133 Face (*Facies*)

It is serious for the lover if his beloved averts her face from him. Therefore, Can. 2[:14]: The groom says to the bride: “Show me your face.” So, it is serious to the lover of the Lord if he does not see his face. According to the naturalists,[[1]](#endnote-1) it is a sign of death if the bird Caladrius turns his face from the sick man, so in proportion, Isai. 64[:7]: “You have hidden your face from us and have crushed us.” In figure of these, 2 Kings 14[:32]: “I beseech you therefore that I may see the face of the king.” Otherwise he will kill me.

¶ Behold here that he preferred to die than not to see the face of the king. Wherefore, Bernard,[[2]](#endnote-2) even if he might imagine a thousand hells, it is nothing like to lack the vision of God. Therefore, it says in Psal. [79:4]: “Show us your face, and we shall be saved.” And Moses [Exod.] 33[:20], after the grace of God was found, he asked to this extent to see his face. Wherefore Chrysostom in the book *De reparacione lapsi,[[3]](#endnote-3)* many ignorant think themselves satisfied if they escape hell; I would rather, in truth, think every hell be removed by the glory of the vision of the Lord, Deut. 32[:20]: “I will hide my face from them,” as if saying, that would be the greatest suffering for them. Wherefore, Augustine, book 8, *De Trinitate,* c. 8,[[4]](#endnote-4) but the good face is measured equally, affected cheerfully, and colored brightly. Which things can be fitted to the face of Christ. Therefore, it says in Psal. [104:4]: “Seek his face evermore,” and rest in the face of your Christ.

1. Cf. *The Bestiary:; A Book of Beasts*, trans. T. H. White (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1954), 115-116: The Caladrius, as Physiologus calls the creature, is a completely white bird without a speck of black. Its dung is good for eye-trouble. Now this bird is generally to be found in the halls of kings, owing to its peculiar properties. For if anybody is very ill indeed, you can tell from a Caladrius whether the patient is going to live or die. When the sickness is mortl, as soon as the Caladrius sees the patient he turns his back on him, and then everybody knows that the fellow is doomed. If on the other hand it is not a mortal illness, the Cladrius faces the patient. It takes the whole infirmity of the man upon itself, flies up toward the sun, sicks up the man’s infirmity and disperses it into the air. Then the patient is cured. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Bernard, cf. John Chrysostom, *Homelia in Mattheum Aniano interprete,*  Homelia 24, cap. 7 (1503, 68r): Tamen si mille aliquis ponat gehennas nihil tale dicturus est; quale est a beatae illius gloriae honore propelli, exosumque esse Christo: et audire ab illo non noui uos, atque argui quod esurienti, et sitienti negauerimus cibum, et potum. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. John Chrysostom, cf. Rabanus Maurus, *De modo Poenitentiae* 13 (PL 112:1320): Nonnulli imperitorum [Col.1320C] putant sibi satis esse et optabile videri, si gehenna tantummodo careant, ego autem multo graviores quam gehennae dico esse cruciatus removeri et abjici ab illa gloria, nec puto tam acerba esse gehennae supplicia, ut sunt illa quibus torquetur is qui arcetur a conspectibus Christi, hoc, crede mihi, poenis omnibus gravius est. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 8.3.4 (PL 42:949): et bona facies hominis dimensa pariliter et affecta hilariter et luculenter colorata. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)