231 Attendant (*Minister*)

The merits of the attendants of Christ are to be considered and imitated, and first in the merited glorious vision. For they are acquainted with the offices in the house of which the first are the porters shutting out the unworthy or sending away the unworthy. These are the unlearned men, guarding the gates of the senses lest sins should enter, 2 Paral. 35[:15]: “The porters kept guard at every gate.” However, alas, because the death of things entered through the windows it is seen, because anger through touch, gluttony through taste, envy through sight, pride through smell, etc.

Others in the household are dispensers of the goods of the Lord under the key. The keepers for a place and time distribute the sacraments of the church. The managers, 1 Cor. 4[:1-2]: “Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God,” etc., up to “that a man be found faithful.” Psal. [102:20-21]: “Bless the Lord, all you his angels.” … “You ministers of his.”

¶ The angels are prelates who if they are evil, they are devils.

Other in the house are cooks preparing the foodstuffs. These are the preachers restoring and inviting to the feast, Acts 6[:4]: “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” 2 Tim. 4[:5]: “Fulfill your ministry.”

Others in the house are servers of the table. These are the priests and clerks, Ezech. 44[:15-16]: “The priests, and Levites … they shall come near to my table.” However, alas, because in Gen. 40[:1, 3] it is said the ministers “the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, offended their lord and were sent into prison.”

¶ Others in the house are the directors of music, the instrumental and the singers. There are the one who assist in the church with the divine praises, 2 Paral. 9[:11]. These are the leaders of the singers, who remained in Exod. [32:1-20].

Again, others are almoners who take care of the poor, Rom. 15[:25], Paul said, “But now I shall go to Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints.”

Others are chamberlains giving the virtues of hospitality to the household, 2 Pet. 1[:5]: “Minister in your faith, virtue; and in virtue, knowledge,” etc. The rewards of the minister of Christ are to be sought, and these are three in the future. The first of which is honor as far as the place. For honor is to the servant if he is called to the table and to the bed of the lord his king, John 12[:26]: “If any man minister to me,” by serving, “let him follow me,” by imitating, “and where I am,” namely, in battle, “there also shall my minister be.”

Second, there will be honor as far as service. There will be honor to the servant as if he were the son of a king, Luke 12[:37]: “He will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them.” Therefore John 12[:26]: “If any man minister to me, him will my Father honor.”

Third, as far as the food, Num. 18[:31]: “You shall eat the first fruits … your reward for the ministry, wherewith you serve.” Therefore happy is the ministry that is praised to the king, Psal. [100:6]: “The man that walked in the perfect way, he served me.” Who, namely, in the ministry of God does not defile the image of the good work by a stain of crooked intention, according to Gregory, *Super Ezechielem*, second book, homily 16.[[1]](#endnote-1) Wherefore also “Samuel ministered before the face of the Lord: being a child girded with a linen ephod,” 1 Kings 2[:18].

However, in a great household there are diverse ministers. Wherefore also “The queen of Saba saw the order of his ministers,” in the house of Solomon, 3 Kings 10[:4-5]. In addition, Heb. 1[:6, 14]: “All the angels … Are ministering spirits, sent to minister.” Moreover, Matt. 4[:11]: “Angels came and ministered to him.” Paul says 1 Tim. 3[10, 13], concerning the deacons “Let these first be proved: and so let them minister … For they that have ministered well, shall purchase to themselves a good degree.” As is evident concerning Joseph who was this faithful servant afterward he was exalted, as if saying, the honors of Egypt which were seen by this one [Gen. 41:41-46]. The honors in Christ rather when he entered his ministries, Mark 10[:43]: “Whosoever will be greater, shall be your minister.”

¶ The example of Chrysostom,[[2]](#endnote-2) the honor seems to go to the eye, which illuminates the body. However, rather it is the servant. Therefore, the lord of the body, namely man, does not honor more the eye than the foot, nor does he despise the foot more, than the member that is the eye. For it does the service to which it was created.

¶ However, it is to be noted that just as the infirmity of the physician does not impede the effect of the medicine, so neither does the iniquity of the minister impede the effect of the work of the sacrament. For it has always worked cleanly, although the one doing the work is unclean. Therefore the sacrament on the altar is completed although by an evil minister, because the words by which the sacrament is made are those of the savior who instituted this sacrament. However, the good minister for himself and the salvation of the people and it was his damnation, 1 Cor. [11:27]: “Whosoever shall eat this bread, of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord.”

1. Gregory, *Homilia in Ezechielem* 2.10.16 (PL 76:1066): qui in hoc mundo recipere mercedem quaerit, et foedat in [Col.1066D] conspectu Dei speciem boni operis macula pravae intentionis. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. (Pseudo-)Chrysostomus, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 35 ex capite 20 (PG 56:831): Ut puta, honor oculi videtur, quia illuminat corpus: sed ipse honor illuminandi non est ei honor, sed ministerium ejus. … Propterea dominus corporis, scilicet homo, nec oculum suum amplius honorat quam pedem, nec pedem magis contemnit, quam oculum: quia nec oculus pro aliquo suo merito honoratus est, ut oculus sit, sed ad hoc ministerium creatus est. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)