389 Visitation (*Visitatio*)

God visits, man visits, and the angel visits. The visitation of God is triple: past, present, and future.

First therefore, God visited man with a corporeal presence in the incarnation, just as if a legate sent from the side of the pope with a plenitude of power.

For first, in the difficult case of the incarnation he dispensed over every decree so that a virgin without deflowering be fruitful, without burden be pregnant, without pain be a woman who has given birth. A virgin mother of a son, a woman mother of God, a daughter mother of the Father, Psal. [64:10]: “You have visited the earth,” that is, a humble and steadfast virgin, “and have plentifully watered it,” through a plenitude of gifts, “you have many ways enriched it,” through the fertilization made of the Holy Spirit. Jer. 29[:10]: “I will visit you, and I will perform my good word in your favor.”

Second, in that coming he worked at preaching, Luke 1[:78-79]: “The Orient from on high has visited us to enlighten them,” etc. For man does not know how to find the door of paradise like a whale, but each fell into the ditch of hell, Luke 7[:16]: “A great prophet is risen up among us: and, God has visited his people.”

¶ Third, he pacified the great discords which were between God and man, angel and man, man and man. Nor was there another who could pacify this, because God did not want to put himself above a pure man, nor man above a pure God. Therefore, he was mixed as a mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus in whom God and man came to an agreement, Psal. [11:6]: “I will set him in safety,” says God the Father and I, “I will deal confidently in his regard,” says the good man the mediator Christ who rather wished to die in pain than not to pacify between the parts, Isai. 60[:17]: “I will make your visitation peace.” Psal. [105:4]: “Visit us with your salvation,” so that namely he may pacify through his passion.

Fourth, he promulgated absolutions and indulgences. He was of humankind, excommunicated by the sentence of the Church, the triumphant one thrown out from the communion, Luke [1:68]: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; because he has visited and wrought the redemption.” Where Joseph said in parallel of Christ, Gen. last chapter [50:23]: “God will visit you after my death and will make you go up out of this land,” that is, from limbo. Psal. [8:5]: Lord, “What is man that you are mindful [of him?] etc. He visits man with his presence and spiritually.

First, just as a master of discipline does not err and if he would have erred, so that he may correct defects by sending in his medicinal tribulations, 1 Kings 17[:18]: “Go see your brethren.” 1 Kings 17[:18]: “Go see your brethren, if they are well,” etc. Psal. [88:31, 33]: “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments … I will visit [their iniquities] with a rod,” etc.

Again, in the Psal. [58:6]: “Attend to visit all the nations,” etc., “have no mercy on all of them that work iniquity,” namely, in the future.

Second, so that placed in affliction he may be consoled and bring happiness, just as the three friends of Job [2:11]: “They had made an appointment to come together and visit him and comfort him.” Exod. 3[:16-17]: “Visiting,” through tribulation, “I have visited you,” through consolation, “and I have seen,” with my eye of compassion, “all,” namely, adversities, “that hath befallen you in Egypt,” by the Pharaoh, that is, the persecuting devil, “And I have said the word to bring you forth out of the land of Egypt,” etc.

Third, that advancing to the good work he may stimulate you to continue, just as the householder visits his laboring workers, Gen. 21[:1]: “The Lord visited Sara,” that is, the straitened soul which Isaac found who is interpreted as laughter, that is, a meritorious work.

¶ Third, the word will visit the world at the end and the good and evil and particularly the proud will be put away from the throne, Soph. 1[:8-9]: “I will visit upon the princes,” who are proud of the power, “and upon the king's sons,” who are proud of their noble origins, “and upon all such as are clothed with strange apparel,” that is, hypocrites who outwardly are dressed as a lamb, but inwardly are wolves, “and I will visit upon every one that enters arrogantly over the threshold the house of the Lord,” that is, who are proud of their knowledge and authority. Therefore, it is said in 1 Pet. 5[:6]: “Be humbled under the mighty hand of God.”

Second, he will visit the cupidinous and the avaricious so that they will be despoiled of their riches, Jer. 6[:13, 15] and namely “from the least of them even to the greatest, all are given to covetousness,” and it follows as a result “in the time of their visitation they shall fall down.” So that rich man was visited, and Luke 12[:21]. But otherwise, the simple will be visited, Ezech. 34[:12, 14]: “So will I visit my sheep, and will deliver them,” so that “I will feed them.”

Third, the voluptuous will be tortured eternally, Soph. 1[:12]: “I will visit upon the men that are settled on their lees,” so that they will be gnawing their flesh. It is said in Soph. 2[:7]: “They shall rest in the evening,” like good workers, “because the Lord their God will visit them, and bring back their captivity.”

Fourth, so that the detractors and false speakers may be confounded, Jer. 9[:8; 51:33]: “Their tongue is a piercing arrow, it hath spoken deceit. One speaks peace with his friend,” and it follows, Woe to them, “Because the time shall come.”

The second visitation is of man to man and this is useful.

First, because it renders man grateful to God. For he loves those princes who visit their friends, namely, being sick in distant parts, James 1[:27]: “Religion clean before God and men, is this, to visit” the sick, among those cited before the judge. Let him think about these over whom he is to be judge, Matt. 25[:36]: “I was sick, and you visited me.”

Second, because he preserves man from sin, Job [5:24]: “Visiting your beauty you shall not sin.” The wagon driver seeing his companion to have fallen down guards himself, and one seeing the house of his neighbor to burn guards himself.

Third, he edifies his neighbor, Eccli. 7[:39]: “Be not slow to visit the sick.” However, note here that for this man ought to be visited so that his spirit may be guarded, Job 10[:12]: “Your visitation has preserved my spirit.” For a man is besieged by many pursuers, Psal. [55:2-3]: “All day long he hath afflicted me fighting against me. They are many that make war against me.” According to Ambrose in his *Hexameron*,[[1]](#endnote-1) (hawks) visit their chicks in the nest while they are tender lest they grow fat and lazy, but rather to learn to capture prey, but the prelate ought to visit his underlings, Matt. 25[:36]: “I was sick, and you visited me.”

Again, the eagle often visits her chicks on account of the serpent which naturally attacks them ascends the tree to kill them if it can, so the sons of the Church ought to be visited against the devil. However, the manner of the human visitation is placed, 1 Kings 17[:18] where Isai the father said to David, “go see your brethren, if they are well: and learn with whom they are placed.” For the visitor ought to learn the conditions of those to be visited. For they are not his servants but his brothers. For they are not his servants but his brothers in Christ. However, a brother is a person of skill. However, all of us where we do not sin are equal according to Gregory in his *Pastorale*.[[2]](#endnote-2) On account of this Christ said to Peter how he should set up the prelacy of the others, Luke 22[:32]: “And you, being once converted, confirm your brethren.” This is shown figuratively, Gen. 37[:14] in this that Jacob the patriarch told Joseph as a future prelate over all his brothers, “Go, and see if all things be well with your brethren, and the cattle.”

Concerning this authority, see above chapter [296] To Preach (*Predicare*)

This one wants that he may see if all things are well because prosperity is to be fears more than adversity.

Just as it is evident above in the chapter Prosperity (*Prosperitas*).[[3]](#endnote-3)

Also, he ought to pay attention to their occupation. Wherefore he says, “If they are well,” Prov. 12[:22]: “They that deal faithfully please him.” And to [2] Thess. 3[:11]: “For we have heard there are some among you who walk disorderly, working not at all, but curiously meddling.”

Against whom it is noted above in chapter [262] Work (*Operari*).

Also, he ought to see the association of the underlings with others. Therefore, he says, “And learn with whom they are placed.” For all things which are according to God are ordered, Rom. 13[:1]. Wherefore also the society of the Church is described “as an army set in array,” Can. 6[:3]. But according to the Philosopher, book 12 of the *Metaphysics*,[[4]](#endnote-4)in a community there is a kind of double order. One of all to the prelate just as an army to the leader. The other is order of individual things among themselves. So, the underlings ought to be ordered in humility to the prelate, in amicability to the society. Wherefore Bernard,[[5]](#endnote-5) you who live in a congregation, you live well, if you live orderly and humbly. And note here that of the distributions of the house of Joseph when the sacks of grain were examined Joseph began “at the eldest and ending at the youngest,” Gen. 44[:12]. So, the visiting prelate ought to begin at the older because as commonly the sin of the underlings is nothing but the negligence of the prelates or of those giving the example of an evil life. Just as the dryness of the branches in the tree comes from a defect in the root, Ezech. 9[:6]: “Begin at my sanctuary.”

¶ Again, Laban first examined the tent of Jacob himself then the others, Gen. 31[:33]. Therefore, every human visitation ought to be salutary, that is for the health of the underlings. This is to be prayed for, Psal. [105:4]: “Visit us with your salvation.”

Again, see and visit the vine itself and perfect it. So, the vine needs to be watched continuously and purged of superfluities, if the vine of the Church is not be converted by chance into wild vines, that is, into the forest life. Wherefore Psal. [88:33]: “I will visit their iniquities with a rod.” Meritoriously when the Lord sent Moses into Egypt to visit the children of Israel, he gave him a rod in his hand, Exod. 4[:4-20]. But although God often visits men, they do not notice this because Christ complains, Luke [19:42]: “If you also had known,” because you did not know the time of your visitation. Therefore Amos [3:2] the prophet says of God, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore, will I visit upon you all your iniquities.”

¶ Third, an angel visits man just like the messenger of the king visits his friend when he is sick, Tob. 3[:25] God sent Raphael to Tobias and Sara so that he may guard them and heal the elder Tobias from his blindness. So, God sent his son to visit and heal us, Luke 1[:78-79]: “The mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high has visited us, to enlighten them that sit in darkness.” From all of which it is gathered that a visitation is the be praised when it happens quietly, charitably, and piously. And according to this God visits us, as a prelate made to his underlings seeking out diligently, as a teacher to his student rooting out freely, as a physician to the sick considering wisely.

Concerning the first, Isai. 26[:21]: “The Lord will come out of his place, to visit the iniquity of the inhabitant.” And Exod. 3[:16]: “Visiting I have visited you: and I have seen all that hath befallen you,” etc.

Concerning the second, Psal. [88:33]: “I will visit their iniquities with a rod.”

Concerning the third, 4 Kings 8[:29]: “The king of Juda, went down to visit Joram.” Christ did this by assuming our flesh.

1. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 5.18.59 (PL 14:231): [Accipitres] Deinde cum his natura quadam praedandi munus inoleverit, magis a tenero pullos suos instituere videntur ad praedam, [Col.0231D] quam pastus abdicare compendiis. Cavent ne in tenera aetate pigrescant, ne solvantur deliciis, ne marcescant otio, ne discant cibum magis exspectare quam quaerere, ne naturae suae deponant vigorem. Intermittunt studia nutriendi; ut in usus rapiendi audere compellant. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, cf. *Regulae Pastoralis* 2.6 (PL 77:34): Sit rector bene agentibus per humilitatem socius, contra delinquentium vitia per zelum justitiae erectus; ut et bonis in nullo se praeferat, et cum pravorum culpa exigit, potestatem protinus sui prioratus agnoscat, quatenus et honore suppresso aequalem se subditis bene viventibus deputet, et erga perversos jura rectitudinis exercere non formidet. Nam sicut in libris Moralibus dixi se me memini (Lib. XXI, Moral., cap. 10, nunc n. 22), liquet quod omnes homines [Col.0034C] natura aequales genuit, sed variante meritorum ordine alios aliis culpa postponit. Ipsa autem diversitas quae accessit ex vitio, divino judicio dispensatur; ut quia omnis homo aeque stare non valet, alter regatur ab altero. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. No chapter named Prosperitas. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12.10 1075a11-24 (Barnes 2:1699): We must consider also in which of two ways the nature of the universe contains the good, and the highest good, whether as something separate and by itself, or as the order of the parts. Probably in both ways, as an army does; for its good is found both in its order and in its leader, and more in the latter; for he does not depend on the order but it depends on him. And all things are ordered together somehow, but not all alike,-both fishes and fowls and plants; and the world is not such that one thing has nothing to do with another, but they are connected. For all are ordered together to one end, but it is as in a house, where the freemen are least at liberty to act at random, but all things or most things are already ordained for them, while the slaves and the animals do little for the common good, and for the most part live at random; for this is the sort of principle that constitutes the nature of each. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Bernard, *In Festo SS. Petri et Pauli Apostolorum* 1.4 (PL 183:470): Arbitror autem quod tu, qui in congregatione es, bene vivis, si vivis ordinabiliter, sociabiliter et humiliter: ordinabiliter tibi, sociabiliter proximo, humiliter Deo. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)