Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

25 Charity (*Caritas*)

Charity according to the Master of the *Sentences*, book 3,[[1]](#endnote-1) is the love by which God is loved on account of himself and our neighbor because of God. This is compared to a natural fountain, a virtual fire, or wedding attire.

¶ Concerning the first, a natural fountain[[2]](#endnote-2) in winter is warm, in summer it is cold, thus charity is warm in tribulation, John 4[:14]: “The water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water.”

¶ Concerning the second, it is said in Luke 12[:49]: “I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled?”

¶ Concerning the third, Matt. 22[:12], he who “did not have a wedding garment” was cast out from the wedding.

¶ And note here that this wedding attire[[3]](#endnote-3) which is charity is commended by four ways: by the art, the material, the color, and the fragrance.

¶ Concerning the first in Psal. [9:12]: “Declare his ways among the Gentiles.”

Concerning the second, note that other attires[[4]](#endnote-4) come from the fleece of animals, such as wool clothing, or from the covering of plants, such as linen clothing, or from the innards of worms, such as silk clothing. But the attire of charity is made of grace and the flesh of Christ. Wherefore it is signally said, Rom. 13[:14]: “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” As for the third, it is commended for color,[[5]](#endnote-5) Prov. [31:32]: “Fine linen, and purple is her covering.”

¶ Concerning the fourth,[[6]](#endnote-6) Can. 4[:11]: “The smell of your garments, as the smell of frankincense.” Wearing this attire merits a blessing, just as Jacob, Gen. 27[:27]: “And immediately as he smelled the fragrant smell of his garments, he blessed him,” etc.

¶ Charity is compared to fire in four conditions.[[7]](#endnote-7) For fire is stronger (*virtuosior*) than the other elements, as charity is to the other virtues (*virtutibus*), Luc. 13[:49]: “I am come to cast fire on the earth,” etc. But in this charity

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excels, because water can extinguish the material fire, but not charity, Can. 8[:7]. Second, fire burns and gives light,[[8]](#endnote-8) thus charity burns through affection, and it gives light through example, John 5[:35]: “He was a burning and a shining light.”

¶ Third, fire heats up the cold,[[9]](#endnote-9) [1] John 3[:14]: “We have passed from death to life.”

¶ Fourth, fire incinerates,[[10]](#endnote-10) as charity humiliates, Gen. 18[:27]: “I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.”

¶ Fifth, fire tends upward,[[11]](#endnote-11) Philip. 1[:23]: “I have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.”

¶ Sixth, fire is always in motion,[[12]](#endnote-12) so is charity always doing something good, according to that of Gregory, in the homily *De penitencia*,[[13]](#endnote-13) if love is idle, it is not [love], if it is great, it works [remarkable things].

¶ Seventh, fire removes rust,[[14]](#endnote-14) so does charity, Deut. 4[:24]: “The Lord your God is a consuming fire.”

Eighth, [fire] emits sparks,[[15]](#endnote-15) as charity sends out holy desires, Dan. 9[:23]: “You are a man of desires.”

¶ Ninth, fire makes a pot to boil and keeps flies off,[[16]](#endnote-16) so charity drives off temptations by which Beelzebub ignites, that is, the god of flies, Luke 11[:15-19].

Tenth, fire serves the lamp on the wall,[[17]](#endnote-17) lest it consume the oil, but on the other hand if the lamp is extinct, the prudent virgins seek this oil, Matt 25[:2-4].

Again, the charity of God had liberal munificence because he loved us without debt, he had an abundance of piety because he loved us without merit, he had a sufficiency of goodness because he loved us without being moved.

¶ Concerning the second, Titus 3[:5]: “Not by the works of justice, which we have done. Jer. 31[3]: “I have loved you with an everlasting love.”

Concerning the third Psal. [15:2]: “For you have no need of my goods.”

Again, charity is the merit of the living, because without it there is neither the elegance of eloquence, nor the eminence of knowledge, nor the excellence of work to merit glory. Therefore, the soul uses it just as a glorifying ornament, Rom. 11[:16]: “If the root be holy, so are the branches,” etc. Eph. 3[:17-18]: “That being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend what is the breadth.”

¶ Again, charity is the price of the dying, for letter without the seal is a division, without cement, it is of small price or vigor so do not depart without sanctifying charity, Can. the last chapter [8:7]: “If a man should give all the substance of his house [for love],” etc.

1. Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* lib. 3, dist. 27, chap. 1 (PL 192.812): Charitas est dilectio qua diligitur Deus propter se, et proximus propter Deum, vel in Deo.

Cf. Gulielmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:293a): Charitas est dilectio, qua diligitur Deus propter se, et proximus propter Deum, vel in Deo, ut habetur in libro tertio *Sententiarum* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gulielmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:294b): Charitas quidem est sicut fons naturalis: sicut enim aqua fontis naturalis in hyeme est calida, sic charitas fervet in tribulatione. Et sicut aqua fontis est frigida, vel frigescit interius, cum calor invalescit exterius; sic etiam interius tepescit amor Dei, cum invalescit exterius amor mundi. De hac aqua fontis mundani dicitur: *Omnis qui biberit ex aqua hac, sitiet iterum,* quia ut vulgo dicitur, talis aqua inflat et non satiat; sed de aqua fontis divini dicitur ibidem: *Aqua quam ego dabo, fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam æternam.* [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Gulielmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:294b-295a): Et nota quod vestis charitatis a quatuor præcipue commendatur, a quibus consuevit commendari vestos nuptialis. scilicet ab artificio, a materia, a colore, a fragrantia. Commendatur ergo vestis charitatis ab artificio . quia magno studio componitur a Deo, juxta illud: *Annuntiate inter gentes studia ejus*. Hæc enim sunt studia divina, ut componat in nobis charitatis indumenta. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295a): Commendatur etiam hæc vestis a materia: nam aliæ vestes sunt vel de velleribus animalium, ut vestis lanea; vel de corticibus herbarum, ut vestis linea; vel de visceribus vermium, ut vestis serica. Vestis autem charitatis fit ex gratia Spiritus sancti, et de visceribus Christi. Unde signanter dicit Apostolus: *lnduimini Dominum Jesum Christum*. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295a): Commendatur autem hæc vestis a colore: est autem duplex color hujus vestis, scilicet byssinus, et purpureus lit sicut rubeus color optime sedet super byssinum. vel candidum; sic charitas optime stat super hominem castum. Unde dicitur: *Byssus et purpura indumentum ejus*. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295a): Commendatur autem hæc vestis a fragrantia, juxta illud: *odor vestimentorum tuorum. sicut odor thuris*; et ideo qui portat hanc vestem a meretur benedictionem, sicut Jacob. Unde dicitur: *Statim, ut Isaac sensit vestimentorum ejus fragrantiam, benedicens ait*. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295a-b): Charitas comparatur igni in decem: nam primo ignis est virtuosior omnibus elementis: sic inter omnes virtutes efficacvior est virtue charitatis. Unde dicitur: *Ignem veni mittere in terram*. In hoc autem charitas excellit ignem quia aqua 4extinguit ignem naturalem; sed *aquae muoltae non poterunt extinguere charitatem*, ut dicitur in *Canticis*. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Secundo ignis ardet et lucet: sic charitas in homine ardet per affectum, et lucet per 4exemplum, sicut Joannes Baptista de quo dicitur: *Ille enim erat lucerna ardens et lucens*. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Tertio ignis frigidum ferrum accendit, et etiam carbonem extinctum: sic incendium charitatis expellit ab homine gelu avaritiae, et etiam mortem culpae, et facit vivere sicut carbonem exlinctum, ut dicitur: *Translati sumus de morte ad vitam, quoniam diligimus fratres.* [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Quarto ignis inctnerat : sic virtus et incendium charitatis redigit hominem in cinerem humilitatis. Unde dicebat Abraham: *Loquar ad Deum meum,* cum *sim pukis, et cinis?* [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Quinto ignis semper tendit sursum: sic charitas facit ascendere sursum vel ad coelum per desiderium. Unde dicebat Apostolus: *Cupio dissolvi, et esse cum Christo.* [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Sexto ignis semper in motu : sic charitas semper est in aliquo bono actu. Nam, sicut dicit Gregorius: Amor Dei nunquam est otiosus. Operatur enim magna, si est; si autem operari renuerit, amor non est. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Gregory, *Homilia in Evangelia* [Joan. 14:23-31] 2.30.2 (PL 76:1221): Nunquam est Dei amor otiosus. Operatur etenim magna, si est; si vero operari renuit, amor non est.

Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* 5.7 (PL 176.794): Si amor est, otiosus esse non potest. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Septimo ignis aufert rubiginem a ferro : sic charitas tollit rubiginem peccati. Unde dicitur: *Deus autem ignis est usque ad consummationem devorans,* scilicet peccati rubiginem, per suam ignitam dilectionem. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Octavo ignis scintillas emittit; sic charitas mentem dcvotam scintillas ccelestium desideriorum emittere facit, sicut legitur in *Daniele* : *Vir desideriorum es.* [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Nono ignis facit ollam fervere, et ollae ferventi non incidunt muscae : sic mens quae per charitatem fervet, muscas tentationis non timet. Diabolus autem propter infestationem tentationum, inter alia nomina sua vocatur Beelzebub, qui interpretatur Deus vel *pater muscarum* , ut habetur in *Luca*. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Guilelmus de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:295b): Decimo ignis servat lampades a mure : mus namque, cum lampadem extinctam conspicit, mox bibit oleum; sed ipsum non audet fugere, quandiu conspicit lampadem ardere : sic charitas ardens in animo, oleum gratiae custodit a Spiritu maligno. Hoc oleum volunt prudentes virgines in suis lampadibus habere, ut cum sponso valeant ad nuptias intrare, sicut dicitur in *Matthaeo*. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)