142 To Weep (*Flere*)

Weeping is because of three things:

First, because of the hardness of the time. The example concerning a new plant which if it is hardened at the right time it grows; if it waits until it emerges it becomes green again with no moisture. So, it is concerning the man who if he bewails in weeping, he will grow in eternal life. If, however, he was without the weeping of contrition until death all the weeping of the world will not help him in hell, Psal. [31:6]: “In a flood of many waters, they shall not come nigh unto him.” Therefore, according to the Psalm [136:1]: “Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept.”

¶ Which thus appears right that the middle of which should concord with the extremes. But the beginning of our life is with weeping and the end likewise, Job 30[:31]: “My harp is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of those that weep.” Therefore, if it be the right way it needs that the middle be with weeping. But the middle is the whole time of our life. Therefore, etc., Eccle. 3[:4]: “A time to weep,” namely, now, “and a time to laugh,” in the future, and thus note that the life of many is bent because the middle goes out from the extremes, because the middle time they lead in joy, Isai. 22[:12-13]: “The Lord … in that day shall call to weeping, and to mourning, to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth. And behold joy and gladness, killing calves, and slaying rams.”

Second, because it washes away the stain of vices, water is cleansing. The example of Peter who after the business wept [Matt. 26:75] and concerning Magdalene [Luke 7:38]. To this point Gregory, *Super Evangelium*, homily 34,[[1]](#endnote-1) narrated that a certain rich man, Aemilianus, made a certain commitment on account of which he entered a monastery where he offered vigils and weeping privately at night; he went out at the side of a mountain and prayed where his abbot saw him bathed in light under which light there was a voice made saying, Your sin is forgiven. In the figure of this king Ezechias wept, 4 Kings 20[:3]. And he was healed in body and from his sin.

Third, because weeping changes the sad time into everlasting joy, Luke 6[:25]: “Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn and weep.” Therefore, from the contrary the blessed who now weep, because they will laugh in the future, Luke 6[:21]: “Blessed are you that weep now: for you shall laugh.” The example concerning the rains which when they fall in winter seem a burden, however they give us joy in the autumn because they increase the fruit, Psal. [125:6]: “Going they went and wept,” etc., and John 16[:20]: “You shall lament and weep … but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.”

1. Gregory, Homelia 34.18 (PL 76:1257-58): Nostris modo temporibus Victorinus quidam exstitit, qui alio quoque nomine Aemilianus appellatus est, non inops substantiae juxta mediocritatem vitae; sed quia plerumque regnat in rerum opulentia carnis culpa, in quodam facinore lapsus est, quod debuisset valde pertimescere, ac de suae mortis immanitate cogitare. Reatus ergo sui consideratione compunctus, erexit se contra se, mundi hujus omnia dereliquit, monasterium petiit. In quo nimirum monasterio tantae humilitatis tantaeque sibi districtionis exstitit, ut cuncti fratres, qui illic ad amorem divinitatis excreverant, suam cogerentur vitam despicere, dum illius poenitentiam viderent. Studit namque toto mentis adnisu cruciare carnem, voluntates proprias frangere, furtivas orationes quaerere, quotidianis se lacrymis lavare, despectum sui appetere, oblatam a fratribus venerationem timere. Hic itaque nocturnas fratrum vigilias praevenire consueverat; et quia mons in quo monasterium situm est ex uno latere in secretiore parte prominebat, illuc consuetudinem fecerat ante vigilias egredi, ut se quotidie in fletu poenitentiae quanto secretius, tanto liberius mactaret. Contemplabatur namque districtionem venturi judicis sui, et, jam eidem judici concordans, puniebat in lacrymis reatum facinoris sui. Quadam vero nocte abbas monasterii vigilans hunc latenter egredientem intuitus lento foras pede secutus est. Quem cum in secreto montis latere cerneret in oratione prostratum, exspectare voluit quando surgeret, ut ipsam quoque longanimitatem orationis ejus exploraret, cum subito coelitus lux emissa super eum fusa est qui in oratione prostratus jacebat; tantaque se illo in loco claritas sparsit, ut tota pars regionis illius ex eadem luce candesceret; quam abbas ut vidit, intremuit, et fugit. Cumque post longum horae spatium idem frater ad monasterium rediisset, abbas ejus, ut disceret an super se effusionem tanti luminis agnovisset, requirere eum studuit, dicens: Ubi fuisti, frater? At ille, latere posse se credens, in monasterio se fuisse respondit. Quo negante, abbas compulsus est dicere quid vidisset. At ille videns se esse deprehensum, hoc quoque quod abbatem latebat aperuit adjungens: Quando super me vidisti lucem de coelo descendere, vox etiam pariter venit, dicens: Dimissum est peccatum tuum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)