222 Sea (*Mare*)

The sea in one way is said to be penance, because just as fish in that bitterness are delighted as a favor, so the penitent in their penance ascend. That one from the sea is the curlew, which is a royal bird, according to the Master in the *Historia*.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Again, the sea ejects from itself everything of death, so penance casts out sin. Wherefore when Magdalen began to repent, seven devils were cast out from her. Wherefore just as the Israelite people put themselves into the sea after their escape from Egypt and then they came through the desert to the promised land, so it is necessary that if men wish to escape the danger of sin, they should place themselves first in the sea of penance. In the figure of this matter Christ led his disciples to his mother as a father, [John] 19[:26-27] and Matt. [12:46-50].

Again, in figure, 3 Kings 5[:9] the timbers from which the temple was constructed first were put into the sea and then brought to Jerusalem, so the penitent from whom the temple of God is constructed pass through penance. And Solomon made a copper sea to stand upon twelve oxen, where the priest might wash themselves before they would enter the temple, 3 Kings 7[:25].

Again, the sea can be called the world in which by the ship of the church we go over to heaven and in which is the great movement until Christ commands “the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm,” Matt. 8[:26]. And note here that Ambrose says in the *Hexameron*,[[2]](#endnote-2) that sailors take oil with them in their mouth by which they clarify the depth of the water and they are freed, so they who carry with them the divine can be freed from the perils of the world.

Again, according to Ambrose,[[3]](#endnote-3) as above, how long the halcyon bird lays its eggs next to the sea, so the tempest would not be feared.

Again, the sea is also said to be the world because in it many are endangered. In the sea of Sicily where there is Charybdis and Silla of ten ships hardly one is endangered. But in the sea of the world, of ten souls hardly one is saved. Wherefore Augustine,[[4]](#endnote-4) you love the world and it will devour you. Its lovers know to swallow, not to carry. Therefore he asks in Psal. [68:16]: “Let not the tempest of water drown me, nor the deep swallow me up,” etc.

¶ These are drowned who fall in mortal sin, but they can be freed. Those are swallowed up who are detained by a long custom, but those are rescued with difficulty, Psal. [67:23]: “The Lord said: I will turn them from Basan, I will turn them into the depth of the sea.” But then we think he closed his mouth when man falls into desperation.

Again, the sea is said to be the world because it is swelled up through pride, Psal. [92:4]: “Wonderful are the surges of the sea.” So this world. Therefore, also everything that is in the world or is the concupiscence of the flesh or the concupiscence of the eyes or the pride of life.

Second, because it is dreadful because of envy, Eccli. 43[:26]: “Let them that sail on the sea, tell the dangers thereof.”

¶ So the world, John 15[:18]: “If the world hates you, know, that it has hated me before you.”

Third, because it is turbid through wrath, Dan. 7[:2]: “The four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.” So the world, John 16[:33]: “In the world you shall have distress. In me you may have peace.”

Fourth, because it is rapid through avarice, Isai. 57[:20], “The heart of the wicked is like the raging sea, which cannot rest.” So the world, [1] John last chapter [5:19]: “The whole world is seated in wickedness,” that is, the danger of an evil fire. When the whole house is on fire, but not thus when there is a fire in the house, Jer. 8[:10]: “From the least even to the greatest all follow covetousness.”

Fifth, because it is sick through sloth, [Apoc.] 16[:3]: “And every living soul died in the sea.” This can be said to be the sea of the dead, so the world, be in the Psal. [13:1]: “There is none that do good.” And John 14[:27]: “My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives.” For the peace of the world is idleness, but the peace of God is industrious, about which [1] John 5[:4]: “This is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith,” namely, which works love.

Sixth, it is flowing through lust, Job 38[:8], “Who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth.” So the world, James 4[:3-4]: “You may consume it on your concupiscences. Adulterers.”

Seventh, sordid inclining to vomit through gluttony, Eccle. 1[:7]: “All the rivers run into the sea,” etc., so the world, 2 Pet. 2[:20]: “Flying from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord.” Therefore, we are in this world as if in the sea and the soul in the body as if a sailor in a ship, and so in the tempest those sailing suffer from peril, they bail out the intransigent water. They vow vows that they might lighten the ship, they promise they will fast, so we in this world being tested ought to suffer through contrition, bailing out water through confession, lighten the ship through the giving of alms, to vow vows in prayer, to fast in the abdication of vices, James 5[:1]: “Go to now, rich men.” Gloss,[[5]](#endnote-5) penance, but alas because many are as if the frenetic who laugh in danger of death, James 4[:6]: “Now you rejoice in your arrogances,” etc. And this is because they do not consider their end, Luke [19:41]:

¶ “Jesus seeing the city, wept over it,” etc., because this world is a place of pilgrimage, etc.

So it is treated in chapter [239] The World (*Mundus*).

Again, the sea is compared to the world and the opposite because there is the wind of pride sweeping into judgment the giddiness of wrath, the plunder of avarice, the inundation of lust, and the whirlpool of gluttony.

Again, just as by the sea some are moved as ships, some are drowned as rocks, some are raised by the sea as clouds.

Again, in this world some are moved by oars to virtue as travelers, some are drowned under the weight of sins as the impenitent, some are elevated by the cloths of virtues as the just who persevere.

Concerning the first, Eccli. 43[:26]: “Let them that sail on the sea, tell the dangers thereof.” Psal. [76:20]: “Your way is in the sea.”

Concerning the second, Exod. 15[:19]: “For Pharaoh went in on horseback with his chariots and horsemen into the sea,” etc.

¶ Concerning the third, 3 Kings 18[:44]: “Behold, a little cloud arose out of the sea like a man's foot.”

Again, the world as the sea inflates through pride, spews out through lust, boils through wrath, marriages through sadness. All the rivers receive in themselves through avarice, large fish devour little fish through plunder, of the others they throw out the dead through impatience, drown the living through envy, because it reveals the evils of others, and hides the good.

¶ Again, the whirlwind is accustomed to happen in the sea for three causes. Sometimes from a superior cause as from erratic stars, but Augustine in the book *De vita beata*,[[6]](#endnote-6) and in an *Epistola*.[[7]](#endnote-7) See who says {Jude 1:13]: “Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own confusion; wandering stars,” etc. Sometimes from an inferior cause as for example the boiling bottom of the sea, Job 41[:22]: “He shall make the deep sea to boil like a pot.” Sometimes from a middle cause as from a wind moving the waves, Dan. 7[:2]: “Behold the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.” So the four winds of temptation drive our ship, namely, vain glory which blows from the east which is accustomed to be born from the great kind or from the threshold of knowledge.

The third wind is avarice which blows from the south.

The fourth is idleness which blows from the north on account of its frost.

Again by bring in a tempest for a sailor, the four make a burden which they project, that is, a burden of sins, Heb. 12[:1]: “Laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us.”

¶ The figure for this, Jonah 1[:5]: “They cast forth the wares into the sea, to lighten it.”

Second, they put down the sail of elation and rather they hold themselves because according to the poet [Ovid],[[8]](#endnote-8) Envy seeks the highest ones, the winds blow around the heights.

Third, they run back to God and the saints for attaining help, Matt. 8[25]: “Lord, save us, we perish.”

Again, sailing into port they are secure from the winds and from the pirates. The quiet are enriched by the goods and labors, so they who arrive to heaven are secure from the temptations, the quiet from the enemies and are enriched by merits and labors.

¶ Again, the world is called the sea on account of instability, Isai. 57[:20]: “The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest.”

Second, on account of insatiability, Eccle. 1[:7]: “All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea doth not overflow.” Because when there were three infernal rivers, [1] John 2[:16]: “The concupiscence of the flesh” is not satisfied by delights, “the pride of life” is not satisfied by honors.

Third, the world is said to be the see on account of bitterness because namely the three aforesaid seem to men sweet when really they are bitter, like fish they do not sense the sea, because they are nourished there, but when a fish leaves the sea and enters sweet water it is delighted there and would linger if possible. So it is for men taken from secular association, although this is difficult for them, however they are delighted in the new life abhorring the past, to such an extent that those thus captured are delighted to capture others to salvation, according to that of the Apoc. last chapter [22:17]: “He that hears, let him say: Come.” And so such fishermen often enriched when however the butchers, that is, the cruel are impoverished. However, many offices in the world are laborious and unfruitful.

1. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica* Exodus 34 (PL 198:1159): Et ascendens coturnix» de sinu Arabico, ubi praecipue nutritur, transcenso medio mari operuit castra, et ad libitum populi capiebatur. Est autem coturnix avis regia, quam Josephus ortygiam vocat, Graecus orthogometrum, nos vulgo curlegium dicimus a currendo Mane vero cum orasset Moyses. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 1.9 (PL 14:142): Quid miramur si Deus locutus est lucem, et caliganti mundo lumen emicuit, quando si quis inter aquas mersus, oleum ore emiserit, clariora faciat [Col.0142C] ea quae profundi tegebantur occultis? [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 5.13 (PL 14:224): Et ideo de iis avibus prius dicamus, quae circa aquas maris fluminumque versantur, cum quibus possumus emergere. Itaque ab halcyone sermonem adoriamur. Ea est avis maritima, quae in littoribus fetus suos edere solet, ita ut in arenis ova deponat medio fere hyemis. Nam id temporis fovendis [Col.0224B] habet deputatum partubus, quando maxime insurgit mare, littoribusque vehementior fluctus illiditur, quo magis repentinae placiditatis solemnitate avis hujus eluceret gratia. Namque ubi undosum fuerit mare, positis ovis subito mitescit, et omnes cadunt ventorum procellae, flatusque aurarum quiescunt, ac placidum ventis stat mare, donec ova foveat halcyone sua. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *Sermo De Scripturis* 76.6.9 (PL 38:482): Amas Deum; ambulas super mare, sub pedibus tuis est saeculi tumor. Amas saeculum; absorbebit te. Amatores suos vorare novit, non portare. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. *Glossa ordinaria* Epistola Jacobi 5:1 (PL 114:678): Agite nunc. Tempore accepto et in die salutis, futuras poenas fletibus et eleemosynis redimite. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Augustine, *De Beata Vita* 2 (PL 32:959-960):  Alterum vero est eorum, superiorique contrarium, qui fallacissima facie maris decepti, elegerunt in medium progredi, longeque a sua patria peregrinari audent, et saepe ejus obliviscuntur. Hos si nescio quo et nimis latente modo a puppi ventus, quem prosperum putant, fuerit prosecutus, penetrant in altissima miseriarum elati atque gaudentes, quod eis usquequaque fallacissima serenitas voluptatum honorumque blanditur. His profecto quid aliud optandum est, quam quaedam in illis rebus a quibus jacti excipiuntur, improspera; et, si parum est, saeviens omnino tempestas, contrarieque flans ventus, qui eos ad certa et solida gaudia, vel flentes gementesque **[Col.0960]**perducat? hujus generis tamen plerique nondum longius evagati, quibusdam non ita gravibus molestiis reducuntur. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Augustine, *Epistola* 105.5 (PL 33:403): Sic enim eos in isto mundo, in quo Ecclesia catholica per omnes gentes diffunditur, quem agrum suum Dominus dicit, tanquam zizania inter triticum, vel in hac unitatis area tanquam paleam permixtam frumento, vel intra retia verbi et Sacramenti tanquam malos pisces cum bonis inclusos, usque ad tempus messis **(Matth. XIII, 24-43)**, aut ventilationis **(Id. III, 12)** aut littoris **(Id. XIII, 47-50**, toleramus, ne propter illos eradicemus et triticum, aut grana nuda ante tempus de area separata, non in horreum mittenda purgemus, sed volatilibus colligenda projiciamus; aut disruptis per schismata retibus, dum quasi malos pisces cavemus, in mare perniciosae libertatis exeamus.  [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Ovid, *Remedia amoris*, 369 (LCL 232:202-203): Summa petit livor; perflant altissima venti.

What is highest is Envy’s mark; winds sweep the summits, [↑](#endnote-ref-8)