Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

129 The Sea (*Mare*)

The sea. In the sea the whirlwind is accustomed to happen for three causes. Sometimes from a superior cause as from erratic stars, according to Augustine in the book *De vita beata*,[[1]](#endnote-1) and in an *Epistola*.[[2]](#endnote-2) Thence he 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 born from a great kind or from the threshold of knowledge. The second wind is carnal concupiscence which blows from the west because daily it tends toward the sunset.

¶ The third wind is avarice which blows from the south. The fourth is laziness and idleness which blows from the north.

¶ Again by bringing in a tempest for a sailor, the four make a burden which they project, that is, 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 they hold themselves because,[[3]](#endnote-3) Envy seeks the highest ones, etc. Third, they run back to God and the saints, Matt. 8[25]: “Lord, save us, we perish.” Again, in port the sailors are secure from the winds and from the pirates. They are quiet from labors and tempests, enriched from bearing goods. So they who arrive in heaven are secure from the temptations, the quiet from labors, rich with merits.

¶ Again, the world is called the sea on account of being blown up with pride, Psal. [92:4]: “Wonderful are the surges of the sea.” So, the world. [1] John 2[:16]: “For all that is in the world,

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is the concupiscence of the flesh,” etc. 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,” etc. 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, Psal. [13:1]: “There is none that do good.” John 14[:27]: “My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives do I give unto you.” For the peace of the world is idleness, 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 through 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,” etc. 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.” And so by the sea some things are moved as ships, some things are drowned in the sea, as stones, some things are raised up by the sea such as clouds. Thus, in this world as if in the dangerous sea which is moved by the oars of virtues as voyagers, some are drowned by the weight of sins as impenitents, some are lifted by the wings of virtues as the just persevering. 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.” We are therefore in this world as if in the sea and the soul in the body as if a sailor on a ship. And so, in a time of tempest those sailing suffer from peril, they bail out the entering water. They vow vows that they might lighten the ship, they promise they will fast, and weep. So, we in this world being tested ought to suffer, bailing out water through confession, lighten

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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,[[4]](#endnote-4) 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,” etc.[[5]](#endnote-5)

¶ Again in the sea are seven perils to which the seven dangers of the world correspond, but therefore more to be feared because they kill souls.

¶ First is the elevation of the waves to which correspond the swelling of pride through which the front part of the ship is elevated against nature, that is, the flesh, and the rear is depressed, that is, the spirit. But this is perilous because it drives out grace, destroys virtues, and offends God. It is well therefore that the Christian ought in such peril cry out and say, Lord, save us we perish.

¶ Second is the contumacy in the sea, so in the world grows cupidity. Wherefore Eccli. [8:7]. Seneca,[[6]](#endnote-6) As we grow old, all our vices grow old with us, but only avarice becomes young. Therefore, his infirmity is so much more dangerous by how much no one sees himself to labor in those things, and yet they afflict in acquiring, Eccle. 5[:9]: “A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money.” It afflicts in conserving it, Job 15[:21]: “When there is peace, he always suspects treason. It afflicts in spending, Eccle. 6[:1]: “There is also another evil which I have seen, a man to whom he has given riches, yet he does not give him power to eat thereof, but a stranger shall eat it up.” And truly these matters see how avarice afflicts. Therefore, it is necessary to flee these and say, Lord save us we perish.

¶ Third there is in the sea the spoilage of pirates. So, in the world is envy which spoils a man with virtue from whom it excludes charity which is the root of all goods, [1] Cor. 13[:2]: “If I have all prophecy, and have not charity, I am nothing,” etc. Let us call therefore, Lord, save us.

¶ Fourth is ignorance of the locations. So, in the world is sloth which does not know its soul, or how to lead it to the eternal port, Prov. 18[:8]: “Fear casts down the slothful.” Therefore, it is necessary to call out, Lord, save us, we perish.

¶ Fifth there is in the sea the intemperance of the winds, so it is in the world that wrath which casts man into uncertainty, Eccli. 30[:26]: “Envy and anger shorten a man’s days.”

¶ Sixth there is in the sea the profundity of sands, so in the world is the vice of gluttony absorbing reason. Isai. 5[:11]: “Woe to you that rise up early in the morning to follow drunkenness.” Here note concerning that one who

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appealed against Pharaoh the drunken king to Pharaoh the sober and thus the sentence was changed.[[7]](#endnote-7)

¶ Seventh there is in the sea immense savage beasts, so in the world, there is lust in which one is entirely absorbed by reason of the flesh, so it is that God is entirely deserted, Psal. 72:27]: “Behold they that go far from you shall perish, you have destroyed all of them that are disloyal to you.”

¶ Again there is abuse of creatures, Wis. 2[:6-7]: “Come therefore, let us fill ourselves with costly wine.”

¶ Again this world is said as the sea 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 this sea of the world, of ten souls hardly one is saved. Wherefore Augustine,[[8]](#endnote-8) 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.” 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.

1. 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-1)
2. 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-2)
3. 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-3)
4. *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-4)
5. At this point F 128 adds: So it is treated in chapter [239] The World (*Mundus*). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Seneca, cf. Pseudo-Augustine, Omnia in homine senescunt vitia, sola avaritia juvenescit. Augustinus (pseudo) Belgicus, *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes*, 48 (PL 40, col.1330) [Viridarium consolationis 1.5.14 (wlu.ca)](https://viridarium-project.wlu.ca/Fontes/1.5.14.pdf)

Cf. Petrus Berchorius, *Moralia* 7.22 (p. 192b): Vnde Seneca, Cum caetera vitia senescentibus nobis senesceant sola auaritia iuuenescit. [PETRI BERCHORII PICTAVIENSIS Ordinis D. Benedicti OPERA OMNIA - Google Books](https://www.google.com/books/edition/PETRI_BERCHORII_PICTAVIENSIS_Ordinis_D_B/Bm5kAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Seneca:+nobis+senescentibus,&pg=PA192&printsec=frontcover)

Cum cetera vitia senesccant in homine, sola avaritia iuvenescit.

D. Augustinus: Omnia peccata in homine senescut, sola avaritia iuvenescit.

Bernardus: Cum omnia vitia senescente homine senescant, sola avaritia iuvenescit. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. The original allusion is to Philip II (382-336 BC), King of Macedon, whose response to such an appeal is reported by the Roman historian and moralist Valerius Maximus (floruit 14-37 AD) in Facta et Dicta Memorabilia (Memorable Deeds and Sayings). Chapter 2 of Book 6 is titled Libere Dicta aut Facta (Frank Statements or Actions); after the Roman Stories, the first of the Foreign Stories is as follows:

*Inserit se tantis uiris mulier alienigeni sanguinis, quae a Philippo rege temulento immerenter damnata, prouocare se iudicium uociferata est, eoque interrogante ad quem prouocaret, ‘ad Philippum’ inquit, ‘sed sobrium’. excussit crapulam oscitanti ac praesentia animi ebrium resipiscere causaque diligentius inspecta iustiorem sententiam ferre coegit. igitur aequitatem, quam impetrare non potuerat, extorsit, potius praesidium a libertate quam ab innocentia mutuata.
(translation: Henry John Walker – 2004)
A woman from a foreign nation joins these great men. She had been wrongly convicted by King Philip, who was drunk at the time. She shouted out that she was appealing against the judgement, and when Philip asked her who she was going to appeal to, she said, “To Philip, but not until he is sober.” He had been gaping stupidly, but she knocked his drunkenness out of him. By her determination, she forced him to come back to his senses, inspect her case more carefully, and make a more just decision. She had been unable to obtain justice so she got it by force, and she borrowed strength from her frankness rather than from her innocence.* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. 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-8)