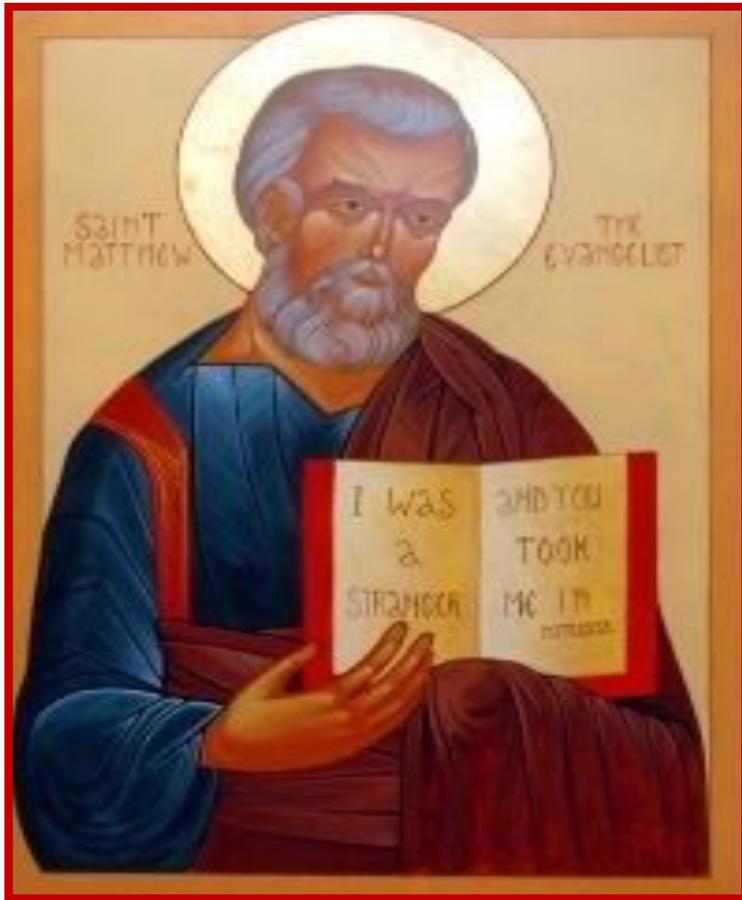


Wherefore the Godhead of Christ exercised His Divine power and grace towards those whom He touched through His hands, giving them health both of body and soul, or increasing the grace given them in their circumcision, and in other ways, sanctifying them, and offering them to God, and as it were consecrating them. Whence we need not doubt that these young children who were blessed by Christ grew up to be wise and holy men, who afterwards became rulers of Churches, and propagated the faith of Christ. So Francis Lucas.

Verse 15- No commentary given.



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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Matthew 19: 1-15

Douay Rheims Version

Christ declares matrimony to be indissoluble: he recommends the making one's self an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven; and parting with all things for him. He shews the danger of riches, and the reward of leaving all to follow him.

1. And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these words, he departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan.
2. And great multitudes followed him: and he healed them there.
3. And there came to him the Pharisees tempting him, saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?
4. Who answering, said to them: Have ye not read, that he who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And he said:

Emperor Numerianus, being by him condemned to death, desired that three boys, whom he had brought up in faith and piety might be beheaded before him, lest they should be led astray. He offered them to Christ as innocent victims, and said, "Behold I and the children, whom the Lord hath given me for a sign." Thus it is in his *Life* in Surius.

Learn from hence with what care children ought to be brought up, and instructed, that they may remain pure, for "the newly made jar long preserves the savour of what it first contains."

S. Basil proves the advantages of early religious training from these words of Christ. He asks (*in Reg. Disputat. interrog. 292*), "Is it fitting that a master of boys living in the world should be a Brother? He answers in the affirmative. Let the Lord's command be kept, Suffer the little children to come unto Me." For young children go forth amongst the adult members of society, and what they have learnt in youth, they retain in old age. Children are the nursery of the Church and of the commonwealth. *Of such, &c. Syriac, Of those who are like them.* Whence Luke adds, *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.* Christ's meaning here is as though He said, "It is not beneath My dignity to bless young children, because through My blessing they are made fit for the Kingdom of Heaven, whilst you, O ye adult Jews, who have often heard Me teaching are unfitted for it on account of your pride, and your other vices by which you have become callous. Wherefore in order that ye may become fit, ye must become like unto these little ones." Hear S. Ambrose (*lib. 8, in cap. 18 Luc.*): "This age is weak in physical strength, and immature in mind and judgment. It is not therefore childhood which is meant, so much as the goodness which emulates childhood's simplicity." And a little afterwards, speaking symbolically, "Who is the child which is to be imitated by the Apostles of Christ? It is He of whom Isaiah speaks, Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. For it is that Child who saith to thee, Take up thy Cross, and follow Me. And that thou mayest recognise who He is—when He was reviled, He reviled not again, when He was smitten, He smote not back. Here is perfect virtue. Therefore there is in childhood a kind of venerable character of old age, and in old age an innocent childhood." From hence it is plain that the Anabaptists are wrong in keeping children away from Baptism, and so from Christ and the kingdom of heaven, on the ground that infants have not the use of reason, and therefore cannot believe. For although they may not have the act of faith, they may have the habit of faith. Because a habit (*habitus*) of faith, and grace and charity is infused into them by Baptism. They believe moreover in act by the faith of the Church, *i.e.*, of their parents, and the faithful of the Church, who often exercise acts of faith on behalf of themselves and all who belong to them.

And when He had laid, &c. The hands of Christ conferred life and salvation. The reason is because the hand is the organ of organs.

that he used to visit not only his friends of the first and second ranks, but the sick of even a lower degree." Lastly, of the Christian emperors, Pacatus says to Theodosius in his Panegyric, "When the people are waiting for you, you make it plain not only that you are willing to be seen, but easy of approach. You receive from him who is nearest to you the petitions of all your people."

Verse 13 (continued)- *That He would put His hands;* that by this imposition of hands He might bless them, and so implore Divine grace for them, that they might grow up to be wise and holy men. That this was an ancient practice of the Hebrews is gathered from Gen. xlvi. 14, where Jacob—extending his arms in such away as to form the figure of a cross—blessed the two young sons of Joseph. See also Eccles. iii. 11: "The blessing of a father strengthens the house of sons; but the curse of a mother roots out their foundations." From Christ has been derived the custom among Christians, that lay people, and especially children, should ask a blessing from their elders and from priests. This is the case in Belgium, where boys will run up to the priests and religious men, and ask them to sign them with the sign of the cross. They are taught to do this both by the catechists and by their parents. Remigius says this was a custom among the Jews before the time of Christ. The great Sir Thomas More, the glory of England and a martyr, when he was Lord High Chancellor, publicly asked his aged father to give him his blessing, as Stapleton testifies. Moreover, the Church uses this ceremony of imposition of hands in Baptism, Orders, Penance, and whenever heretics are received into the Church. It is to pray for and obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 14- *But Jesus said,* &c. Victor of Antioch mentions five natural endowments why Christ has so great a love for the little ones. "The mind of a child is pure, and free from all vicious passions. It does not remember injuries, nor meditate upon revenge. In like manner, although a child may be severely chastised by its mother, yet will it run to her before any one else, and is attached to her more than to any other woman. And if you should show it a queen with a diadem upon her head, in no wise would it prefer her to its mother clothed in rags. It would rather see its mother clothed in rags than a queen in her royal apparel. Then a child requires nothing more than nature demands. Thus as soon as it is satisfied, it leaves its mother's breasts. Moreover it is never grieved at the loss of those things, of which we make so great account, such as money and jewels. Lastly, it is not carried away by corporeal beauty, as other human beings are. Wherefore the Lord said, *Of such is the kingdom of Heaven.* Assuredly by them does He admonish us, that we should do such things by the firm choice of our own will, which little children do by natural endowment." (*On Mark x. 13.*) Thus Christ chose out and blessed when they were children, S. Edmund, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, S. Nicholas, S. Catharine of Siena, and other eminent saints. When Gelasius was a boy he found his little brother, S. Ophilus, praying in his chamber, and a company of angels talking with him. He saw them with his own eyes, and heard a voice saying, *Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.* As he became older he grew in holiness, and like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord, he brought forth abundant fruit, and thus in his early youth, he passed to Christ. S. Babylas, Patriarch of Antioch, and an illustrious martyr under the

5. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh.
6. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.
7. They say to him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away?
8. He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.
9. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.
10. His disciples say unto him: If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry.
11. Who said to them: All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given.
12. For there are eunuchs, who were born so from their mothers womb: and there are eunuchs, who were made so by men: and there are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it.
13. Then were little children presented to him, that he should impose hands upon them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them.
14. But Jesus said to them: Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such.
15. And when he had imposed hands upon them, he departed from thence.
16. And behold one came and said to him: Good master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?
17. Who said to him: Why askest thou me concerning good? One is good, God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.
18. He said to him: Which? And Jesus said: Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.
19. Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
20. The young man saith to him: All these have I kept from my youth, what is yet wanting to me?
21. Jesus saith to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.
22. And when the young man had heard this word, he went away sad: for he had great possessions.
23. Then Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.
24. And again I say to you: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

25. And when they had heard this, the disciples wondered much, saying: Who then can be saved?

26. And Jesus beholding, said to them: With men this is impossible: but with God all things are possible.

27. Then Peter answering, said to him: Behold we have left all things, and have followed thee: what therefore shall we have?

28. And Jesus said to them: Amen I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.

30. And many that are first, shall be last: and the last shall be first.

Verse 1- *And it came to pass, &c.* This is the same history as that related by S. Mark (x. 1.), by S. Luke (ix. 51), and, as it would seem, by S. John (vii. 1). So Jansen, Francis Lucas, and others. Maldonatus, however, denies this with respect to S. John: but his arguments will be refuted by the exposition of the context. It is plain from John that these events took place about the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated in September. Christ went up to that feast, that He might gradually prepare Himself for death. He was crucified in the following March. Luke adds, that Christ journeyed through Samaria. Hence it follows, that Christ—leaving the direct route from Samaria to Jerusalem—proceeded to the Jordan; and having crossed it, passed through Peræa and entered the borders of Judea from the east, and arrived at Jerusalem about the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, as John has (vii. 14). This explains the expression, *beyond Jordan*, in the text. *Beyond, or across Jordan*, must be connected with the verb *came*, not with the words *coasts of Judea*, as is plain from Mark. For Christ, about the borders of Judea, crossed over the Jordan, that He might be farther away from the observation of the Pharisees, when He was teaching and healing the multitudes.

Verse 2- *Great multitudes followed Him, &c.* Not so much from Galilee—where He wished His journey to escape observation, as Mark and John say—as from the other districts through which He passed. *He healed them there. There—i.e., on the confines of Judea;* and then sent them back to their homes. For He did not wish to enter Jerusalem with so great a crowd of people, that He might not give the Pharisees an opportunity of accusing Him of sedition, and stirring up the people.

Verse 3- *The Pharisees also, &c.* They had no doubt (from Deut. xxiv. 1) that this was allowable for any grave cause. So Origen, SS. Jerome and Bede. *Came*, not when Jesus proceeded from the confines of Judea to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (see John vii 1), but after the feast was over, and He was returning to the borders of Judea and had again crossed the Jordan. This is plain from John x. 40; for Matthew passes over in silence both the going to Jerusalem and the return from thence. John's words are as follow. *And He went away again beyond Jordan into the place where*

difficult thing. And he who is willing to put constraint upon himself, generously to withstand lust, to mount up to the lofty pinnacle of continence; let such an one embrace the same, *let him receive it.* All the faithful, then, have the power of continence, not proximate, but remote. So the Fathers already cited on verse 11. Hear S. Chrysostom, speaking in the name of all: “All, therefore, cannot receive it, because all do not wish. The palm is set before them: he who desires glory does not think of the labour. No one would conquer if all were afraid of danger.” Hear, too, S. Jerome (*lib. 1, cont. Jovinian*). “The master of the games proposes the reward. He invites to the course. He holds in His hand the prize of virginity. He points to the most pure fountain, and chants, Whoso thirsteth, let him come unto Me and drink. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” From these things it appears how foolish and carnal is Calvin's exposition, which is as follows: “You, O ye Apostles, think that it is a good thing to live without a wife; but I forbid any one to attempt so to do unless he is certain that he can live without a wife.” For Christ does not forbid celibacy, but exhorts to it. Neither can any one be certain that he has the gift, except either he have a revelation from God—which is given to very few—or else by experience has had proof of his own continence. And how can a man be certain about his continence before he has made the trial? Still worse is what Luther taught—that it is as impossible for a man to be without a wife as to be without food or drink. No doubt it is impossible for the heretics, but not for the orthodox, who are strengthened by faith and the grace of Christ.

Verse 13- *Their were brought(Vulg., were offered) to Him. Rebuked—* because they thought Christ was occupied with more important matters, such as instructing men; and that He must not be called off to attend to little children, as not having the use of reason; and that it was unworthy so great a prophet to busy Himself about children. For *little children* Luke has (xviii. 15) *βρέφη, infants.* But infancy lasts until the seventh year.

Moraliter: let princes here learn from Christ, Who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, to make themselves accessible to the poor, to women and children, and graciously to hear and grant their supplications and requests. This was done by several of the Roman emperors, even of those who were heathens. Such was Titus, who, as Suetonius testifies, was wont to say, “No one ought to go away sorrowful after talking with a prince.” And on the day when he had not done a kindness to any one, he groaned and said, “Alas! I have lost a day.” Next there was Trajan, of whom Pliny says in his *Panegyric*, “Thou dost not suffer citizens to embrace thy feet, nor return a kiss with thine hand. All who approach thee come close to thy side; and it is their own sense of modesty, not thy haughtiness, which puts an end to the conference.” And, a little afterwards: “There is no difficulty in obtaining an audience, there is no delay in giving an answer: forthwith they are heard, forthwith they receive a reply.” Then there was Alexander Severus, of whom Lampridius says: “So great was his moderation, that no one was ever removed from his side; he made himself so bland and affable to all men,

brain, or from the loins but from a lascivious mind, and from neglecting to watch over the thoughts.”

Ver. 12. *There are eunuchs, &c.* Who when they might be husbands, become eunuchs for Christ’s sake, says S. Jerome. Christ here speaks of three sorts of eunuchs. 1. Those who are such by nature. 2. Those who have been made eunuchs artificially, that they may guard queens and noble matrons. 3. Those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven’s sake. Christ here alludes to Isaiah lvi. 3, 4, 5, where the prophet foretells that there should be such eunuchs in Christ’s church, and promises them a name better than of sons and daughters, yea an everlasting name. *Made themselves eunuchs:* This expression has two meanings. 1. That it is in our power with God’s grace to make ourselves eunuchs, *i.e.*, chaste and celibate, and to keep so by a perpetual vow. This is the force of the verb, *have made themselves*, signifying a moral inability to beget children. If it were not so, He would have said, There are who make themselves eunuchs, or who endeavour to do so. But he says, *have made themselves*, *i.e.*, have taken from themselves the power of generating, that is to say by a vow of continence. So S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 53), S. Fulgentius (*lib. de fide ad Pet.*).

Origen took these words literally. He mutilated himself out of his love of chastity. But he was wrong in doing so, both because such self-mutilation is unlawful, as well as because lust is not thereby quenched but inflamed. Hear S. Chrysostom: “When He says, *Have made themselves eunuchs*, He does not speak of the cutting off of members, but of the suppression of evil thoughts. For he who mutilates himself renders himself liable to a curse. Neither is concupiscence thereby assuaged, but is made more troublesome.” For eunuchs sin in thought, through the desire of lust, grieving that they cannot fulfil it. See what I have said on Eccles. xx. 2, and xxxix. 21.

For the kingdom of Heaven’s sake, that by continence they may merit it. So Origen, Hilary, Chrysostom, Euthymius, and S. Augustine (*de Virgin. cap.* 23). Falsely, therefore, do the heretics expound *for the kingdom of Heaven’s sake* to mean for the sake of preaching. As though it meant, There are some who abstain from marriage that they may be more free to preach the Gospel, or that they may be free from the anxieties which matrimony brings with it. For continence is not only to be praised and desired for such reasons as those, but for its own sake; because it is a great virtue, and because the victory over himself, by which a man overcomes lust, raises his mind to meditate upon and follow after heavenly things. Wherefore chastity makes men angels.

He that is able, &c. Arabic, *He that is able to carry it, let him carry it.* Note here the evangelical counsel of celibacy, proposed, yea counselled, by Christ to all men, though not commanded. For these words, *he that is able, &c.*, are those of one exhorting and animating to celibacy, say SS. Jerome and Chrysostom. Moreover, it is signified that as Christ gives this counsel, it is in our power to fulfil it, if we will invoke the grace of God, and co-operate with grace. Nor does the expression *he that is able* do away with the force of this; for all that this means is, that continence is a

John was first baptizing. This was Ćnon, near to Salim (John iii. 23). This question, concerning the putting away a wife, seems to have been very hotly debated in the time of Christ, just as it is now. Therefore the Pharisees proposed it to Him, that they might tempt Him, and find an occasion for carping at Him. For if Christ should say, It is not lawful to put away a wife, He would incur the hatred of many rich and carnal men who made a practice of divorce. But if, on the other hand, He should assert that divorce is lawful, then they were ready to insinuate that His doctrine was imperfect and carnal—His doctrine, I say, Who professed to be the teacher of spiritual perfection, the Doctor sent from Heaven. The Abyssinians at the present day, like the Jews, frequently put away their wives, and marry others. Indeed, they sometimes take them only for a month, or a year.

Verse 4- *He answered, &c.* Some think from this passage that Adam was created a hermaphrodite, and had in himself both sexes. But away with such puerilities. The meaning is as follows: Since Holy Scripture did not say in the case of other animals (Gen. 1. 27), that God made them male and female, but only as regards man, by this it is signified that it is only the marriage of the human race, and that of one male with one female, which was instituted by God. This union or marriage between Adam and Eve was so ordained that he could not put her away and marry another. So SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Theophylact, Euthymius. Again, from the fact that of one Adam two persons were made, namely Adam and Eve, and because Eve was formed from Adam, it is shown that monogamy is right, *viz.*, that a wife ought not to be separated from her husband, forasmuch as she is a part and a member of him. For as Plato says (*Dial. de amore*), “As it were of two imperfect parts one perfect man is formed.” As therefore a member, such as the head, cannot be separated from a man, as to its origin and formation, so ought the marriage of one man and one woman to be perpetual and indissoluble, so that it can only be dissolved by death, even as the head can only be separated from the body by death. Wherefore Our Lord adds by way of explanation, *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife.* Plato, and from him S. Basil (*lib. de Virginit.*), adds that this is the cause why a man seeks a wife, as it were a part cut off from himself; and as a magnet attracts iron, so does a woman a man.

Verse 5- *And said, viz., God, by the mouth of Adam, as a prophet, instituting marriage with Adam and Eve. For this cause:* Because the woman being formed out of the man becomes flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. *Shall be joined*, Greek, *προσκολληθήσεται, i.e., shall be agglutinated*, shall adhere closely and undividedly to his wife, by the most close and intimate bond of matrimony, and that leaving the society and often the home of his father and mother, he may dwell with his wife.

Verse 6- *And there shall be two in one flesh.* (Vulg.) Greek, *εις σάρκα μίαν, i.e., into one flesh.* This is commonly expounded of corporeal union.

But it is better to take it more simply and purely as a Hebraism, signifying one human being, one civil person. For, by synecdoche *flesh* denotes the whole man. As therefore such a part of the body as the heart ought not to be separated from the body, so ought not a man to be separated from his wife. From hence it follows, *moraliter*, that a man and his wife ought so to love one another as the heart and the soul love the body to which they belong, and the body loves them. (See Eph. v. 28.) Again, from hence it follows that there is a common power over either body, that a man should have the same power over his wife's body that he has over his own, and, *vice versa*, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. vii. 4). I have said more on this subject in Gen. ii. 24.

No more twain . . . joined, Greek *συνέζευξε*, *i.e.*, has yoked together, as in one yoke, whence married people are called *σύζυγοι*, because as two horses are coupled together by one yoke in a chariot, that they may draw it, so are two spouses coupled together by the one yoke of matrimony, that they may sustain it, and by it procreate, and bring up offspring. There is a twofold reason by which Christ proves that a man ought not to put away his wife. 1. A man's putting away his wife is contrary to nature, just as it is contrary to nature that one flesh and one man should be divided into two. 2. This divorce is contrary to the ordinance of God. If therefore it be done, it is done impiously, because what God hath joined together is torn asunder. Who dares to annul what God has sanctioned? Who dares to divide what God has united? Who dares to mutilate the work of God the Creator, to tear asunder one man? Falsely therefore saith Erasmus on 1 Cor. vii, "What is rightly joined together is what God hath united. God separateth what is rightly separated." As though marriages improperly and inconsiderately entered into without God's instigation might be set aside. For Christ speaks of nature, and the natural and primary institution of marriage, according to which marriage being once contracted in any way whatsoever, and by whomsoever as instigator, it is indissoluble. For nature requires this, that offspring may continuously be propagated by matrimony, and be advantageously brought up by both parents. This bringing up is, in the human race, a work of difficulty, and of long continuance, lasting up to the twentieth year of a child's age, and sometimes longer. It is otherwise with beasts, which in a few months, or weeks come to adolescence, so that they do not longer require a father or mother's care. Wherefore their marriage is then dissolved. There is then an *à priori* reason why the indissolubility of marriage belongs to the *jus nature*, and why fornication, pollution, divorce, and polygamy are contrary to that law. It is because God, who is the Lord of nature and of marriage, and of our bodies, so ordained at the very beginning of the world, and gave the right and use of our bodies only in the union of wedlock. And if we use them in any other way, we abuse our bodies contrary to the will of God, who is the Supreme Lord; and contrary to the law which He has ordained. That this is so appears from this, that in the Mosaic law God allowed a dispensation by which a new law was introduced which gave permission for polygamy, and a bill of divorce. Thus Hosea, by God's command married a wife who had been a fornicatrix. Moreover the end and the cause why God ordained this absolute indissolubility of marriage, is, 1. That there may be closer union and greater mutual love between those who are married. 2. For the sake of the better bringing up of children. The 3rd reason is an

they actually persevere in justice, yet all the just have the gift of perseverance in such sense, that they may, if they will, persevere in God's grace. Thus in like manner all the faithful have the gift of continence in the first instance. And by it they may contain if they will; viz., if they assiduously beg of God the grace of continence, and if they co-operate with that grace by guarding their eyes, by fleeing from sloth, and so on. Thus SS. Chrysostom, Origen, Theophylact, Euthymius, Jerome in this place, S. Augustine (*in Psalm 138*), S. Ambrose (*lib. 3, de Viduis*), Tertullian (*lib. de Monog.*), and others. Christ in this place, as well as S. Paul (1 Cor. vii. 7), gives the counsel of continence to every believer. For nothing is counselled except what is in man's power and good pleasure with God's grace, which truly He offers and provides for all who ask it. It is otherwise with the gifts of prophecy, tongues, healing, miracles. For the grace of these God does not offer to every one, but only to a few of His elect for the common good of the faithful. Listen to S. Jerome, "It is given to those who have wished, who have laboured that they may receive." So, too, Euthymius says, "It is given to those who ask, but not for mere asking, but to those who ask fervently and perseveringly. What is meant is that virginity is a gift of God, given to those who ask for it as they ought to ask." So also *Auctor Imperfecti*, "When He says, to whom it is given, it is not meant that it is given to some and not to others, but He shows that unless we receive the help of grace, we have no power at all of ourselves. But grace is not refused to those who desire, for the Lord says, Ask and ye shall have." And S. Chrysostom, "If it is a work of election, wherefore is it that He immediately said, *All do not receive it*, &c.? It is that you may learn thoroughly the peculiar nature of this warfare, that it is not like a kind of necessity bestowed as it were at random. It is given to those who freely choose it. He spoke as He did in order that He might show the necessity of grace from above—which grace is provided for all who seek it, if we would come forth victors in this warfare." S. Chrysostom adds that we ought not to be slothful in our resolution of continence, because some may fall from continence. Since soldiers falling in battle do not discourage their comrades, but rather stir them up to fight more valiantly. Lastly, the same S. Chrysostom suggests a consideration, by means of which celibacy is shown to be not only possible but easy to every one. "Consider with thyself," he says, "that if thou wert a eunuch, either by nature, or by the wrong-doing of man, thou wouldst be deprived of these pleasures, and wouldst obtain no reward by being deprived of them. Give thanks therefore to God, because thou wilt obtain great rewards and bright crowns, if thou livest thus as they do without any rewards at all. Yea, indeed thou mayest do it much more easily, safely and pleasantly than they can, both because thou art strengthened by the hope of recompense, and because thou rejoicest in the consciousness of thy virtue, and art not tossed by such vast billows of desire. For the cutting off a member is not like the bridle of reason. yea verily, it is reason alone which restrains such waves as these we are speaking of. For I should not say that this sting of desire proceeds from the

saying is true, "I labour to be brief, I become obscure." The same thing is proved, 2. by what precedes, when Christ by the original institution of marriage, which fornication does not annul, proves that matrimony is altogether indissoluble. 3. Because in what follows, this exception is not to be understood, as if it were said, *And he who shall marry her that is put away, except for fornication, commits adultery.* For so she that is put away on account of fornication would be in a better position, with respect to another contract of marriage, than an innocent woman who has been divorced. 4. Because S. Paul so teaches (1 Cor. vii., 10, 11), and the Fathers, passim. SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Bede, in this passage, S. Augustine in his two Books on Adultery, Innocent I. (*Epist. ad Exuper.*) Concil. Milev. (*Can.* 17). Forojuliense (*Canon* 10), Nannetense (*Can.* 10), Florentin. (*in instruct. Armeniens.*) Trident. (*Sess.* 14, *Can.* 6). Origen, in this passage (*Tract.* 7), animadvertes severely upon certain bishops of his time, for conceding with Tertullian (*lib.* 4, *cont. Marc.*) and Ambrosiaster (*in Cor.* vii.), second nuptials to wives on account of the adultery of their husbands, saying that it is lawful for the innocent spouse to put away an adulterous partner, and to marry another. The same license is given by the Council of Illiberis. (31 *quæst.* 1 *cap.* *Si qua mulier.*) Also in *Concil. Aurelian* 1, *cap.* 10. But the decrees of those Councils are either apocryphal, or else are cited imperfectly by Gratian.

Ver. 10. *His disciples say, &c. Case, i.e., matter, business.* So the Syriac translates, *If the case of those who are married be thus, if the indissolubility of marriage be so great, if a man be so strictly bound to his wife, that he cannot put her away for anything except fornication, but must live with her, though she be odious, quarrelsome, deformed, nasty, and so on, and must have close connection with her until death, it is better not to marry a wife,* as the Syriac has it. For the Greek *γαμῆσαι* applies both to men and women. It may be that the Vulgate in translating by *nubere*, alludes to the servitude and subjection, by which a man is bound to a woman, and not seldom, if he wishes to have quietness, must give in to her, and bear patiently her complaints, quarrels, and reproaches. S. Chrysostom gives the reason. "It is easier to fight against concupiscence and ourselves than against a bad woman." Whence Cato said, "A wife is a necessary evil." Hence too the illustrious Sir Thomas More, who suffered martyrdom under Henry VIII. of England, being asked why he had married a little wife, replied sportively, "Of evils I chose the least." So Stapleton in his life.

Ver. 11. *To whom it is given: Arabic, those who are given, viz., to God and continence.* So in Religious Orders those who are converted are called *given, i.e.,* to religion.

Do not receive: Origen and Nazianzen (*Orat.* 31.) translate *Χωροῦσαι* are not capable. And by capacity they mean a natural inclination to celibacy, which all have not. But it is better to translate with the Vulgate *do not receive*, or contain. As it were, narrow vessels do not receive into them, do not embrace so arduous a counsel as that of celibacy, but only those to whom is given by God this great gift of continency. Where observe, although all the faithful may not have the gift of continency, so that they have continence *in act*, as all the just have not the gift of perseverance, by which

allegorical one: because marriage is a type and figure of the indissoluble Union of the Divine **WORD** with our flesh, and through it with the Church. As the Apostle teaches us (Eph. v. 32), "This is a great sacrament. I speak concerning Christ and the Church." (*Vulg.*)

Verse 7. *They say, &c.* The Pharisees object to Christ, *Why hath Moses commanded?* In order to make their objection the stronger, they use the word *command*, whereas Moses, as Christ observes in the following verse, only *permitted* the bill of divorce. It was only that sort of command which is conditional, not absolute. Moses had commanded that if the Jews would put away their wives, they could only do so by giving a writing of divorcement. I have fully entered into every thing connected with this bill of divorce on Deut. iv. 1. We must here supply from S. Mark x. 3, 4, that when the Pharisees asked Christ whether it were lawful to put away a wife, He first answered and said unto them, "what did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." Thus Christ as Matthew here has it in the fourth verse unfolds the original institution of marriage by God, and its indissolubility. Then the Pharisees rejoined, *Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put her away?* Jesus answered, Moses permitted this because of the hardness of your hearts. But it was not so from the beginning. Thus by prefixing the words in Mark, and affixing those in Matthew, we show the agreement of the two Evangelists.

Verse 8. *Moses suffered.* He alters *commanded* into *suffered, or permitted.* Moses suffered you to put away your wives, when you hated them, lest if you could not divorce them, you should kill them. For so great was the hardness and carnality of your hearts that ye would rather put them to death than be without the pleasure of a new and desired marriage.

From the beginning. When man's nature had become corrupted by sin, man changed and corrupted this institution of God, and gave occasion for divorce and polygamy.

Verse 9. *But I say, &c.* Christ used those words upon two occasions. 1. Publicly in this place to the Jews and the Pharisees. When He here promulgated His new law, by which He revoked the power of giving a bill of divorce, and brought back marriage to its primeval institution and indissolubility. 2. Shortly afterwards He repeated the words in private to his disciples. (Mark x. 10, 11, 12.)

I say, i.e., I enact, and as the Lawgiver of the New Law, I ordain, and bring back marriage to its original rectitude and steadfastness. And I declare that whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another shall be accounted, and shall be in fact an adulterer.

Except for fornication. That is, except on account of adultery. For what in

those who are free is fornication, in the married is adultery. And this dissolves marriage *quoad thorum*, though not *quoad vinculum*. For the adulterer does not keep the faith which he gave to his spouse. Whence he may be put away by his spouse, according to the saying, "With him who has broken troth, let troth be broken."

From this exception, the Greeks, according to the testimony of Guido the Carmelite (*Tract. de Hæresibus*), and modern heretics gather and conclude that if *whoso putteth away his wife except for fornication, and marry another, committeth adultery*; then, on the contrary, whosoever shall put away his wife on account of fornication, and shall marry another, does *not* commit adultery. Whence they *are* of opinion that marriage is dissolved by adultery, not only *quoad thorum*, but *quoad vinculum*, that under such circumstances a man may contract another marriage. Thus Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, and speaking generally, the Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, and among Catholics, Catharinus, and Cajetan. And so in practice the Greeks and heretics act. But this is an error condemned by the perpetual tradition of the Church, and by S. Paul (Rom. vii. 1, and 1. Cor. vii. 10, 11), and expressly by the Council of Trent (*Sess. 24. Con. 6, 7*). To the argument deduced *à contrario*, Paul of Burgos, on this passage, (*additione 2. ad Lyran.*) replies by admitting the consequence, but adds that Christ was speaking only of the Old Law, in which on account of fornication a bill of divorce was allowed to be given. But there is this difficulty in such a reply, that Christ both here and in the fifth of Matthew expressly opposes His own words, that is the evangelical Law, to Moses and the Old Law; in fact He repeals that bill of divorce which Moses had allowed. Verses 8 and 9. "He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Observe how plainly Christ opposes His own word to the sanction which Moses had given to the bill of divorce, and how He condemns whosoever makes use of it, as guilty of adultery.

I say therefore that it is better with S. Augustine (*lib. 1. de adult. conjug. c. 9.*) to take the word *except* negatively, so that the expression, *save for the cause of fornication*, means the same thing as *apart from the cause of fornication*. This is supported by the Greek and Syriac which have, *not an adulteress*. As though Christ only intended to affirm that a chaste and faithful wife might not be put away, but intended to say nothing about an adulterous wife, in order to escape the hatred of the Pharisees and the people, who were at that time used to divorce.

2. The word *except*, can be taken in its proper, exceptive sense, but it should be referred not to the words which immediately follow, *and marry another*, but only to those which preceded, *whosoever shall put away his wife*, so as to make an exception in the case of fornication. Then the words would be taken as follows, *Whosoever shall put away his wife, which is not lawful, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery*. The Ethiopic favours this view, translating as follows, *Who so ever, on account of any other cause than on account of fornication, shall put away his*

wife, and marry another, is an adulterer. Similarly the Persian, *Every man who puts away his wife, and not on account of adultery, and marries another, is an adulterer*.

3. Most clearly and aptly from Theophylact and Augustine (*lib. cont. Adamant, c. 3*), you may refer this exception to both what precedes and what follows. Thus, Whoso shall put away his wife, unless for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. He commits adultery, I say, both by putting away his wife, as well as by marrying another. That is, he is twice an adulterer. Christ gives an answer to both the questions put to Him, for the Pharisees had asked two. And both answers are true. For even though a man should only divorce a chaste wife, without marrying another, he commits adultery, both because he breaks the law of marriage, by violating one of its conditions by putting away an innocent wife, as well as by causing her to commit adultery, as Christ explains in Matthew v. 32. For verbs of the Hebrew conjugation *Kal*, often in *Hiphil*, signify the double action as above. This is well known to Hebrew scholars. Whence from the contrary you can only infer as follows, *Whoso shall put away his wife unless for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery*. Therefore he who puts away his wife on account of fornication, and marries another, does not indeed commit adultery by divorcing the adulteress, but by marrying another. It is the same form of expression as if you should say, "He who breaks his fast without a dispensation, and gets drunk, commits sin. Therefore he who does not fast, having a dispensation, does not sin by eating, but sins by getting drunk."

I say, 2. Christ here concedes divorce to a man on account of the fornication of his wife, *quoad thorum*, but not the dissolution of marriage, so that he may marry another. This appears, 1. because Mark and Luke lay down a general proposition, and omit this exception. This is what Luke says, xvi. 18 : "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." For he does her a great wrong, breaking the troth which he had given her.

You will say, why then does Matthew add this exception? I answer, because the Pharisees had virtually proposed two questions to Christ. The first was, whether it was lawful for any cause to divorce a wife? The second, whether when a wife was put away by a bill of divorce, the marriage was dissolved, and another might be entered upon? For they put away their wives that they may marry again. Christ then replies to both questions; and as it seems by means of two propositions. 1. Whoso shall put away his wife except for fornication, commits adultery. 2. Whoso shall marry another, commits adultery. For together with the bill of divorce he abolishes polygamy, which had hitherto been allowed. The pronoun *whosoever* must be repeated. Matthew, here as elsewhere studying conciseness, throws two sentences of Christ, each with its *whosoever*, into one. Hence that