366 Fear (*Timor*)

In the present life fear is multiplex. For there is natural fear[[1]](#endnote-1) by which one fears a thing naturally contrary or harmful to nature. And this fear is neither evil nor good, neither meritorious nor demeritorious. Since it is from nature this fear is found in good men because it was in Christ, Matt. 26[:37]: “Jesus began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.” And in Paul,[[2]](#endnote-2) who walking to his beheading accepted also from Plantilla a piece of cloth by which he would cover his face lest he see the striking sword. And the *Noctium Atticarum* in the sixth book of *De civitate*,[[3]](#endnote-3)reports about a certain philosopher fearing death in the sea, to whom there hurried to him a jester sitting with him, that to fear certainly any distress ought not to fall on a philosopher.

¶ To whom the philosopher responded, I confess I fear but for such a thing for which it is to be feared, namely, lest the life of a good man be lost, but you do not fear because for the loss of vile men it is not to be feared.

¶ Again, there is a worldly or human fear[[4]](#endnote-4) because a person fears the curses of the world upon himself or on his things. When Christ had that fear, Matt. 10[:28]: “Fear not them that kill the body.”

Another fear is servile[[5]](#endnote-5) when one does a good or he withdraws himself from evil by the fear of pain, not for the love of justice. But the adulteress fears her husband, so our first parents feared God when they hid themselves in paradise, Gen. 3[:8]. However, this fear in souls well-disposed can sometimes cross over to another degree of fear which is initial. Because what first happens only by fear of pain, now by habit begins to happen by love of justice.

Then it is the chaste fear or filial[[6]](#endnote-6) by which the good son fears the father, the chaste wife her husband, in this way the good fear for their past sins. For they know that they have sinned, but they do not know whether their sins are forgiven, because Eccle. 9[:1] it is said, “Man knows not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred.” For he fears concerning his past goods because they do not know “whether of hatred” they have pleased or not, Eccle. 9[:11]: “There are just men and wise men, and their works are in the hand of God,” namely hidden. For they are known and certain just as concerning an object because it is held. Wherefore a certain holy man in the *Vitae patrum*,[[7]](#endnote-7) who in his habits seemed to fear, responded to this brothers inquiring about this, I have kept the commandments of God in my life to the best of my ability, but because I am a man I will [not] be secure until I come before God.

¶ Next there is another holy fear which remains in the ages, about which Psal. [18:10] and Job 28[:28]: “Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.” This fear also by some reverential ones by which one having seen the immensity of God springs back into his own depravity. The example of Daniel [2:19-20] who having seen by a vision there did not remain in him any strength. And Apo. 3[:1] the vision of John became man, and he fell as if dead. The example also of Peter, James, and John, Matt. 17[:6] who having seen the glory of God in his transfiguration “fell and were very much afraid.” And concerning the angels it is said in the *Prefatione misse*,[[8]](#endnote-8) “The powers are in awe” (*Tremunt potestates*) where Peter Alfonsus[[9]](#endnote-9) narrates that a certain king sought from a certain philosopher why he did not fear him. And he responded, Your power which has passed is nothing. Therefore, it is not to be feared what is present. I do not fear because quickly it passes what is not yet the future. Therefore, because it is uncertain it is not to be feared.

It is narrated concerning a certain king that hardly ever did he receive any consolation. And when he was asked by his brother concerning his sorrow, he was silent. But when it was morning, he had two trumpets blow at the door of his brother that it was then a sign of the time of death. Therefore, the brother of the king is brought before the king shaking very much, and it was inquired of him why he was fearful. Because, he responded, he was in a case of condemnation. If, the king inquired, he was fearing so much the judgment of man, much more we should fear the judgment of God.

Again, Augustine, *Sermo* 63,[[10]](#endnote-10) it is a great thing not to do evil. It is also great to love the good. For even the thief fears evil. And where he cannot do, he does not do. And yet he is a thief. For God questions the mind, not the hand. And he gives the example of the wolf who comes to the sheepfold. And although he cannot take any sheep, yet he is still a wolf. If by the fear of hell, you do not do evil, and certainly faith is in you, because you believe the future judgment of God, I rejoice in your faith, but I fear your malice.

¶ Again, fear has many noble effects. For it expels sins as if an interruption or an antidote.

Second,[[11]](#endnote-11) it preserves man from future fault as if a medicine mixed with honey against the remaining, Exod. 20[:20]: “God is come to prove you, and that the dread of him might be in you, and you should not sin.” For fear is as if a good tutor preserving against unfortunate things, according to Augustine, in the first book of *De civitate*,[[12]](#endnote-12) where he touches on the contrasting views of Cato and Scipio over destroying Carthage or not. Where Scipio decreed that Carthage should be standing and not destroyed, so that thus by fear the weak minds of the Romans may be fired, who if they were absent, they would be converted to lascivious things and seditions which did happen. For if Carthage were destroyed according to the counsel of Cato, they would arise among the Romans when they lacked the fear of civil war, Eccli. 27[:4]: “Unless you hold yourself diligently in the fear of the Lord, your house shall quickly be overthrown.”

¶ Again, the fear of the Lord is like a precious treasure which render a man solicitous about the custody of his grace, [Isai.] 33[:6]: “Riches of salvation, wisdom and knowledge: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.” Wherefore Bernard *Super Cantica*, when you are before the altar, fear lest you be unworthy of the work of it, for then the grace is withdrawn more fully. And if he shall return fear more fully lest the rest happen that is also punishment, John [8:11]: “Sin no more.” Lest anything worse happen to you.

Again,[[13]](#endnote-13) someone said, All things fear him who fears God; and who does not fear God, he himself fears all things. The example of Cain who said, Gen: 4[:14]: “Everyone that finds me shall kill me.”

Again, fear makes the earthly annoyances go away, just like those endangered in the sea throw away their things, Job. 31[:23]: “I have always feared God as waves swelling over me, and his weight I was not able to bear.” Concerning the decline of evil which happens out of fear of pain and concerning those things which happen out of love of justice, the poet said:[[14]](#endnote-14) The evil hate to sin out of fear of punishment, the good hate to sin from the love of virtue.

1. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:307): Primus igitur est naturalis, scilicet quando homo naturaliter timet mortem, et omne quod est sibi nocivum. Iste timor naturae non est meritorius, nec demeritorius, quia non subest libero arbitrio. Hoc timore Christus timuit mori, sicut dicitur in *Marco: Coepit Jesus pavere, et taedere.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. James of Voragine, *The Golden Legend* (Ryan, 1:353): And as he was led to the place of his passion in the gate of Hostence, a noble woman named Plantilla, a disciple of Paul, who after another name was called Lemobia, for haply she had two names, met there with Paul, which weeping, commended her to his prayers. To whom Paul said: Farewell, Plantilla, daughter of everlasting health, lend to me thy veil or keverchief with which thou coverest thy head, that I may bind mine eyes therewith, and afterwards I shall restore it to thee again. And when she had delivered it to him, the butchers scorned her, saying: Why hast thou delivered to this enchanter so precious a cloth for to lose it? Then, when he came to the place of his passion, he turned him toward the east, holding his hands up to heaven right long, with tears praying in his own language and thanking our Lord, and after that bade his brethren farewell, and bound his eyes himself with the keverchief of Plantilla, and kneeling down on both knees, stretched forth his neck, and so was beheaded. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 9.4.2 (PL 41:259): In libris quibus titulus est Noctium Atticarum, scribit A. Gellius, vir elegantissimi eloquii, et multae ac facundae scientiae, se navigasse aliquando cum quodam philosopho nobili Stoico. Is philosophus, sicut latius et uberius, quod ego breviter attingam, narrat A. Gellius **(Lib. 19, cap. 1),** cum illud navigium horribili coelo et mari periculosissime jactaretur, vi timoris expalluit. Id animadversum est ab eis qui aderant, quamvis in mortis vicinia, curiosissime attentis, utrumne philosophus animo turbaretur. Deinde tempestate transacta, mox ut securitas praebuit colloquendi vel etiam garriendi locum, quidam ex his, quos navis illa portabat, dives luxuriosus Asiaticus philosophum compellat, illudens quod extimuisset atque palluisset, cum ipse mansisset intrepidus in eo quod impendebat exitio. At ille Aristippi Socratici responsum retulit, qui cum in re simili eadem verba ab homine simili audisset, respondit illum pro anima nequissimi nebulonis merito non fuisse sollicitum, se autem pro Aristippi anima timere debuisse. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:307b): Tertius timor dicitur humanus, scilicet cum aliquis plus debito timet de corpore suo. Iste timor prohibetur in *Mattheo: Nolite timere eo qui occidunt corpus, animam autem non possunt occidere.* [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:307b): Quartus timor est servilis, cum aliquis timet peccare et abstinet se a peccato timore gehennae; habet tamen voluntatem peccandi, si peccartum posset impune fieri, et, in quantum in se est, vellet non esse justitiam, ut posset perpetrare culpam. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:307b-308a): Sextus timor dicitur filialis. Nam sicut filius super omnia timet offensam patris, etiamsi pater non intenderet eum percutere; sic qui habet timorem Domini filialem, instar foni filii, timet et cavet offensam Patris coelestis, etiamsi ex offensa illa nihil mali deberet sibi accidere. ... Iste timore a sanctis doctoribus vocatur castus timor, qualis famulorum Susannae, qui secundum Danielem verecundantur specialiter, et timent in turpi facto. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. *Vitae patrum*, Verba seniorum 11.2 (PL 73:933): Pulsaverunt autem eum fratres, dicentes: Abba, ubi es? Et ille respondit: In conspectu divini judicii assisto. Dicunt ei: Et tu times? Et ille dixit: Interim laboravi virtute qua [Col.0933C] potui, in custodiendis mandatis Dei; sed homo sum, et nescio utrum placuerint opera mea coram Deo. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. THE DOMINICAN MISSAL in Latin and English, Revised Edition, Blackfriars Publications, Oxford, 1948: THE ORDINARY OF THE MASS No. 16. COMMON PREFACE Said on all Feasts and Ferias having no proper Preface:

Vere dignum et justum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus, per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem majestatem tuam laudant angeli adorant dominationes tremunt potestates; caeli caelorumque virtutes, ac beata seraphim, socia exsultatione concelebrant.

<http://www.liturgialatina.org/dominican/mass_ordinary.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Petrus Alphonsus, *Disciplina Clericalis* Fabula 26 (PL 157:702-703): Tunc rex, defixo paululum visu, sic incepit: [Col.0703A] Ut patet in verbis nihilum esse potentiam confiteris. Cui philosophus in angustam suae mentis sedem receptus ait: Scis ipse nimium tibi ambitionem mortalium rerum dominatam fuisse et materiam rebus gerendis te optavisse quod ne virtus tua, ut ipse fateris, consuesceret tacita; sed ob cupidinem gloriae, sicut rei sinceritas est, fecisti adipiscendae, quae quam sit exilis et totius vacua ponderis sit considera. Tuae praeterita gloriae potentia utpote quae jam nulla est, metuenda non est, sed neque futura, cujus eventus dubitabilis est et incertus. De praesenti constat quia ita parva est, ita momentanea et quae in ictu oculi adnullanda: ob hoc enim nulla sui parte est formidanda. Perceptis denique philosophi verbis, rex ait complicibus suis: Servus Dei est, [Col.0703B] videte ne quid molestum ei faciatis aut inhonestum.

Cf. Pedro Alfonso, *The Scholar’s Guide* 28 trans. Joseph Ramon Jones and John Esten Keller (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1969), (pp. 104-105): The king, then with an exp0ression of mild surprise, began to say, “It is plain from your words that your are not afraid of my poer at all.”

The philosopher, in profound thought, said, “You know only too well that the ambition of morthal things has dominated you and that you wanted an opportunity to reign so that your power—as you youself confess—might not decline in obscurity. But on account of the craving for obtaining glory, you have acted as if there were some value in what your are seeking. So consider how insignificant and vain this glory is. The power of your past glory, inasmuch as it is now nonexistent, is not to be feared; but neither is that of your future glory, whose outcome is doubtful and uncertain. It is plain that the power of your present glory is so small that in a moment as in a wink of an eye it can be wiped out. Therefore, it is not to be feared on any account.” [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Augustine, *Sermo* 178.9.10 (PL 38:965): Magnum est, non facere malum: magnum est, amare bonum. Nam et latro timet malum; et ubi non potest, non facit: et tamen latro est. Deus enim cor interrogat, non manum. Lupus venit ad ovile ovium, quaerit invadere, quaerit jugulare, quaerit devorare: vigilant pastores, latrant canes: nihil potest, non aufert, non occidit; sed tamen lupus venit, lupus redit. Numquid quia ovem non tulit, ideo lupus venit, et ovis redit? Lupus venit tremens, lupus redit tremens: lupus est tamen et fremens et tremens. Interroga ergo te, quisquis vis judicare; et vide si tunc non facis male, quando potes facere et ab homine non puniri: tunc times Deum. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:306b): Secundo timore Dei custodit hominem a culpa futura. Sicut enim sapiens dedicus infirmo quem habet in cura, non solum dat antidotum ad expellendum morbum, set etiam ministrat curato aliquod electuarium contra recidivum: ... Unde dicitur in *Exodo: Ut probaret vos venit Dominus, et ut timore illius esset in vobis, et non peccaretis.* [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 1.30 (PL 41:43): At ille Scipio pontifex maximus vester, ille judicio totius senatus vir optimus, istam vobis metuens calamitatem, nolebat aemulam tunc imperii Romani Carthaginem dirui, et decernenti ut dirueretur, contradicebat Catoni, timens infirmis animis hostem, securitatem; et tanquam pupillis civibus idoneum tutorem, necessarium videns esse terrorem. Nec eum sententia fefellit: re ipsa probatum est, quam verum diceret. Deleta quippe Carthagine, magno scilicet terrore Romanae reipublicae depulso et exstincto, tanta de rebus prosperis orta mala continuo subsecuta sunt, ut corrupta disruptaque concordia prius saevis cruentisque seditionibus. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 6.1 (8:306a): Et Philosophus: “Qui timet Deum, omnia timesnt eum; qui vero non timet Deum, timet omnia.” Unde Dain, perpetrato homicidio fratris, statim habuit caput tremulum, et ait: *Omnis qui viderit me, occidet me,* ut dicitur in *Genesi.*

Cf. Peter Alfonsus, *Disciplina clericalis* “De timore Dei” : Dixit alius philosophus: Qui timet Deum, omnia timent eum; qui vero non timet Deum, timet omnia.

[Peter Alfonsi: Disciplina clericalis (thelatinlibrary.com)](https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/alfonsi.disciplina.html)

Cf. Peter Alfonsus, *The Scholar’s Guide*, trans. Joseph Ramon Jones (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute, 1969), p. 35: Another wise man saide, “All things fer him how fears God; he who does not fer God fears all things. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. Horace, *Epistula* 1.52 (LCL 194:354-355): oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore. tu nihil admittes in te formidine poenae:

The good hate vice because they love virtue; you will commit no crime because you dread punishment.

Cf. Radulfus Ardens, *Homilia* 3 (PL 155:1955): Oderunt peccare mali formidine poenae. [Col.1955D] Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)