Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

229 The shedding of Christ’s blood (*Sanguis Christi effusio*)

The shedding of Christ’s blood was our cure. Therefore, in his abode the arm of a man is bandaged, lanced, and [its pain] lessened, so the whole body may be healed. So, Christ who is the arm of the Father is abated so that the whole body which is the Church may be healed. Again, through the example of the figure, Heb. 9[:22]: “Almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” of sins. If therefore they were cleansed by the blood of animals and without spilling blood, there is no remission of sins. If therefore they were cleansed by the blood of animals symbolically and figuratively much more has been signified of those figures, better by the offering of blood. From these things it is evident that the first conclusion, how the blood of Christ could and should be sacrificed to live. The second conclusion is that we should carefully collect this blood which is taught by nature. For the bath helps the medicine. But the hot blood of Christ contributes to the bath, Apo. 1[:5]: “He has loved us and washed us in his own blood.” To this reason agrees in practice. For to whom anything good is ordered, the good is a free bequest and executors follow until he has it. But Christ gave us liberty in his will, Zachar. 9[:11]: “You also by the blood of your testament have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit.” To this agrees the scriptural figure. For the precept was in the law in memory of the leading out of the sons of Israel from the land of servitude. To kill a lamb, to mark the posts just as is evident in Exod. [12:7]. There it is said in Zach. 9[:11]: “You also by the blood of your testament have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit,” etc. To this agrees that history which can be called a parable which is ascribed among the works of Bernard.[[1]](#endnote-1) A certain noble lady would lose her inheritance unless some fighter would fight for her and win. Finally, there was present a certain son of a great king under the habit of a pilgrim. Having only a staff with which he would fight.

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This one asked of the girl that if won, and in the war, he met his death, his staff and her pierced servant the girl would continually place before her eyes. Nor ever assent to marry her enemy. Therefore, he fought, won and was dead. His armaments were hung up next to her place. But finally with the enemy begging the lady for marriage, at the counsel of her handmaiden the arms were moved and put in a room, then also the latrine. Thus, finally the ungrateful woman was seduced and coupled to her enemy. But she was expelled from her inheritance and put to his service.

¶ This lady, most beloved, is human nature, Christ is the fighter, the staff is the cross, the servant is the body, the enemy is the devil, the handmaiden is the flesh, the delights or suggestions are put to service when from habit one returns to sin. The third conclusion is to see how man ought to dispose himself to the reception of this blood. Preparation and disposition are required because it is perilous for one sick to take powerful food. But the flesh of Christ in which there is always blood is a powerful food. Therefore, etc. However, man is disposed to this sacrament by the truth of love, just as the Apostle said, [Rom. 5:9]: “Christ” pacified “by his blood” the things in heaven and those on earth. Therefore, if man does not have peace toward God and his neighbor for which Christ died, although he receives the sacrament, he despises it. Pride is the cause of dissension. Therefore, abandon it and embrace humility.

¶ The example in art. He would be a fool who would give the body of Christ to a dog, but such is the proud and wrathful man. And see if you do that. Wherefore your father lost ten pounds. And again, you do that. Is it not in you to do as much as your father. Again, Christ lost so much, he shed all his blood so that his sons to gather and pacify his sons. Therefore, if you destroy however much is in you, you pour out your blood. What therefore is the value of dead blood and to spill it again, [1] Cor. 11[:27]: “Whoever drinks unworthily, shall be guilty of the blood.” *Gloss*,[[2]](#endnote-2) And so you kill Christ because you despise his body. So do those who despised the members of Christ who are Christians. Therefore, he remits to anyone who repents and then receives the sacrament.

¶ Here[[3]](#endnote-3) can be narrated concerning the soldier to whom the cross inclined itself on Good Friday because as revenge for the death of his father, the knight forgave the killer. Hear

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proud one, you who extol concerning a certain family, the blood of Christ was of a greater family, which he spilled for you as if he despised it. Hear wrathful one because for you he suffered many things.

¶ Second man is disposed to this sacrament through the purity of innocence so namely you do not harm your neighbor, if you have harmed that you make satisfaction, if you have taken, if you have deceived, you make restitution. Christ who did not take paid. Because for man who owed and could not make satisfaction. For sin is not dismissed unless what was taken away is restored, but you say if I restore, I will be poor, my family will be beggars. Thus, Christ is poor, why therefore are you ashamed to be poor with Christ for a time so that you may always be rich with him. Behold I demonstrate by example in nature. It is impossible to join the greatest distances. Of such a kind is to bend heaven to earth because only he can do that who can do all things. But the blood of Christ is “heavenly” according to the Apostle, Heb. 6[:4]. But the avaricious is as if totally earth because according to wisdom, [Eccli. 10:9]: “Nothing is more wicked than the covetous man.” Therefore, etc. Second thus in art a halfpenny is worth more among the avaricious than God. Why therefore ought the blood of Christ be of value to him who prefers the halfpenny.

¶ Third man ought to dispose himself through true penance which gratifies, namely, pure confession, generous alms, and pious patience. Concerning the first [1] Macc. 13[:47]: Judas “cleansed” the temple. Concerning the second, Luke 11[:41]: “That which remains, give alms, and all things are clean unto you.” Concerning the third reason in the law, water is made clean by oil and blood. Therefore, whoever does not wish to receive the Lord Christ into his hospitality according to the exigency of his status, he dishonors Christ and is guilty [1] Cor. [6:20]: “You are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body.”

¶ In this they are at fault as if how much more they receive from God of the benefits of Christ poured out in blood, so much less they communicate and celebrate. For as long as one was a poor priest he celebrates continuously, if he be made a vicar then once in a week, if a fat rector hardly once in a year, but this does not please God. Therefore, they ought to accept but also this with dignity, that is, without the conscience of a mortal sin. First as far as himself so no uncleanness resides and if it is, let it be purged through confession, through contrition, with the proposition of avoiding. Second as far as one’s neighbor that if you have harmed him by word made by insult,

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defamation, or beating, let them make satisfaction by sacrifice of a thing. Third, as far as this sacrament so that from it one generated the right faith.

1. Bernard, [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Glossa ordinaria, interlinea on 1 Cor. 11:27: mortis Christi penas dabit vel de bono male sumpto maculam trahet [Glossae Scripturae Sacrae-electronicae (Gloss-e) (cnrs.fr)](https://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?id=liber&numLivre=61&chapitre=61_11) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. *Fasciculus morum,* part 2, ed. and trans. Siegfried Wenzel, (pp. 124-125): Nota eciam de milite qui mortem patris remisit alteri militi in Parasceve pro amore illius qui illo die pro humano genere mortuus est: qui cum simul ad crucem honorandam et oblaciones offerendas ivissent, crucifixus brachiis dissolutis illum qui misercordiam fecit amplexus est, et vocem pro venia ibidem audivit.

Notice also the story about the knight who on Good Friday forgave another knight the death of his father, out of love for him who died on that day for all mankind. When the two knights went together to worship the cross and bring their offerings, the Crucified detached his arms ;and embraced the one who had acted so mercifully, and he then heard a voice speaking of forgiveness. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)