the Lord's prayer: *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*. But you also could have saved those who died while fighting, but you did not permit them to live nor did you wish to save them, and in this you clearly did not act advisedly; for it is written: *There shall be judgment without mercy for the person, who does not exercise mercy;*⁵⁴ and through the abovementioned prophet the Lord says: *Is it my will that the wicked man should die, sayeth the Lord God, and not that he may be converted from his ways and may live?*⁵⁵ But because you erred more because of your zeal for the Christian religion and your ignorance than because of any other vice, with subsequent penance seek mercy and indulgence for these sins through the grace of Christ.

Chapter XVIII. You indicate that you wish to know what you should do concerning those who reject the Christian law. In this matter it should be noted that every man, just as he has contracted sin through the fault of another, i.e. Adam, from which he needs purgation through the water of baptism, so, when he comes to profess his faith at the wave of rebirth, he chooses another as a certain kind of father, namely spiritual, by whom, once he has been received, he is instructed, protected with complete protection, and presented again to the rector of the church as if he was some kind of surety. Furthermore, if he has rejected what he promised, he should by all means be recalled by the man who received him and was the mediator of his faith. But if he will not listen to the man whom he himself had offered as surety for himself,⁵⁶ he should be reported to the Church, by which, acting with great zeal, it is fitting that this sheep be led back to its proper flock⁵⁷ and recalled in every way, in order that it may return to the way of truth, which is Christ; moreover, the Church should persuade him like a mother, like a teacher, so that he may see that he has imitated an apostate spirit, about which it is written that it did not stand in truth.⁵⁸ Also consider what Peter, prince of apostles, proclaims, when he says: *But if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and*

⁵⁴ James 2:13.

⁵⁵ Ezechiel 18:23.

⁵⁶ Cf. Matthew 18:12.

⁵⁷ Cf. John 14:6.

⁵⁸ Cf. John 8:44.

overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them, after they came to know them. But it has happened unto them according to the proverb: 'A dog is turned to his own vomit again,' and 'The sow that was washed, wallows in the mire'.⁵⁹ Finally, if he does not heed the Church, let him truly be considered by all to be a heathen, i.e. a gentile, and because of this, he may now be rightly oppressed by the external powers as an outsider. It is also certain that God often arouses the powers against the deniers of Christ, against the desertors of baptism, and therefore let no one be surprised that God incites the powers, in order that these men may bend their necks and return, humiliated, to the Church. For after Hagar had left her mistress, an angel came to her and said to her: "What is this, Hagar servant of Sarah? Return to your mistress." Therefore, whoever is like this, is afflicted for this reason — that he may return. And would that he does return because he shall receive the promised inheritance along with his brothers! Indeed, unless the Christian power were moved against people of this kind, how would they render an account of their rule to God? Certainly it pertains to the Christian kings of the world to want to keep their mother Church, from which they were spiritually born, peaceful and undiminished during their reigns. Even King Nebuchadnezzar, who had erected a statue of himself and had forced all the people to adore it, is read to have said, after being moved by the praises of the three boys who were freed from the fire: And I proclaim a decree among all the tribes and all the tongues in all the land and whoever shall speak any blasphemy against the God of Sidrac, Misac, and Abdenago, shall be destroyed and their houses laid waste.⁶⁰ Hence, if a barbarian king raged so, lest the God of Israel be blasphemed because He could free the three boys from temporal fire, how much more should Christian kings rage, because Christ is denied and mocked, Who liberated not merely three boys but the whole world along with these kings from unending fires! For indeed those who are convicted of lying or being unfaithful to God and Christ, are either never or hardly ever allowed to live by Christian kings: and how could they not be indignant and become enraged, when they see Christ, who is the king of kings and lord of lords,⁶¹ denied and mocked by men and the fidelity, which was promised to Him, not maintained? Let kings act more zealously with the zeal of God,⁶² because they recall

⁵⁹ I Peter 2:20-2.

⁶⁰ Cf. Daniel 3:29.

⁶¹ Cf. 1 Timothy 6:15.

⁶² Cf. I Macchabees 2:54.

that they have been more liberated from hell by Christ than the king, who attended to the three boys snatched from the flames.

Chapter XVIII. What rightly should be done about those who have risen up to kill the king, the venerable laws which we sent to you in writing shall adequately teach you. This matter nevertheless remains within the judgment of the king, who should forgive the sinner not merely once, but seven times seventy times,⁶³ in accordance with what the Lord commanded of Peter in the holy Gospel.⁶⁴ For the person whom one forgives more, loves more, and, as the Gospel teaches: The king would have forgiven his servant a debt of ten thousand talents, i.e. many monstrous sins, if the servant himself had wished to forgive his fellow servant a debt of one hundred denarii, i.e. minor sins.

Chapter XX. What should be adjudged concerning a free man, who shall have slipped from his country in flight, if he is apprehended? Clearly, nothing should be adjudged, except that which the laws decide. Nevertheless, the sacred histories claim that many of the saints departed from their homeland and were venerated more highly in another. Indeed, unless I am mistaken, I have found that, as long as there are no other reasons, they were never culpable for their departure alone, especially since it is said to our father Abraham: *Depart from your country and your kin*,⁶⁵ and some of our forefathers lived for many, many years in a land that was not their own. Moreover, if someone does not dare leave his country, he is not free; and if he is free and rightly is not held to be bound by the bonds of any condition, he is not fleeing but rather leaving his country, just as it is not said to Abraham: "Flee", but rather "Depart from your country";⁶⁶ and because he did this out of obedience, he went forth, with no one assigning any punishment.

Chapter XXI. If a servant leaves in flight from his lord and is captured, he should be forgiven; otherwise let the decrees of the laws not be transgressed in this case. Nevertheless, this saying of the apostle Paul should always be kept before one's eyes, when he said in salubrious admonition: *Lord, give to your servants what is just and equitable, knowing that you are the Lord in heaven*,⁶⁷ and elsewhere, when he ordered

⁶³ Cf. Mt.18:22.

⁶⁴ Cf. Lk. 7:47.

⁶⁵ Gen.12:1.

⁶⁶ Cf. Gen.12:4.

⁶⁷ Col. 4:1.

servants to obey their carnal lords,⁶⁸ he added: ... *knowing that whatever good each one of you does, whether servant or freeman, he seeks this from the Lord. And you, o lords, do likewise, leaving aside threats against them, knowing that their Lord and yours is in heaven, and that there is no acception of persons in the eyes of God.*⁶⁹

Chapter XXII. Concerning those who take flight, when you set out for battle against the enemy, if compassion does not mercifully prevail, at least let the severity of the laws be tempered.

Chapter XXIII. Concerning those who have been ordered to proceed to battle against the enemy and treat the order to prepare [for war] with contempt, we recommend the same things.

Chapter XXIV. What a parricide, i.e. someone who kills his mother or father or even kills his brother or sister, should suffer, the laws indicate. Furthermore, if he flees to a church, we think that you should do whatever the bishop or priest of the place, who has been constituted by God, has provided. Chapter XXV. You claim that it is part of the custom of your country that guards always stand on the alert between your country and the boundaries of others; and if a slave or freeman [manages to] flee somehow through this watch, the guards are killed without hesitation because of this. Now then, you are asking us, what we think about this practice. One should look through the laws concerning this matter. Nevertheless, far be it from your minds that you, who have acknowledged so pious a God and Lord, now judge so harshly, especially since it is more fitting that, just as hitherto you put people to death with ease, so from now on you should lead those whom you can not to death but to life. For the blessed apostle Paul, who was initially an abusive persecutor and breathed threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,⁷⁰ later sought mercy and, converted by a divine revelation, not only did not impose the death penalty on anyone but also wished to be anathema for the brethren⁷¹ and was prepared to spend and be spent most willingly for the souls of the faithful.⁷² In the same way, after you have been called by the election of God and

⁶⁸ Cf. Eph. 6:5.

⁶⁹ Eph. 6:8-9.

⁷⁰ Cf. Acts 9:1.

⁷¹ Cf. Rom. 9:3.

⁷² Cf. II Corinthians 12:15.

illuminated by his light, you should no longer desire deaths but should without hesitation recall everyone to the life of the body as well as the soul, when any opportunity is found.⁷³ And just as Christ led you back from the eternal death in which you were gripped, to eternal life, so you yourself should attempt to save not only the innocent, but also the guilty from the end of death, according to the saying of the most wise Solomon: *Save those, who are led to death; and do not cease freeing those who are brought to their destruction.*⁷⁴

Chapter XXVI. Concerning those who have slaughtered their kinsman, i.e. someone related by blood such as a brother, cousin or grandson, let the venerable laws keep their force. But if they have fled to a church, let them in fact be saved from the laws of death and let them submit without hesitation to the penance that the bishop or priest of the place has decided: *I do not want the death of the sinner, sayeth the Lord, but rather wish that he be converted and live.*⁷⁵

Chapter XXVII. Concerning those, who hand their companion (*socius*) over to death, we think the same thing as above.

Chapter XXVIII. Concerning a man, who has been apprehended with another man's wife, you will find out what should be judged when you have read the laws. But if the adulterer should flee to a church, we think that the bishop should decide whatever it is clear the sacred canons have defined or the holy bishops of the apostolic see have established.

Chapter XXVIII. We also judge likewise concerning the man, who has intercourse with a female relative of his own blood. But truly we would direct the leprosy of so great a crime as this to the consideration and judgment of a priest (*sacerdos*).

Chapter XXX. Concerning a person who has involuntarily killed someone, we have decreed what the sacred rules establish and it is fitting that the bishop, who has been placed with you, always have these rules with him in his hands.

Chapter XXXI. Concerning animal thieves, let the provisions of the laws, if not mercy,

⁷³ Cf. Rom. 7:6.

⁷⁴ Proverbs 24:11.

⁷⁵ Ezechiel 33:11.

be preserved.

Chapter XXXII. We allow the same with regard to those who have kidnapped (*rapuerint*) a man or a woman.

Chapter XXXIII. You indicated that hitherto, when you used to go into battle, you have carried the tail of a horse as your military emblem, and you ask what you should now carry in its place. What else, of course, but the sign of the cross? For it is the sign with which Moses divided the sea and killed Amalec, with which Gideon conquered the Madianites, and Christ our Lord not only conquered but also prostrated the devil, who held power over death. This is the sign which we carry on our foreheads and with it we are protected from all enemies and fortified against all attacks. This is the sign of the faith and the devil's great terror, which Christian princes use in their times of need and with which kings following the truth religion often achieve celebrated triumphs over their enemies with Christ's aid. But that you may know more plainly why it is more fitting that you should carry the sign of the cross as your military sign instead of that horse's tail as you go forth in battle formation, we think that there are a few things to remember about the actions of Constantine, who was the most pious emperor of the Romans and the most famous of all propagators of Christianity. Indeed, *when he led his army against Maxentius, the tyrant of Rome — in fact, even then he was a supporter of the Christian religion, though he had not yet received the sign of the Lord's passion, as it is a solemn ritual to be initiated into our religion — in any event, as he made his journey, while turning over many matters concerning the demands of impending battle in his mind, he often turned his eyes to heaven and thence besought divine aid. And through his weariness he sees in the eastern part of the sky the sign of the cross shining with fiery brilliance. And although he was terrified by so great a vision and disturbed by its new appearance, he sees angels standing there saying: Constantine, in this sign conquer. Thereby rendered happy and sure about the victory, he marks the sign of the cross, which he had seen in the sky, on his forehead and marks this onto military standards, and adapts the labarum, as they call it, into the shape of the Lord's cross. Thus provided with the armed standards of religion, he sets forth against the arms of the impious and without slaughtering the Roman people, just as he prayed to God, he miraculously triumphed over the tyrant Maxentius who drowned in the river.*⁷⁶

Chapter XXXIV. You also asked, if, when a messenger arrives, you should set off immediately in order to get to the fighting or whether there are any days when it is not fitting to go forth into battle. On this matter we answer: there is no day which should

⁷⁶ Rufinus, The Ecclesiastical History IX, 9.

be kept completely free from beginning or carrying out any kind of business, except (if too great a necessity does not compel you) the most celebrated days mentioned above, which are venerated by all Christians. But this is not because it is forbidden to do such a thing on these days. For our hope should be placed not in days nor determined by days, but all salvation should be expected absolutely from the true and living God alone. Rather it is because on these days, if the necessity is not unavoidable, one should spend time in prayer and the mysteries of so great a festival should be attended more zealously than usual; for when the Hebrews refused to bear arms against their enemies on the day of the Sabbath, because they were observing the former Sabbath and omnipotent God wished to show them that hope and strength were not to be located in themselves alone and in the observance of days, one thousand of their men were killed, so that the survivors, having been led to penance, would say to each other: *If we do all things just as our brothers have done, and we do not fight against the nations for our souls and our justifications, they shall quickly drive us from the land.*⁷⁷

Chapter XXXV. You say that when you went forth into battle, you used to watch the days and hours and perform incantations, games, songs and some auguries, and you wish to be instructed on what you should do now. Regarding this matter, we would of course instruct you, if we did not think that you have been divinely instructed on this matter; for atop the divine foundation, we cannot build anything. Therefore, when you decide to go forth into battle, do not fail to do what you yourselves have recalled, i.e. go to the churches, carry out prayers, forgive sinners, be present at the solemnities of the Mass, offer oblations, make a confession of your sins to the priests, receive the reconciliation and communion, open the jails, loose the fetters and grant liberty to servants and especially to those who are broken and weak and captives, and distribute alms to the needy, so that you may fulfill what the Apostle admonishes when he says: *Do everything, whether it be in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*⁷⁸ For the things which you mentioned, that is, the observations of days and hours, the incantations, the games, iniquitous songs, and auguries are the pomp and workings of the devil, which you already renounced, thank God, in baptism and you cast off all these things completely along with the old man and his actions, when you put on the new.

Chapter XXXVI. Regarding whether it is licit to walk or proceed to war on Sunday or

⁷⁷ I Maccabees 2:40.

⁷⁸ Colossians 3:17.

on the other feast days, when necessity calls, you can note our view in chapter thirty-four of these responses.

Chapter XXXVII. Just as you asked, we have gladly given you the books that we think you need at present, and we desire to loan you many more through God's largess.

Chapter XXXVIII. You say that when you are in camp, you are unable to perform fitting and perfect prayers, and because of this you wish us to explain what you should do. Yet we would argue that, however much more the enemies rage and necessity and tribulation lay heavy upon you, so much the more readily should you devote your energy to prayer. For our fathers were victors more by praying than by fighting and gained what they prayed for more by entreaties than by battles. For example, Moses prayed and Joshua fought, but the former conquered more by praying than the latter did by fighting. It is therefore more fitting that one should cease from arms than from prayer.

Chapter XXXVIII. You asked about the consanguinity of the generations, so that you may clearly know which women you should marry. We have, however, already recalled what the laws allow on this matter but consider it worthwhile to recall it again in summary fashion. They say in fact: *We cannot marry any and every women. Some unions have to be avoided. Marriage cannot be contracted between people in the relation of parent and child, such as father and daughter or grandfather and granddaughter, or mother and son or grandmother and grandson and so on up and down the line. A similar but less stringent regime applies to collaterals.*⁷⁹ But we shall leave what the sacred canons and especially the decrees of the highest bishop Zacharias proclaim on this matter, for your bishop to explain to you.

Chapter XL. You say that it is a custom of your country that, before you set out for battle, a most faithful and prudent man is sent by your lordship, who inspects all the arms, horses, and things which are necessary for battle; and if, at someone's home, they are found to have been readied in a useless fashion, that person receives capital punishment: now you wish to know what we think should be done in this case. Truly we encourage you to turn all this [attention] to the arming of your spiritual weaponry and we advise you to incline the rigor of such great severity to the exercise of piety. For just as the preparation of arms and horses was hitherto investigated as to whether they were well suited to oppose the visible enemy, so now you should zealously inquire as to

⁷⁹ Justinian, *Institutes*, I, 10, 1-2.

whether each person possesses their spiritual arms, i.e. good works, in readiness *against the princes and the powers, against the worldly rulers of these shadows, against the spirits of iniquity in heaven.*⁸⁰ Finally, the horse is understood as the soul, obviously because just as a man is carried by his horse, so he is ruled by his soul; clearly then, whoever does not have their arms prepared against the enemy, perishes, because, as is written, "Cursed be the man, who does the work of God with neglect."⁸¹ Concerning a horse which hasn't been trained in its spirit, it is well said by the Psalmist: *A man cannot trust his horse to save him, nor can it deliver him for all its strength.*⁸² When he is prepared, in contrast, it is said: *The horse may be ready for the day of battle; but the Lord give the safety.*⁸³ And so, what you have hitherto observed carnally and the arms which you have cruelly exacted from poor men who perhaps were not able to prepare them, now venerate spiritually and exhort great and small to prepare them piously and spiritually.

Chapter XLI. Concerning those who refuse to receive the good of Christianity and sacrifice and bend their knees to idols, we can write nothing else to you than that you move them towards the right faith by warnings, exhortations, and reason rather than by force, proving that what they know in vain, is wrong:⁸⁴ namely that, although they are people with capable intellects, they nevertheless adore works of their own hands and senseless elements, or rather they bow their necks and sacrifice to demons. For as the apostle teaches: *We know that an idol is nothing, but whatever the nations sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons.*⁸⁵ But if they do not listen to you, you should neither take food nor have any communion at all with them, but rather remove them from your service and friendship (*familiaritas*) as if they were foreign and polluted, in order that, once pierced by such confusion, they may be converted with God's inspiration to Him Who is the true and not the false God, creator and not created, unmade but maker of all. For as the Lord commanded, the Christian should not only not take the food, but [should also shake] the dust from his feet from the house of someone who does not believe,⁸⁶ so

⁸⁰ Ephesians 6:12.

⁸¹ Jeremiah 48:10.

⁸² Psalm 32:17.

⁸³ Proverbs 22:31.

⁸⁴ Cf. Jeremiah 1:16.

⁸⁵ I Corinthians 8:4; 10:20.

⁸⁶ Cf. Matthew 10:14.

much so that the disciples, who were unaware of what had happened, bore it very badly when their leader Peter approached Cornelius, whom he had, at God's command, made the first Christian from among the gentiles.⁸⁷ Therefore, no communion should be shared with those who do not believe and who adore idols. Yet, violence should by no means be inflicted upon them to make them believe. For everything which is not voluntary, cannot be good; for it is written: *Willingly shall I sacrifice to you,*⁸⁸ and again: *Make all the commands of my mouth your will,*⁸⁹ and again, *And by my own will I shall confess to Him.*⁹⁰ Indeed, God commands that willing service be performed only by the willing. But if you ask about what should be judged concerning perfidious persons of this sort, listen to the apostle Paul who, when he wrote to the Corinthians, says: *Why indeed is it my business to judge concerning those who are outside? Do you not judge concerning those who are inside? God will judge those who are outside. Remove the evil from yourselves.*⁹¹ It is as if he said: Concerning those who are outside our religion, I shall judge nothing, but I shall save them for the judgment of God, Who is going to judge all flesh. Nevertheless, remove the evil from yourselves, lest, while it remains with you, it creep along like a cancer⁹² and lest, when it sees the faithful communicating with it, it think that they also commune with its vanity and consequently consider its sect truer and more holy than our religion. Therefore, for the sake of one's conscience, communion with those who worship idols should be greatly avoided in every way; for he who communicates with idolaters, appears to communicate with the idols, nay the demons themselves. *All the gods of the nations are demons,*⁹³ and the Apostle says: *Whatever the nations sacrifice, they sacrifice it to demons and not to God,* and adds, *I do not want you to become friends of demons.*⁹⁴

Chapter XLII. You state that when your king sits down in his throne (sedilis) at the

⁸⁷ Cf. Acts 10; 11:2-3.

⁸⁸ Psalm 53:8.

⁸⁹ Palm 118:108.

⁹⁰ Psalm 27:7.

⁹¹ I Corinthians 5:12-13.

⁹² Cf. I Timothy 11:29.

⁹³ Psalm 95:5.

⁹⁴ I Corinthians 10:20.

table to eat, no one, not even his wife, may recline with him; rather you sit far away on stools and eat on the ground; hence, you desire to know what we command you to do regarding this. Therefore, because what is done is not against the faith — though it goes very much against good behavior — we exhort you, not so much commanding as persuading, that you pay attention to those who observe the Christian religion as leaders and after considering the evidence of their humility, cast aside everything superfluous which has no use; for they have read in the Gospel the Lord saying, *Learn from me, because I am meek and humble in heart, and you shall find rest in your souls.*⁹⁵ For the ancient kings, many of whom merited the company of the saints and therefore they were truly called kings because they were found to be saints, are remembered to have lived together with their friends, indeed their servants; indeed, the King of kings and the Lord of lords Himself is described not only as having reclined with servants and his friends,⁹⁶ that is, the apostles, but also as having reclined and eaten with publicans and sinners.⁹⁷

Chapter XLIII. Regarding which animals or birds it is permitted to eat, as far as I am concerned, the Lord shows this plainly when, after the Flood, He gave all the animals to be eaten by Noah and his children, saying: *All the fish of the sea have been given into your hands. And everything which moves and lives, shall be for you as food like the oil of the vine;*⁹⁸ and when all the animals had been divinely shown to Peter upon that dish (although this should be understood to have a higher meaning), it is said: *Kill and eat.*⁹⁹ Thus, every animal whose food is shown not to be harmful to the body and human society admits as food, is not forbidden to be eaten; for as the holy and most articulate teacher Augustine writes: *As for eating animals that die of themselves, the custom of men does not allow it because the flesh, not of animals that have been killed but of those which have died of themselves is diseased and not fit for the health of the body, for the sake of which we consume food.*¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the Lord Himself destroyed the opinion of those who claim that there is something unclean in food, when he said: *It is not what enters the mouth which pollutes*

⁹⁵ Mt.11:29.

⁹⁶ Cf. 1 Tim.6:15.

⁹⁷ Cf. Mt.9:10-11.

⁹⁸ Genesis 9:2-3.

⁹⁹ Acts 10:13.

¹⁰⁰ Augustine, Against Faustus XXXII, c.13.

a person, but rather it is that which proceeds from his mouth, that pollutes him;¹⁰¹ and it is said divinely to the apostle Peter: *What God has sanctified, do not call common,*¹⁰² i.e. unclean; and his fellow apostle Paul writes, saying: *All things are clean to the clean, but nothing is clean to the polluted and the unfaithful.*¹⁰³ Nonetheless, lest someone wish to demonstrate on the basis of the Old Testament that certain animals are prohibited and to coerce you away from eating them, it should be noted that the pig is among those things which were prohibited. Concerning this prohibition the aforementioned saint Augustine, although remaining silent for the time being concerning the others, recalls this animal when he writes, saying: *When someone asks why these statements, in which the Apostle says: "All things are clean to the clean, etc." (Tit.1:15) and: "All God's creation is good" are not contrary to the Old Testament where certain types of meat are prohibited, they should recognize, if they can, that the Apostle was speaking about the natures of things, while the letter told them [the Jews] — because of certain prefigurations appropriate to that time — that certain animals were unclean not by nature, but by signification. So, for the sake of example, if one asks about the pig or the lamb, both are clean by nature, because "All of God's creation is good" (I Tim.4:4); but by a certain signification, the lamb is clean, the pig is unclean. It is as if you said "fool" and "wise." Clearly both of these words are clean in the nature of the utterance, letters, and syllables; on this we are agreed; but in terms of their signification, one of these words, which is called "fool", can be said to be unclean, not because of its nature, but because it signifies something unclean. And perhaps a pig is among the figures of reality what a fool is in reality; and both that animal and these two syllables, which are pronounced "stult-us" (fool), signify one and the same thing. Indeed, the pig has been classified as unclean in the law because it does not ruminate; but this is not its vice, but its nature. But the men who are signified by this animal, are unclean by their own vice, not by their nature; for although they willingly listen to the words of wisdom, afterwards they do not think about them at all. To summon up, in the sweetness of recollection, something useful you have heard from the intestine of your memory to the mouth of your thought — what else is this than to ruminate spiritually in a certain way? Those who do not do this, are figured in the type of those animals; as a result, the very abstinence from such meats warns us to beware of such a vice. For in another passage, it is written concerning this cleanness of ruminating as follows: "The desirable treasure rests in the mouth of the wise man, the fool gobbles it down." (Prov.21:20) These similarities of things in their expressions and in their observable figures move rational minds gently and usefully. But many*

¹⁰¹ Matthew 15:11.

¹⁰² Acts 10:15.

¹⁰³ Titus 1:15.

*such things are ordered not only to be heard by the former people, but also observed. For there was a time, in which it was necessary to prophesy the things which were to be revealed at a later time, not only in words but also in deeds. But when these things were revealed through Christ and in Christ, the burdens of observation were not imposed upon the religion of the gentiles, though the authority of the prophecy was commended.*¹⁰⁴

Chapter XLIV. No rationale permits hunting during Lent; for hunters capture nothing but meat. Therefore, lest you be seen to follow anything carnal, you should appropriately abstain from the flesh of captured beasts especially during Lent. For however much you attend more closely to the divine services in a time of fasting, by so much should you move farther away from all the harmful delights of the world, especially since sacred history shows that no one but the reprobate participate in hunts.

Chapter XLV. You wish to know from us whether or not judgments should be carried out or anyone sentenced to death during Lent. In this matter, know that we say the same thing to this question about Lent as we are known to have already responded concerning fast days in a chapter of these responses of ours.¹⁰⁵

Chapter XLVI. Now then, it should not be necessary to explain to you whether, if some necessity demands it or if no necessity demands it, it is permitted to go to war during Lent, since you can now gather for yourselves what is appropriate for you to do from the answers to the previous question even if we say nothing. Certainly the struggles of battles and wars as well as the beginning of every quarrel are revealed by the fraud of the diabolic art, and the person who is desirous of expanding his kingdom and the lover of anger or envy or some other vice is proven to concentrate and take delight in these things alone. Therefore, if no necessity compels you, you should abstain from battles not only during Lent, but at all times. But if some unavoidable event drives you, you should without hesitation spare no preparation for war in defense of not only yourself but also your country and the laws of your fathers, lest man seem to tempt God, if he has the wherewithal and does not take care to take counsel for his own safety and the safety of others and does not take precautions against damage to the holy religion.¹⁰⁶ In the end, the walls of Jericho were knocked to the ground when the sons of Israel, who had already accepted that the Sabbath was to be observed, surrounded the city even on

¹⁰⁴ Augustine, Against Faustus VI, c.7.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Chapter XXXIV.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Deuteronomy 6:16.

the Sabbath and the trumpets blew.¹⁰⁷

Chapter XLVII. You ask whether it is permitted to play games during Lent. This is not permitted to Christians not only during Lent but also at any other time. But because we cannot yet persuade you to abstain from games at all times, since you, weak as you are, cannot yet ascend to the mountain to receive the highest commandments of God but are located in the plains like the former children of Israel¹⁰⁸ so that you can at least receive some of the simple and lesser commands, you should at least spend more time more intent upon prayer, abstinence and every kind of penance during Lent and at times of fasting, as we have explained at length above, and stay away from games, empty conversation, scurrility, and idle chatter, which do not belong to the occasion. For as the Lord says in the Gospel: *What men have said, let them render an account for it;*¹⁰⁹ and if for the idle word, so much the more for the harmful or criminal word! Therefore, do not let the vanity of any pleasure or game be able to seduce you, especially in a time of fasting; for lamentations do not accord with games, and a false, deceptive happiness cannot produce real tears in your neighbor. Furthermore, there is the judge who says: *Woe unto you, who laugh now, because you shall moan and weep;*¹¹⁰ on this Solomon says: *Laughter shall be mixed with sorrow and sadness sits at the end of joy;*¹¹¹ and he again says: *I thought laughter an error and I said to joy: Why do you deceive in vain?*¹¹² On this he again says: *The heart of the wise, there is sadness, and the heart of fools, there is happiness;*¹¹³ for the sacrifice which is pleasing to God is affliction against sin, as the Psalmist attests, who says: *The contrite spirit is a sacrifice to God.*¹¹⁴

Chapter XLVIII. Consequently we judge that one can in no way take a wife nor hold celebrations during Lent. But you may know what the sacred canons says about this,

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Joshua 6:20.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Exodus 19:12.

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 12:36.

¹¹⁰ Luke 6:25.

¹¹¹ Proverbs 14:13.

¹¹² Ecclesiastes 2:2.

¹¹³ Ecclesiastes 7:5.

¹¹⁴ Psalm 50:19.

when your bishop teaches you.

Chapter XLVIII. Furthermore, you ask whether you are permitted to show your wives gold, silver, cattle, horses, etc. before [the marriage] since it is for the dowry. Because it is no sin and the laws do not prohibit it, we, too, do not forbid it to happen; and not only this, but whatever else you did before baptism, you are completely allowed to do now. *For we know that Peter was a fisherman, and Matthew a tax-gatherer, after their conversion Peter returned to fishing, but Matthew did not go back to the business of tax-gathering, since it is one thing to seek sustenance through fishing, it is another to increase wealth through the gains from tax-gathering. For there are some businesses which can be performed without sin scarcely or not at all. Therefore to those alone, which implicate one in sin, is it necessary that after conversion, the mind not return. But whatever someone did without sin before conversion, it is no fault to do this again after conversion.*¹¹⁵

Chapter L. What should be judged concerning the man who has intercourse with his wife during Lent, we entrust to be considered and defined by the judgment of your bishop or the priest who is constituted by him, since they can know the behavior of individuals and shall have to decide or moderate the cases of each one of you after weighing the persons and the circumstances. Finally, it would be completely licit for a man to sleep with his wife without contamination, if fire and chaff could have communion without harm or if the tricks of diabolic fraud were unknown. For wherever a man lives together with a woman, it is difficult for the treachery of the ancient enemy not to be present, treachery which, of course, was not absent from the place where a brother and a sister, namely Ammon and Tamar, lived alone together for the briefest of times.¹¹⁶

Chapter LI. You ask if you are permitted to have two wives at the same time; and if this is not permitted, you wish to know what the person in this situation should do at this point. Neither the origin of the human condition nor any Christian law allows a man to have two wives at the same time. For God, Who made the human being, made one male from the beginning and only one female. Obviously, He could have given him two wives if He had wished, but He did not wish it; indeed, it is written: *Because of this, a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife.*¹¹⁷ He did not say: to his wives.

¹¹⁵ Gregory I, Homily XXIV on the Gospels.

¹¹⁶ Cf. II Samuel 13:8-14, where Ammon orders the other persons in his house out and then proceeds to sleep with Tamar.

¹¹⁷ Genesis 2:24.

Or again: *There shall be two, namely male and female, in one flesh*, and not: three or more. And so, in whosever household two wives are found at the same time, that man shall be forced to send away the later wife, while keeping the earlier. Furthermore, he shall be compelled to accept the penance which the priest of the place provides. For this is so inhuman a sin, that the sin of murder, which Cain committed against Abel his brother, was avenged by the Flood in the seventh generation, but the sin of adultery, which Lamech first perpetrated on two wives,¹¹⁸ was not wiped clean except with the blood of Christ, who came into the world in the seventy-seventh generation according to the gospel of Luke.¹¹⁹

Chapter LII. If you wish to know what you should judge concerning those who make someone into a eunuch, turn the pages of the laws.

Chapter LIII. You ask if you are allowed to place the standard of the holy cross over a table and to eat at a table, from which a priest or deacon is absent. You are undoubtedly permitted to do this, for all of us are allowed to protect our things from the plots of the devil with this sign and to emerge triumphant in the name of Christ from all his attacks. It remains only to say that when a more powerful man is present, an inferior should not dare to arrogate this to himself, unless ordered to do so, because *the disciple is not above the master*¹²⁰ and again the Apostle commands, saying: *In honor, preferring one another*.¹²¹

Chapter LIIII. You say that the Greeks claim that whoever stands in church without his hands bound to his chest incurs the gravest of sin. Yet, unless we are mistaken, we find that this command has never been issued, and therefore, if it is not done, there is no sin, unless perchance the person adamantly refuses to do what he sees everyone else doing. For certain people do one thing, others do another, now these people show forth this kind of humility, now they show that kind. But this and many other things are done in different places as a sign of humility, and when this is done, it is not done except for the sake of humility, and truly it is written: *The prayer of those who humble themselves shall*

¹¹⁸ Cf. Genesis 4:19-24.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Luke 3:23-38.

¹²⁰ Matthew 10:24.

¹²¹ Romans 12:10.

*penetrate the clouds;*¹²² consequently, neither this nor any other act of humility a person can think up should be reproached, since according to the Gospel, *he who humbles himself, shall be exalted.*¹²³ For if, when someone comes before a mortal prince, he stands, speaks, and approaches with complete reverence and fear, how much more fitting is it that the person who comes before God, Who is eternal, terrible, and all high, not only stand in complete fear and trembling but also present himself humbly like a servant in His sight; and because in the Gospel, the hands and feet of certain reprobates are ordered to be bound,¹²⁴ what else do these people do, who bind their hands before the Lord, except say to God in a particular way: "Lord, do not order my hands to be bound, that I be cast into the outer darkness, because I have already bound them and behold, I am prepared for my beating? This is why we, too, beat our breasts, namely to indicate whatever we have iniquitously done to displease ourselves and God, we smite this in ourselves before God smites us, and we punish what has been committed with worthy penance, before the last punishment comes.

Chapter LV. Now then, as for your assertion that the Greeks forbid you to receive communion without belts, we have no idea with what witnesses from sacred Scripture they are shown to have rightly forbidden this, unless perhaps by the one in which the Lord commands, saying: *Let your loins be girded.*¹²⁵ But it is fitting *that this testimony of the holy gospel be fulfilled not through the letter, but through the spirit. For if it was commanded in order that it would be kept in that way, why are things which follow not equally done, that they be like "burning lights", and, as is commanded to those eating lamb, that they hold a staff in their hands?*¹²⁶ *For these things have their own mystery and are clear to those who understand them in such a way that they are preserved more in the meaning which befits them. For in the girding of the loins, chastity is indicated; in the staff, pastoral rule; in the burning lights, the splendor of good works, about which it is said: Let your works shine forth.*¹²⁷ Therefore we should lead the rustic minds of the faithful to such things," as the holy and excellent defender of the church Pope Celestine writes, whose words we have changed to summarize

¹²² Ecclesiasticus 35:21.

¹²³ Luke 18:14.

¹²⁴ Cf. Matthew 22:13.

¹²⁵ Luke 12:35.

¹²⁶ Cf. Exodus 12:11.

¹²⁷ Matthew 5:16.

them; for they should be taught rather than played with, and the commandments should not be imposed on their eyes but rather infused into their minds.¹²⁸

Chapter LVI. You say that you wish to know, if in a time of drought you are allowed to command all of your people to pray and fast to summon the rain. Of course you are allowed to do this, because prayer and fasting are great virtues, and your exhortation has a great effect by having these performed constantly. It is more fitting, however, if these things are done by the decision of the bishops, for they are the ones who receive the power of binding and loosing, and it is at the sound of their voice that the camps of the people of God are moved and come to rest; without them, you will seem to be without a head and will proceed like wandering sheep who do not have a pastor. Indeed, in such matters, in ancient times, the decree and every ordination of the priests went first (a practice which the holy Church also keeps today) and then the assent of the rest of the people followed; consequently, the outcome of the wish was granted, while due order was maintained and unanimity preserved by God's gift.

Chapter LVII. You claim that the Greeks forbid eunuchs to kill your animals, so that they declare that anyone who has eaten from animals killed by them has committed a grave sin. This sounds truly strange and silly to us. But since we have not heard the reasoning of those who say these things, we are unable to decide anything definitively regarding their assertion, since it is not yet fully known. Nevertheless, we do know one thing, and that is that if eunuchs keep God's commandments, the cutting off of one of their members can offer no obstacle to their receiving the celestial kingdom, since, according to the Apostle, in the resurrection we shall all be present as a perfect man,¹²⁹ and through the prophet the Lord promises some happy things to eunuchs, if they observe His commandments.¹³⁰ Indeed, even that eunuch Ethiops is called a man by the holy evangelist Luke because of his strength and integrity, when he says: *And behold, the man Ethiops, the powerful eunuch of Queen Candace.*¹³¹

Chapter LVIII. As to whether a woman should stand in the church with her head veiled or unveiled, the Apostle teaches: *If a woman prays or prophesies without her head veiled, she*

¹²⁸ In Epist. to the bishops of Gaul, c.1.

¹²⁹ Cf. Ephesians 4:13.

¹³⁰ Cf. Isaiah 56:4-5.

¹³¹ Acts 8:27.

*brings shame upon her own head; indeed, it is the same as if she is bald. For if a woman is not veiled, she might as well have her hair cut off. But if it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cropped or made bald, let her veil her head;*¹³² *and again he says: Hence a woman should have a veil over her head because of the angels,*¹³³ *i.e. the priests; and once again he says: Judge for yourselves: Is it fitting for an unveiled woman to pray to God? Doesn't nature itself teach you that if a man tends his hair, it is to his shame; but if a woman tends her hair, it is to her glory, since her hair has been give to her as a veil.*¹³⁴

Chapter LVIII. We consider what you asked about pants (*femoralia*) to be irrelevant; for we do not wish the exterior style of your clothing to be changed, but rather the behavior of the inner man within you, nor do we desire to know what you are wearing except Christ — for however many of you have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ¹³⁵ — but rather how you are progressing in faith and good works. But since you ask concerning these matters in your simplicity, namely because you were afraid lest it be held against you as a sin, if you diverge in the slightest way from the custom of other Christians, and lest we seem to take anything away from your desire, we declare that in our books, pants (*femoralia*) are ordered to be made, not in order that women may use them, but that men may. But act now so that, just as you passed from the old to the new man,¹³⁶ you pass from your prior custom to ours in all things; but really do what you please. For whether you or your women wear or do not wear pants (*femoralia*) neither impedes your salvation nor leads to any increase of your virtue. Of course, because we have said that pants are ordered to be made, it should be noted that we put on pants spiritually, when we restrain the lust of the flesh through abstinence; for those places are constrained by pants in which the seats of luxury are known to be. This is why the first humans, when they felt illicit motions in their members after sin, ran into the leaves of a fig tree and wove loin cloths for themselves.¹³⁷ But these are spiritual pants, which you still could not bear, and, if I may speak with the Apostle, *you are not yet able; for you are still carnal.*¹³⁸ And thus we have said a very few things on this matter,

¹³² I Corinthians 11:5-6.

¹³³ I Corinthians 11:10.

¹³⁴ I Corinthians 11:13-15.

¹³⁵ Galatians 3:27.

¹³⁶ Cf. Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10.

¹³⁷ Cf. Genesis 3:7.

although, with God's gift, we could say many more.

Chapter LX. To you, who are asking if it is permitted to eat a very little bit despite the time of fasting, we respond that we neither recollect nor find in any monuments that any of our fathers has eaten before the third hour of the day nor that the holy Church has received any tradition of taking food before this hour. On the contrary, we find some of them fast until evening, others until the ninth hour of the day, still others until the sixth hour, but we have found no one who took any food in the morning, since we read instead that "Woe" was said to those who eat in the morning. Therefore, desiring that you be not subject to this curse, we exhort you to consume no corporeal food at all before the third hour of the day even on the noteworthy festivals; for what festival can be more sublime than Pentecost, on which the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and thereby men merited to receive the Lord in themselves? Of course, on this day the holy apostles along with some others are found to have been fasting at the third hour of the day, since to those hearing and wondering at the apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in the tongues of all the nations, and those saying falsely that those present were filled with new wine, Peter, prince of apostles, responded, saying: *They are, in fact, not drunk, as you think, since it is the third hour of the day.*¹³⁹ Here it should be noted that not only the apostles but all who was there with them, i.e. one hundred and twenty men, upon whom the Holy Spirit descended, are found to be fasting at the third hour. It should also be noted that the blessed Peter did not simply say: *They are not drunk, as you think*, but added: *since it is the third hour*, as if he was clearly saying: "You yourselves clearly know that it is not customary for them to stop fasting before the third hour; therefore you vainly suppose that they are drunk." Imitate them, so that the Holy Spirit, upon finding you fasting at the third hour of the day, if not later, may also fill you with the inspiration of his grace, just as it filled them.

Chapter LXI. You also indicate that you wish to know how many times a day a lay person should pray. In this matter, it is appropriate for you to know that no one has been excepted from what the Lord says in the Gospel: *It is proper to pray always and never fail,*¹⁴⁰ and the Apostle says: *Pray without ceasing,*¹⁴¹ a statement which, as the

¹³⁸ I Corinthians 3:2.

¹³⁹ Acts 2:13.

¹⁴⁰ Luke 18:1.

¹⁴¹ I Thessalonians 5:17.

aforementioned St. Augustine teaches most clearly, is understood thus, namely that on no day should certain times of prayer be passed by. But what these certain times of prayer are, which should be not skipped on any day, seek and you shall find.

Chapter LXII. You say that a stone was found among you before you had accepted Christianity, and if someone took some of this rock on account of some illness, it used sometimes to offer a remedy to his body, but at other time to remain without benefit. But surely this is certain to happen even to those who never consume some of that stone, namely that some will in fact receive the remedy of health from their illness, while others waste away in theirs. Therefore, when you ask whether this should be done or rejected from now on, we respond and judge that every use of this rock should be completely forbidden and refuted in every way as the tinder of error; and that the hope of all human salvation be placed upon that one stone alone, our Lord Jesus Christ, *whom the builders rejected, and who has become the cornerstone,*¹⁴² and that the remedy for recovering our strength be expected from the strongest of all. The first of the apostles, the most blessed Peter, exhorts you through his letter to approach Him and place all your trust in Him, when he says: *Approach that living stone, rejected to be sure by men, but elected and honored by God, and you yourselves shall be built as living stones into a spiritual house.*¹⁴³

Chapter LXIII. You also ask if a husband is permitted to have intercourse or sleep with his wife in the daytime or night time on Sunday. To this we respond that if one should cease from all worldly labor on Sunday, as we taught above,¹⁴⁴ how much more should one beware of carnal pleasure and every sort of bodily pollution, especially since the name "the Lord's day" shows clearly that the Christian should do nothing on this day except what is the Lord's. Furthermore, the same thing goes for the night time on Sunday as was judged concerning the daytime. For it is one day, which consists in day period and night period, having twenty-four hours. For unless a day existed as much in the absence as the presence of the sun, Scripture would never have said: *Night and morning happened, one day.*¹⁴⁵ Now then, as to whether one should just sleep with one's own wife at this time, we have already intimated in summary form what we think in chapter fifty of these responses. *Finally, if I may use the words of the Apostle, I say this*

¹⁴² Matthew 21:42.

¹⁴³ I Peter 2:4-5.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Chapter X.

¹⁴⁵ Genesis 1:5.

*for your own good, not in order to lead you towards a trap, but towards what is honorable and offers you the capacity to beseech the Lord without impediment.*¹⁴⁶

Chapter LXVIII. For how many days after a woman gives birth to a child a man should abstain from her, is stated not by our opinions but in the words of the Roman Pope and apostle of the English nation, Gregory of blessed memory, who, when he writes to Bishop Augustine, whom he had sent to Saxony, says among other things: *A woman's husband should not approach to lie with her until the infants, to whom she has given birth, have been weaned. But a depraved custom has arisen in the behavior of married people, that women despise nursing the children whom they have born and hand them over to be nursed by other women; and this seems to have happened solely because of incontinence, since those who refuse to restrain themselves, despise nursing those to whom they have given birth.*¹⁴⁷

Chapter LXV. Now then, no one is rightly permitted to receive the communion of Christ, if he is not found to be fasting, since he is so given over to gluttony that, thinking little of the mystical table, he seems to break the fast by eating the food of laymen first. Furthermore, because he does not distinguish the venerable body and precious blood of Christ from the rest of the food, he is known to place them not ahead of every human meal but rather behind. Indeed, the body of Christ is the health-bringing remedy against sin, and he who does not consume it with veneration before all other eating, does not desire to be healed but rather weakened. And certainly we see doctors everyday drinking their potions on an empty stomach; and if this is done for the health of the body, how much more should it be performed for the salvation of the soul. Now then, no rule teaches why a person whose blood flows from their nostrils or mouth should not receive the body and blood of Christ. For the fact that someone suffers something involuntarily, should not be considered their fault, and therefore he should not be prevented from sharing in so great a remedy; for we know that when a woman who was suffering from a flow of blood, humbly came up behind the Lord and touched the edge of his clothing, the infirmity immediately departed from the woman.¹⁴⁸ Thus, if this woman, who was placed amidst a flow of blood, is not judged unworthy of touching the Lord's clothing, nay the Lord Himself, for He Himself said: *Someone touched me*, why is someone who sustains a flow of blood from the mouth or nostrils not permitted to receive the health-bringing sacraments of Christ.

¹⁴⁶ I Corinthians 7:35.

¹⁴⁷ Gregory I, Register XI.56, c.8.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Matthew 9:20-22; Luke 8:41, 44.

Chapter LXVI. You claim that the Greeks forbid you to enter the church with the linen turban that you wear on your head. We, too, forbid this, though perhaps not for the same reason; for the oft-remembered and often to be remembered apostle Paul says: *Every man who prays or prophesies with his head veiled, dishonors his own head,*¹⁴⁹ and again: *A man should not veil his head, because he is the image and glory of God.*¹⁵⁰ Now then, what is said concerning the veil, we think should also be observed concerning a quantity of wrapping.

Chapter LXVII. You say that you had a custom that whenever you decided to oblige someone for some matter by swearing an oath, you brought a sword into the center of the gathering and swore an oath by it. Now however, you ask to be instructed by us on what thing you should swear by. We, however, consider it completely unfitting to swear not only by a sword but by any other man-made object. For by whomever someone swears, so, too, does he love and venerate this person and commends his trust to him with firm stability. Therefore, one should swear by God, Whom people should love and venerate, in Whom all hope and trust should be placed, and from Whom all creatures should always expect aid. For when the Lord commands someone not to swear by heaven, earth, one's head or Jerusalem, nothing else is forbidden except to swear by something created.¹⁵¹ But that we are ordered to swear by the name of God, we learn from Him teaching us. Clearly we can swear at least by those created things which have been assigned to the divine cult, i.e. the temple and the altar, and someone who swears upon them, also swears upon the very people who live in them, if there are any such things there. Therefore, one should rightly swear by the Gospel, for whatever is contained therein is clearly recognized to be no one's if not God's, Who is written and read to be in it. This, indeed, is our law, this our testament, which the Lord our savior, bearer of the law and maker of the will, has assigned to His elect, and if we love it, we also swear by it; for everyone who speaks the truth swears by the one whom he loves. Therefore, if we swear by the Gospel, we are proven to love both the testator and the testament itself and we indicate beyond all doubt that we do not wish to depart from His commandments.

Chapter LXVIII. You desire to know how many days must pass after a woman has

¹⁴⁹ I Corinthians 11:4.

¹⁵⁰ I Corinthians 11:7.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Matthew 5:34-36.

given birth before she can enter a church. In this matter, following in the footsteps of our predecessor the blessed Pope Gregory, we decree the same things which Gregory said (among other things) when he wrote to instruct a new nation, just as we are doing now: *If a woman in the very same hour in which she has given birth, enters the church to give thanks, she is weighed down by no burden of sin; for it is fleshly pleasure, not suffering, that is the fault. There is pleasure in the commingling of the flesh, but wailing in the bearing of a child. Hence it is said to the very first mother of all: "You shall give birth amidst suffering" (Gen.3:6). Therefore, if we forbid a woman in childbirth from entering the church, we consider her very punishment as a crime.*¹⁵²

Chapter LXVIII. You ask how many times in a year baptism should be celebrated and if on this day it is permitted to eat meat or how many days [after baptism] one should abstain from this. Now then, according to the canons, the notable and solemn times of the year on which baptisms are celebrated are two, namely Easter and Pentecost. But as far as we are concerned, there are no times which should be kept absolutely in baptizing, just as such things are not observed regarding those who desire to be purged with so great a bath, because they fear the danger of their approaching death; it is undoubtedly fitting for those who have been baptized on the holy Sabbath or on holy Pentecost, to abstain from meat on this day, but during the following seven days, which were called the "days of unleavened bread" by the ancients¹⁵³ and are celebrated rightly in connection with the day of the Lord's resurrection, if someone desire at some point to eat meat, it is much more appropriate that he eat it.

Chapter LXX. You decided that you should ask our advice on whether you should maintain a priest who has a wife or cast him from you. On this matter we respond, that, although these men are truly reprehensible, nevertheless it befits you to imitate God, Who, as the Gospel attests, *makes His sun rise over the good and evil alike and He rains upon the just and the unjust.*¹⁵⁴ You therefore should not cast him from you, since the Lord did not expel Judas from the number of the apostles, even though he was a lying disciple. But regarding priests, whatever sort they may be, you, who are laymen, should neither judge nor investigate anything concerning their way of life, but this, whatever it is, should by all means be reserved to the judgment of the bishops.

¹⁵² Gregory I, Register XI.56, c.8.

¹⁵³ Cf. Acts 12:3.

¹⁵⁴ Matthew 5:45.

Chapter LXXI. Since you ask whether or not you should receive communion from a priest who has either been caught in adultery or splashed with only the rumor of this, we respond: No one, no matter how much he has been polluted, can pollute the divine sacraments, which are the purging remedies of all contagions, nor can a ray of the sun, even though it passes through sewers and latrines, attract any contamination from there. Consequently, whatever sort of person the priest may be, he cannot pollute things which are holy; therefore, communion should be received from him until such time as he is reproved by the judgments of the bishops. For evil men only wound themselves in administering good things and the burning wax torch does damage to itself, but offers light to others in darkness and that from which he offers comfort to others, presents a loss to himself. Therefore, boldly take the mysteries of Christ from every priest, because all things are purged in faith. *For, as St. Jerome teaches, it is faith which conquers this world,¹⁵⁵ and because it is not up to the giver but to the receiver to believe that baptism is perfect in every soul and the body of Christ is perfect in every priest.¹⁵⁶ And again, in agreement with sacred Scripture, he says: Before you hear, "Do not judge anyone and suspend no one from your communion before the accusation brought against him is proven, since someone who is accused is not immediately guilty, but rather he is criminal who is convicted.¹⁵⁷*

Chapter LXXII. You ask, if it is permitted for a patriarch to be ordained among you. We cannot say anything diffinitive on this issue before our legates, whom we send to you, have returned and reported to us what a multitude and unanimity of Christians there is among you. In the meantime, have a bishop and when Christianity has spread there with an increase in divine grace and bishops have been ordained in each church, then one among you should be elected, who should be called, if not patriarch, then certainly archbishop; to him all shall come and ask his advice in more serious matters, since the apostolic rules command and state this same thing: *It is fitting that the bishops of each nation know who among them is considered first, whom they consider as their head and treat nothing as greater except their own conscience etc.¹⁵⁸*

Chapter LXXIII. You also ask by whom a patriarch should be ordained. Know then

¹⁵⁵ Cf. I John 5:4.

¹⁵⁶ Jerome, On the seven orders of the Church.

¹⁵⁷ Jerome, On the seven orders of the Church; Cf. also I Corinthians 4:5.

¹⁵⁸ The Apostolic Canons, c.35.

that in a place where no patriarch or archbishop has been constituted, he should be installed for the first time by the greatest bishop, since, according to the Apostle,¹⁵⁹ the lesser is blessed by the greater. But then, once permission and the use of the pallium has been received, from then on he himself ordains the bishops for himself who are able to ordain his successor. But, whether you ask that a patriarch or an archbishop or a bishop be ordained for you, you can wish to have this person ordained by no one more fitting than the pontiff of the see of Peter, from whom the episcopacy and the apostolate took its beginning. In this matter, this order should be preserved, namely that now a bishop should be consecrated for you by the bishop of the apostolic see, who, if the people of Christ increase under his leadership, may receive through us the privilege of the archepiscopacy and so finally he may constitute bishops for himself, who may elect his successor when he dies. And because of the length of the journey, let whoever is elected no longer come here to be consecrated before he receives the pallium from the seed of Rome, as all the archbishops of the Gauls and Germany and other regions are shown to do.

Chapter LXXIII. You inquire as to what you should do if, after a prayer has begun, a messenger comes concerning an enemy and you are therefore unable to finish the prayer. What else should you do, of course, than complete the good which you have begun wherever you happen to have traveled? Indeed, for Christians, there is no one place of prayer, as Jerusalem was for the Jews and as there was for the Samaritans on Mt. Garizin, but rather [we pray] everywhere, as the Apostle also says: *I therefore want you men to pray everywhere by raising pure hands.*¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, the person who perseveres in good work to the end,¹⁶¹ shall be saved, especially when against the hostile attacks of his enemies; indeed, as we have stated above,¹⁶² triumph over the enemy should be expected from prayer rather than from arms.

Chapter LXXV. The bishops whom we have sent to your country are bringing with them in writing the judgment of penance¹⁶³ that you requested, and of course the bishop who shall be ordained among you, will show it to you when it is appropriate; but it is

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Hebrews 7:7.

¹⁶⁰ I Timothy 2:8.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Matthew 10:22.

¹⁶² Cf. Chapter XXXVIII.

¹⁶³ This phrase is thought to refer to a Penitential manual.

inappropriate for a secular person to have such a thing, since the duty of judging someone with it has not been granted to him.

Chapter LXXVI. We also say the same thing concerning the book for performing the Mass.

Chapter LXXVII. You say that certain Greeks take a closed book in their hands and one of them, taking a very small piece of wood, places this within the book; then if a question should arise about anything, they claim that they may know whatever they want using this method. You are asking if this should be maintained or rejected. Clearly it should be rejected; for it is written: *Blessed be the man whose hope lies in the name of the Lord: and who has not attended to vanities and false ravings.*¹⁶⁴

Chapter LXXVIII. You say that the people who rose up to kill you on account of Christianity, wished to do penance, but that the priests who were visiting you refused to accept their penance; now you ask what should be done about them. If, as you claim, they wish to do penance voluntarily, they should not be prohibited from doing so, but each should be completely subjected to the penance which the bishop or ordained priest should require from him; for it is a mark of Novatians, not Catholics, not to receive the penitent.

Chapter LXXVIII. After stating that it is a custom among you for the sick to wear a kind of bundle [of herbs?] hanging under their neck, you are asking if we forbid this from now on. We not only order that this not be done, but we also forbid in every way that this be done; for phylacteries of this kind are invented by diabolical wiles and *are proven to be fetters on the souls of men*, and therefore the apostolic decrees order that those who use them be expelled from the church after being struck with anathema.¹⁶⁵

Chapter LXXX. You inquire how you should confirm and maintain a mutual peace with a nation which seeks to have a peace with you. Whatever nation wishes to offer you peace, do not refuse them; indeed, it is written: *Pursue peace with everyone,*¹⁶⁶ and again: *Having peace with all men.*¹⁶⁷ When it says "all," clearly no one is excepted from mutual

¹⁶⁴ Psalm 39:5.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Council of Laodicea c.36.

¹⁶⁶ Hebrews 12:14.

¹⁶⁷ Romans 12:18.

peace. Yet we cannot easily define how this peace is to be confirmed and maintained with this kind of nation, unless we first know the words and behavior of the nation with whom the peace is to be contracted. Nevertheless, because peace can be as pernicious as it can be praiseworthy, you should take care that in every peace pact Christ is placed first, so that as long as His law and especially His faith remain inviolate, the treaties which you make with each other may remain uncorrupted. How you should achieve this peace, the Lord demonstrates when he says: *I give you my peace*;¹⁶⁸ therefore, with the person who does not have the peace of Christ, we should also not have the peace of communion, nor should we have it with the person who seeks peace in order that he may commit injuries more freely.

Chapter LXXXI. You have asked whether you dare march out against them or you should do something else, if you have made a treaty with a Christian nation through an exchange of oaths and later these people want to break the pact and attack you. Now then, we should tolerate every necessity rather than commit any iniquity; and therefore, the treaty upon which you have agreed should be violated on no account, unless a clause was included in the article confirming this treaty, such that one party shall maintain the pact, only if the other party has not violated it by any evasion. Indeed, a Christian should reject every kind of lying because of what is said to God: *You destroy all who tell lies*,¹⁶⁹ and again: *The mouth which lies, kills the soul*,¹⁷⁰ and the Apostle says: *Do not lie to one another*.¹⁷¹ But if, with oaths cast aside and treaty broken, they have already risen up against you, your bishop shall tell you what you need to do, when you ask him. For since he will clearly know because of his position clearly the circumstances of the affair, the nature of the moment, the characters of the people, and the justice of the parties, he can more easily indicate what he sees to be more fitting and beneficial, and because he has a prior awareness of all these things, he can fully intimate to you what should be done. In the meantime, without knowing the situation well enough, we admonish you to pray always for the things of peace.

Chapter LXXXII. The Apostle, who gives it to be understood that there should be no communion of light with darkness, Christ with Belial, faithful with infidel, indicates

¹⁶⁸ John 14:27.

¹⁶⁹ Psalm 5:7.

¹⁷⁰ Wisdom 1:11.

¹⁷¹ Colossians 3:9.

what sort of pact a Christian should make with pagans. But if the faithful man has established a pact with the infidel with this intention, namely that he be able to attract him to the worship of the true God, this should not be forbidden, since the Apostle does not forbid even the marriage that is between a faithful person and an infidel, to remain intact,¹⁷² and Moses, when he wished to draw his kinsman to the knowledge of the true God, does not dispise his company but greatly entreats him to be the leader of his company.¹⁷³ Moreover, some of the saints and faithful are found to have contracted treaties and pacts of friendship with foreigners and infidels, but they cultivated them not as if they approved of their faithlessness and superstition but rather employed them in various tasks such as for messengers and especially in earthly and servile occupations.

Chapter LXXXIII. You ask if you are permitted to judge anyone concerning sins which are also crimes. Now then, if no one had wanted to sin, no one would have had to judge anyone; but after he sins, he is also judged, of course. For we know, to use the words of the Apostle, *that the law was not established for the just man, but for the unjust, for those who are not submissive, for the impious, the sinners, the wicked, the parricides and matricides, the murderers, the fornicators, sodomites, forgers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else goes against the proper doctrine which conforms to the gospel of glory of blessed God.*¹⁷⁴ You are not allowed, however, to judge clerics, since it is more fitting that they be judged by themselves.

Chapter LXXXIII. You thought it wise to ask us what you should judge concerning a person who has falsely accused someone and later is revealed to be a false accuser. Concerning this, although the venerable laws indicate most fully what is just, it is nevertheless fitting that, together with the Apostle, we always exhort you to the bowels of mercy, which God attests that He wants more than sacrifice; indeed, when [the Apostle] himself taught the nations, whose teacher he was, he did not call them to the austerity of the law, but rather to the bowels of mercy, saying: *Therefore, like God's chosen and beloved saints, put on the bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, modesty, and patience, supporting one another and giving to each other, and if someone has a quarrel against another, just as the Lord has given to you, so you, too, should give.*¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Cf. I Corinthians 7:13.

¹⁷³ Cf. Exodus 18.

¹⁷⁴ I Timothy 1:9-11.

¹⁷⁵ Colossians 3:12-13.

Chapter LXXXV. Concerning [the case of] the man who gave something poisonous to a another man, about which you asked, we likewise exhort you to mercy, just as the Lord also commanded, when he said: *Forgive and it shall be forgiven you.*¹⁷⁶

Chapter LXXXVI. If a thief or a robber is apprehended and denies that he is involved, you say that in your country the judge would beat his head with lashes and prick his sides with iron goads, until he came up with the truth. Neither divine nor human law allows this practice in any way, since a confession should be spontaneous, not compelled, and should not be elicited with violence but rather proffered voluntarily. But if it just so happens that you find nothing at all which casts the crime upon the one who has suffered, aren't you ashamed and don't you recognize how impiously you judge? Likewise, if the accused man, after suffering, says that he committed what he did not commit because he is unable to bear such [torture], upon whom, I ask you, will the magnitude of so great an impiety fall if not upon the person who compelled this man to confess these things falsely? Indeed, the person who utters from his mouth what he does not hold in his heart is known not to confess but to speak.¹⁷⁷ Therefore leave such practices behind and heartily curse the things which you have hitherto done foolishly. Indeed, what fruit shall you have in those practices, of which you are now ashamed. Finally when a free man is caught in a crime, unless he is first found guilty of some wicked deed, he either falls victim to the punishment after being convicted by three witnesses or, if he cannot be convicted, he is absolved after swearing upon the holy Gospel that he did not commit [the crime] which is laid against him, and from that moment on the matter is at an end, just as the oft-mentioned Apostle, the teacher of the nations, attests, when he says: *an oath for confirmation is an end of all their strife.*¹⁷⁸

Chapter LXXXVII. You inquire as to whether or not, if someone forces a widowed woman to take up the monastic life, he commits a sin. Now then, in this matter, one should know that there are some virtues without which we cannot enter into [eternal] life and others which are required only from someone who pledges.¹⁷⁹ Of course, without humility, chastity, almsgiving, and prayers no one can enter into life, and these,

¹⁷⁶ Luke 6:37.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Matthew 12:34.

¹⁷⁸ Hebrews 6:16.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Matthew 18:8.

along with virtues like them, are the ones which are required from everyone. But to wear the monastic habit and to lead a life apart are demanded by God only from someone who pledges thus. Consequently, someone who does violence to another, in order to make that person take up the monastic habit and a more removed life, which the person has neither desired nor chosen — this person cannot escape sin just like any other violent man. Moreover, because what is done does not come from the will of the one who receives it, the person receiving the religious habit gains nothing from it and the person imposing it shall not fail to be condemned for his cruelty.

Chapter LXXXVIII. Regarding your parents, about whom you inquire, you are not allowed to pray for those who died without the faith (*infideles*) because of their sin of unbelief (*incredulitas*), in accordance with the saying of the apostle John who said: *There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*¹⁸⁰ Indeed, it is a sin unto death for those who die in this sin.

Chapter LXXXVIII. It is a custom of the ancients to offer the new fruit and first fruits of property, a custom which we read Abel and Cain to have practiced almost at the beginning of the world itself.

Chapter XC. You ask whether one is permitted to eat animals or birds, if they were killed without a blade and died after being struck only by a man's blow. Concerning this matter, St. Augustine wrote in detail against Faustus the Manichaeon, from whose words we give only a bit to avoid being prolix: *When the church of the nations, he says, became such that no carnal Israelite appears in it, what Christian now observes the rule, that he not touch thrushes and smaller birds, unless their blood has been shed, or not eat a rabbit, if, having been struck on the neck with a hand, it was killed without a cruel wound? And those who perchance still fear to touch these, may be mocked by the rest. Thus that judgment of the truth held the minds of all in this matter: "It is not what goes into your mouth that pollutes you, but rather what comes out.(Mt.15:11)*¹⁸¹

Chapter XCI. A Christian should consume neither an animal which a Christian hunts and a pagan strikes and kills, nor an animal which a pagan hunts and a Christian kills, namely lest the faithful (*fidelis*) appear to have communicated at all with the unfaithful

¹⁸⁰ I John 5:16.

¹⁸¹ Against Faustus the Manichaeon, XXXII, c.13.

*(infidelis); for what part has the faithful with the unfaithful?"*¹⁸² And this is again because of the conscience not of the faithful person but of the unfaithful person, namely who glorifies himself, because a Christian has shared an animal with him and therefore asserts that, because he was not despised by the faithful person, the vanity of his error stood approved by the Christian.

Chapter XCII. You desire to know how many patriarchs there truly are. In truth, those men should be considered patriarchs who achieve the apostolic see through the succession of bishops, i.e. those who rule over those churches which the apostles are shown to have established, namely the churches of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. Rome, because both princes of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, established it by their preaching and sanctified it with their own blood which was shed for the love of Christ; Alexandria, because the evangelist Mark, who was the disciple and son by baptism of Peter, established it after being sent by Peter and dedicated it with his blood to the Lord Christ; and Antioch, because it was there that in a great assembly of the saints the faithful were first called Christians and because the blessed Peter governed it for some years before he came to Rome. The bishops of Constantinople and of Jerusalem, although they are called patriarchs, do not possess as much authority as the above [sees]. For, as regards the church of Constantinople, none of the apostles founded it nor did the synod of Nicaea, which is more venerable and celebrated than all other synods, make any mention of it; rather its bishop was given the title of patriarch more through the favor of princes than by reason, since Constantinople was called "New Rome." As for the bishop of Jerusalem, although he is both called a patriarch and should be honored as such in accordance with ancient custom and the synod of Nicaea, with his proper dignity of metropolitan preserved, in [the acts of this] same great synod, he is in no way called the bishop of Jerusalem, but rather the bishop of Helia. For on the one hand, the true Jerusalem, which is our mother, is only in heaven;¹⁸³ in accordance with what the Lord predicted, on the other hand, the earthly Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman emperor Aelius Hadrian down to its foundations so that not a single stone was left atop another stone,¹⁸⁴ and it was reconstructed by this same Roman emperor Aelius Hadrian in another place so that the place of the Lord's cross, which was outside the gate, is now found within [the city] and that city is called Aelia after the aforementioned Aelius Hadrian.

¹⁸² II Corinthians 6:15.

¹⁸³ Cf. Galatians 4:26.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Matthew 24:2.

Chapter XCIII. You also ask which patriarch is second to that of Rome. According to what the holy Roman Church maintains, the canons of Nicaea indicate, the holy bishops of Rome defend, and reason itself dictates, the patriarch of Alexandria is the patriarch second to the pope.

Chapter XCIII. You claim that the Greeks say that chrism arises in their country and is distributed by them throughout the entire world, and you therefore wish to know if this is true. Yet we believe that your cleverness has already noticed that it is not true.

Chapter XCV. You ask what we think should be done about those who flee to a church because of certain crimes. Now then, although the sacred canons demand that the decrees of the worldly laws be upheld and these laws seem to have no mercy for certain people, we who have not accepted the spirit of this world say nonetheless that, if someone flees to a church,¹⁸⁵ he should not be brought out, unless he should wish [to come out] willingly. Indeed, if in former times robbers and others guilty of different crimes sought indemnity by fleeing to the asylum of the temple of Romulus, how much more should those who flee to the temple of Christ receive remission of their crimes and be restored to their original state of complete security, once the suspect has offered an oath [concerning his innocence] on his own behalf.

Chapter XCVI. Regardless of what your wife plots or does against you or whether she accuses you, she should not be rejected or held completely in hatred, except because of fornication.¹⁸⁶ Rather, as the Apostle commands, she should be loved, just as the Church is loved by Christ.¹⁸⁷ However much Christ is accused in the mouths of heretics and blasphemed among the nations,¹⁸⁸ He tolerates those preaching perversities for the time being and does not repel from the bosom of His mercy those who come to their senses.

Chapter XCVII. The same should also be observed concerning a servant who accuses his lord before the princes, from whom, according to the Apostle, his lord should withhold his threats.¹⁸⁹ For what shall we say about the servant, when the Lord gave a

¹⁸⁵ Cf. I Corinthians 2:12.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Matthew 5:32; Ephesians 5:29.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Ephesians 5:25.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Romans 2:24.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Ephesians 6:9.

general command to all and concerning all, saying: *Forgive and it shall be forgiven you*,¹⁹⁰ and the Apostle said: *See to it that no one render evil to someone for evil*;¹⁹¹ for in fact, where he has placed "to someone", he also understood a servant. Now if you say that he did not include all persons, hear what comes next: *But always pursue what is good towards one another and towards all people*.¹⁹²

Chapter XCVIII. You ask whether someone who has killed himself should be buried, and if a sacrifice should be offered for him. He should indeed be buried, lest he inflict a bothersome smell on the sweet smell of the living; nonetheless, unless fear strikes some people, he should not be carried to the grave with services in the customary manner. Yet if there are those who serve in his burial out of their zeal for humanity, let them seem to render it for their own sake and not for the person who was his own murderer. A sacrifice, however, should not be offered for him, who sinned not only unto death, but toasted his own death and destruction.¹⁹³ For who commits a sin unto death, for whom does the apostle John say one should not pray more than the person who, in imitation of Judas,¹⁹⁴ is shown to have been his own murderer with the devil as his teacher?

Chapter XCVIII. You ask, if a Christian should be buried within a church. The holy pope Gregory resolved this question when he said: *If grave sins do not weigh heavy, it benefits the dead if they are buried in churches, because their relatives, whenever they come to these sacred places, remember their relatives, whose graves they see, and pour out prayers to God on their behalf. But the bodies of those whom grave sins oppress, are placed in churches not for their absolution but rather for the further increase of their damnation*.¹⁹⁵

Chapter C. As for a person who has died in battle, you can gather from the preceding chapter whether he should be brought home, if his parents or friends wish it. Therefore, if indeed his relatives wish it, the dead person should be brought back home, in order

¹⁹⁰ Luke 6:37.

¹⁹¹ I Thessalonians 5:15.

¹⁹² I Thessalonians 5:15.

¹⁹³ Cf. I John 5:16.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Matthew 27:5.

¹⁹⁵ Gregory I, Dialogues IV.50.

that those who see his tomb closeby may remember him and may pour forth prayers to the Lord on his behalf. For sacred history says that when he was about to die, St. Joseph also ordered something similar concerning his own bones.¹⁹⁶

Chapter CI. You inquire to whom alms should be allotted. The Lord clearly shows this when He says: *Give to anyone who asks you*,¹⁹⁷ and again, recalling His father, He says: *He makes the sun rise over the good and bad and rain upon the just and the unjust*,¹⁹⁸ and the Apostle says: *When we have the time, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of the faith*,¹⁹⁹ i.e. Christians. A certain order of discretion should nevertheless be observed in the giving of alms, which we refrain from explaining fully now in our zeal for brevity. But let us first indicate what this name signifies: alms (*elemosyna*) in Greek is called mercy (*misericordia*) in Latin, and certainly it is written: *To take pity on your soul is pleasing to God*.²⁰⁰ Therefore, a person should first give alms to himself before all others; indeed, a man should begin every rule for doing well with himself, namely pleasing God through the cleanliness of his mind and body and thereby giving to himself that living bread, which descends from heaven. But then alms should be offered to relatives suffering from need, as it is written: *Do not despise your own flesh*;²⁰¹ for nature itself teaches us this. Furthermore, when shall a stranger offer what I myself do not offer to my relative? After them, mercy should be especially offered to those who are ashamed to ask. It should also be noted that there are some people upon whom nothing should be conferred, as it is written: *Give to the good, and do not receive the sinner*, and again: *Do not give to the impious man*,²⁰² and again: *Set your bread and wine upon the grave of the just man and do not eat or drink from it in the company of sinners*.²⁰³ For he offers his bread and wine to sinners who gives support to the iniquitous because they are iniquitous; whence some of the rich people of this world nourish actors with effusive largess, while the poor of Christ are tortured by hunger. But the person who

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Exodus 13:19.

¹⁹⁷ Luke 6:30.

¹⁹⁸ Matthew 5:45.

¹⁹⁹ Galatians 6:10.

²⁰⁰ Ecclesiasticus:24.

²⁰¹ Isaiah 58:7.

²⁰² Ecclesiasticus 12:5-6.

²⁰³ Tobit 4:18.

has given his bread to a sinner in need not because he is a sinner, but because he is a man, clearly nourishes not the sinner, but the just man, because he loves the nature in the man, not the fault.

CII. We have taught above that violence should not be inflicted upon the pagan in order to make him become a Christian.

CIII. You ask what should be done with the profane books which you say that you have taken from the Saracens and have with you. These should, of course, not be kept: for, as it is written, "Evil conversation corrupts good behavior."²⁰⁴

CIIII. You ask about what should be done concerning many people in your country who you claim have been baptized by some Jew, though whether he is Christian or pagan you do not know. Of course, if these people have been baptized in the name of the holy Trinity or in the name of Christ alone, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles,²⁰⁵ — for as St. Ambrose explains, it is one and the same thing — it is agreed that they should not be baptized again. But first, inquiry should be made into whether this Jew was a Christian or a pagan or if he later became a Christian, although we do not think that what the blessed Augustine says about baptism should be disregarded: "*...we have already shown at sufficient length, he says, that baptism, which is consecrated in the words of the Gospel, is not affected by the error of any man, whether the minister or the recipient, nor by whether he holds views contrary to the revelation of divine teaching on the subject of the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit;*²⁰⁶ and again: *There are also those among their number, who still live in iniquity or even lie amidst heresies or the superstitions of the gentiles; yet even there, "the Lord knows who are his."* For amidst that ineffable foreknowledge many, who seem outside, are inside;²⁰⁷ and in another passage: *even the slow of heart understand, in my opinion, that the baptism of Christ cannot be violated by any perversity of the person giving or receiving it;*²⁰⁸ and again: *yet he that is separated may confer it [baptism], just as he that is separated may receive it, but he confers it to his destruction. But the person upon whom he confers it, can receive it to*

²⁰⁴ I Corinthians 15:33.

²⁰⁵ Acts 19:5.

²⁰⁶ Augustine, On baptism IV.15 (22).

²⁰⁷ Augustine, On baptism V.27 (38).

²⁰⁸ Augustine, On baptism VI.1 (1).

*salvation, if he himself receives it when he is not separated.*²⁰⁹

CV. To your inquiry and request for instruction as to what should be done about those who, carried away beyond the commands of the apostles, attempt to preach, one of them, i.e. Paul, responds and has given the following instructions, saying: *Yet if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you something more than what we are preaching to you, let him be anathema.*²¹⁰ When this does happen, however, you who are laymen should not judge indiscriminately or boldly; *for we all offend in many things.*²¹¹

CVI. Finally you humbly entreat us to offer you, as we have to other nations, the true and perfect Christianity which has neither spot nor wrinkle,²¹² since you claim that many people from different places come into your country who say many different things according to their wishes, i.e. the Greeks, the Armenians, and those from other places. You therefore ask to be told whether you should obey all of them in their various senses or what you should do. Truly we are not enough in these matters, *but our sufficiency is from God;*²¹³ and the blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his see, offers the truth of the faith to those who seek it. Indeed, the holy Roman Church has always been without spot or wrinkle, obviously because it was established by the man whose confession of faith was divinely approved. To instill this faith of Christianity in you, although no one can understand its mysteries completely — behold, through God's inspiration we have sent our writings, our messengers, and different books to your country and until you grow strong roots, we shall in no way cease from watering you, and until you arrive at the solid food of perfection, we shall never fail to feed you at least with milk;²¹⁴ for you are my crown and joy in the Lord.²¹⁵ Concerning those whom you say have come into your country teaching various different things, we have already written much to you and now we take care to write you some words of the teacher of the nations who said with the support of sacred eloquence, when he feared that there

²⁰⁹ Augustine, On baptism VI.5(7).

²¹⁰ Galatians 1:8.

²¹¹ James 3:2.

²¹² Cf. Ephesians 5:27.

²¹³ 2 Corinthians 3:5.

²¹⁴ Cf. Hebrews 5:12-14.

²¹⁵ Cf. Phillipians 4:1.

were such people among the Corinthians: *For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and I shall be found to be not as you wish; lest there be contentions, envying, animosities, dissension, backbiting, whispering, swellings, and tumults among you.*²¹⁶

Nevertheless, as far as right faith is concerned, we do not care *who preaches, but whom they preach*. Indeed, [the Apostle] himself wrote, saying: *Certain people preach Christ out of envy and contention, certain other preach Him out of good will; still other preach Him out of love, because they know that I have been placed to defend the gospel. Certain people do not proclaim Christ sincerely because of contention, thinking to add affliction to my bonds. Yet what is this to me? When in every way Christ is proclaimed whether by accident or by truth, I rejoice and shall rejoice in this.*²¹⁷ But he who said these things, you respond, also says elsewhere: *Avoid profane and inane conversation, for these lead greatly to impiety, and their word creeps like a cancer.*²¹⁸ Nonetheless, in all these things, the mercy of God shall be with our messengers and your future bishop, who shall instruct you and inform you fully as to what you should do. Yet, whether now or later, let them always consult the apostolic see in doubtful matters and on the more important issues, as is the custom of the entire Church; and once instructed by it on what is fitting, they shall establish and teach with earnest preaching the things that are God's.

We have given these responses to your questions and the issues that you raised, insofar as the Lord has given them to us, not as much as we could but as much we thought could satisfy you for the time being. But when, with God's concession, you have a bishop through the ministry of our prelacy, he shall teach you everything which pertains to his office, and if there are things which he does not understand, he shall receive them again from the authority of the apostolic see. May God, Who has worked the greatest salvation among you, bring it to completion, make it solid, and stabilize and strengthen it to the very end. Amen.

²¹⁶ II Corinthians 12:20.

²¹⁷ Philippians 1:15-18.

²¹⁸ II Timothy 2:16-7.