

SELECTIONS FROM THE FIRST CAPITULARY OF BISHOP THEODULF OF ORLÉANS

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Born in Spain around 760, Theodulf came to Charlemagne's court shortly after 780 and soon established his reputation as a theologian. He was responsible for writing much of the *Libri Carolini* (the Carolingians' response to Iconoclasm) and also took part in the condemnation of the Adoptionist heresy proclaimed by Bishop Felix of Urgel. Charles appointed him bishop of Orléans sometime before 798. As a southerner and a leading intellect, he was central to all the reform programs of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, even though he died in disfavor in 821 (for opposing Louis' actions against Bernard of Italy, Louis' nephew). Theodulf's first episcopal capitulary (there is also a second) was written down for the benefit of his diocesan clergy sometime between 798 and 817/818. As with all Carolingian capitularies, however, a careful reading of the written document will isolate expressions which suggest that the text was a synopsis of an oral proclamation within a public assembly — in this case, a diocesan synod.

Theodulf, to our brothers and co-priests in the parish of Orléans, greetings in the Lord. I beseech you, most beloved brothers, that you labor for the progress and improvement of the subject peoples with vigilant oversight, showing them the way of truth and instructing them by both words and examples. In this way, aided by our Lord Jesus Christ, you concerned with their progress and we with yours, we shall give him useful troops. I also beseech your brotherhood that you carefully read these articles that I have anthologized for the improvement of life and commit them to memory. And what you read in them and in holy writings act out in your behavior, so that you improve your life and, with God's aid, assure your attainment of the heavenly kingdom along with your subject people.

1. Truly you ought to know and always remember that we to whom the cure of souls is committed for rule shall answer¹ for those who perish by our negligence, but for those who profit by our words and examples we shall receive the reward of eternal life. As the Lord has said, "You are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13), and if the faithful people are the food of God, we are the spice of that food. You should know that your status is

¹ *Rationem reddere*, a common phrase used for answering charges in court trials and at the Last Judgment.

second to ours but closely joined to it; for just as the bishops take the place of the apostles in the church, the priests surely act in place of the Lord's other disciples. And they shall hold the rank of Aaron, the highest pontiff, since they are his sons. You must therefore be ever mindful of such a great honor, mindful of your consecration, mindful that your hands have received holy anointing, so that you shall never fall away from that dignity, nor invalidate your consecration, nor pollute with sin hands anointed with holy oil. Rather, keeping cleanness in heart and body, offer the people an example of right living, that you might lead to the heavenly kingdom those over whom you have been placed.

2. You must read assiduously and pray frequently, because reading informs the life of the just man as prayer adorns it. In assiduous reading man is fortified against sin, as it is said, "Your eloquence takes root in my heart so I cannot sin against you" (Ps. 118:11). Reading and prayer are the arms with which we fight the devil. They are the tools by which we gain eternal blessedness. They are the weapons that crush wickedness, the food that nurtures virtues.

3. When we stop reading we should pursue manual labor, because "idleness is an enemy to the soul" (Reg. Ben. c. 48), and when the old enemy finds someone free from reading or prayer or work, he easily corrupts (*rapit*)¹ to vice. By reading you learn how to live and how to teach others. By prayer, you are able to help both yourself and those with whom you are joined in charity. By manual labor you mortify the flesh and deny food to vices, while gaining things that you need.

4. When you come to synod as you should customarily, bring the vestments, books, and sacred vessels with which you execute the ministry and office enjoined on you. Also bring with you two or three clerics or laymen with whom you celebrate the solemnity of masses, so that you might demonstrate that you perform God's service diligently and carefully.

¹ This is the same word (*rapere*) that one would use for a sexual assault against a woman or for the forcible (but in lay culture, legitimate) taking of a woman from her protectors for marriage. It was also used for the illegitimate taking of property from churches, especially monasteries.

5. The bread that you offer in sacrifice to God should be made with care and attention to form by you yourselves or by your boys in your presence. See to it with diligence that the bread, wine, and water without which mass cannot be celebrated are handled with cleanliness and care. Let nothing base, nothing improper be found next to them: as the Scriptures have it, "Let the fear of the Lord be with you, and do all with diligence."

6. Women shall never come to the altar where the priest is celebrating. Rather let them keep to their places. There the priest shall receive their offerings to offer in turn to God. For women ought to be mindful of their weakness and the simpleness of their sex. They should therefore fear touching anything holy in caring for the church. Even lay men should fear, lest they suffer the punishment of Oza (see II Kings 6:6-7) who, wanting to touch the ark of the Lord too often, died, struck down by the Lord.

7. A priest should never celebrate mass alone, since it cannot be celebrated without the greeting of the priest, the response of the people, the admonition of the priest, and the response of the people. With good reason, then, it can never be celebrated by one priest only. Those whom he greets and by whom he is greeted should stand around him. Relevant here is that saying of the Lord: "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am in their midst" (Matt. 18:20).

8. We often see hay and crops gathered in churches. This must never be done. Nothing should be found in a church except ecclesiastical vestments and holy vessels and books, otherwise by some chance it might happen that some business might be conducted on account of these other things. Let us listen to the Lord: "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have turned it into a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13).

9. It was the old custom in these parts to bury the dead in church, and quite often former cemeteries were given over to the divine cult and dedicated to the offering of sacrifices to God. We therefore want this practice to stop henceforth. Let no one be buried within the church, unless perhaps a priest, or a man so just that the merits of his

life while living were such as to gain his body such a place when dead. However, no one should ever exhume the bodies buried in churches in old times. Their mounds should simply be reduced to the level of the ground and paved over, so that no sign of the mounds appears and the reverence for the church is kept. Where there are so many corpses that this would be difficult, let the place be used for a cemetery and the altar be removed and relocated elsewhere, where the sacrifice can be offered to God piously and purely.

10. People should not gather in the church for any reason but to praise God and do his service. Arguments, disturbances, idle chatter, and all other unseemly behavior are entirely prohibited from this holy place. Where the name of God is invoked and sacrifice is offered to God, the presence of angels is not to be doubted. It would be very dangerous to speak or act in any manner that does suit the place. For if the Lord expelled from the Temple those who bought or sold sacrifices offered to him, with even greater wrath will he cast out those who pollute a place dedicated to divine service with lies, laughter, chatter, and all such nonsense.

11. Solemn masses shall only be celebrated in churches, not in any homes or base places, but only in the place which the Lord chose according to that which is written: "See to it that you do not offer your sacrifice in any place that you see, but only in a place chosen by the Lord, where he has placed his name" (Deut. 12:13f.). The exception is for those who accompany an army and for this reason have tents and altars in which the solemnity of masses can be performed.

12. No woman shall live in a house with a priest. For although the canons allow him to live with a mother, sister, or persons of this sort in whom there can be no suspicion, yet we curtail this entirely, because other women not related to him by kinship might visit on their account and entice him to sin.

13. You must abstain from drunkenness and preach that the subject people abstain. Neither shall you go to taverns to drink or eat, nor visit houses or districts to snoop, nor

feast with women or any impure persons, unless you are invited by the head of the family (*pater familias*) who with his wife and children celebrates with you in spiritual joy, feasts on your words, and with due love gives you in turn a bodily meal. Thus, when any *fidelis* gives you a physical feast, you shall make him a spiritual feast.

14. Let no priest persuade the faithful of the church of God from the parish of another priest to come to his church, leaving behind their own church and the tithes they give it, but let everyone be content with their own church and people, because one does not want done to oneself what one does not do to another, according to the Gospel: “Whatever you want men to do to you, do this same to them” (Matt. 7:12). But anyone who goes against this or tries to go against these admonitions of ours shall know that he will lose his grade or (*aut*) be held in prison for a long time.

15. We prohibit all in every way that no one shall solicit or receive your cleric, the sentence of the sacred canons speaking seriously against this.

16. If a priest is found to give or have given gifts to any cleric or lay person (*laico*) so that he might illicitly take (*surripiat*) the church of another priest, let him know that for this act of rapine (*rapina*) and savage greed (*saeva cupiditate*) he shall either (*aut ... aut*) lose his grace or be held in the misery of prison for a long time to do penance.

17. If a sick young boy (*parvulus*) is brought to any priest for the sake of baptism from any parish whatsoever, he shall not in any way deny him the sacrament of baptism. If he declines to grant the petitioner this gift and the boy dies without the grace of baptism, let him who did not baptize him know that he shall answer for his [the boy’s] soul (*rationem redditurum*).

18. Let no priest or layman presume to turn the chalice, paten, or any other sacred vessel dedicated to the divine cult to any other uses. Whoever drinks anything from the sacred chalice besides the blood of Christ which is taken in sacrament, or whoever uses the paten for another purpose besides the ministry of the altar, shall be dissuaded by the

example of Balthasar (Dan. 5), who turned the Lord's vessels to common uses and lost both his life and his kingdom.

19. If any priest wants to send his nephew (*nepotem*) or other relative (*consanguineum*) to school, we give him licence to do so in the church of Holy Cross, or in the monasteries of St. Anianus, St. Benedict, or St. Lifardus, or in any of the other houses that have been given us to rule.

20. Let priests have schools in villages and districts. If any *fidelis* wants to commend his young boys (*parvulos*) to them, they shall not refuse to teach them; but in accepting them let them teach them with greatest love (*caritate*), remembering what is written: "Those who are taught shall shine like the splendor of heaven. And if they learn justice, they shall shine like the stars in the everlasting heavens" (Dan. 12:3). When, therefore, they teach them, they should demand no payment from them, nor receive anything from them save what the parents offer them in desire of charity of their own free will.

21. Although the pages of all holy writings are filled with testaments of good works and though weapons can be found in the fields of holy scriptures through which vices can be suppressed and virtues nurtured, it still pleases us to insert in this our capitulary the statement of a certain father, "Concerning the Instruments of Good Works," in which will be found stated with great brevity what should be done and what avoided.¹ "First, love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, then your neighbor as yourself. Therefore do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not lust, do not bear false witness. Honor all men, and do not do to others what you would not want done to you. Deny yourself in order to follow Christ. Chastize the body, renounce pleasures, delight in fasting, comfort the poor, clothe the naked, visit the sick, bury the dead, aid those in trouble, console the grieving. Remove yourself from worldly activities. Place nothing before the love of Christ. Do not become angry. Do not keep anger in your heart for a long time. Do not keep grief in your heart. Do not give a false peace. Do not forsake charity. Do not swear lest you purjure yourself. Speak the truth with heart and lips. Do

¹ What follows is taken from chapter 4 of Benedict's *Rule*.

not give evil for evil. Do not injure another, but bear injuries done to you with patience. Love your enemies: do not curse those who curse you, rather bless them. Accept persecution for the sake of justice. Do not be proud, or drunk, or gluttonous, or sleep-loving, or slothful, or a murmurer, or critical. Place your hope in God. When you see good in yourself, attribute it to God, not yourself. But know that evil always comes from yourself and attribute it to yourself. Fear the Day of Judgment, tremble before hell, desire eternal life with all one's desire, keep death before your eyes daily. Watch your actions each hour. Know for certain that God looks down on you everywhere. If evil thoughts come into your mind, dash them against Christ and confess them to your spiritual superior. Keep your mouth from evil or wicked speech. Say little; refrain from empty talk and jokes; do not love frequent or loud laughter. Listen carefully to the holy readings, devote yourself often to prayer, in prayer confess your past sins to God every day with tears and sighs. Correct those sins. Do not yield to the desires of the flesh; hate your own will. Obey the commands of priests and teachers in all things,¹ even if they do what they should not do, remembering the Lord's precept (Matt. 23:3), 'Do what they say, not what they do.' Do not wish to be called holy before you are; first be holy, so that it may be said with greater truth. Strive to fulfill the commands of God each day; love chastity, hate no one, hold no jealousy or envy, hate discord, flee pride, honor your superiors, love your inferiors. Pray for your enemies in the love of Christ. Make peace with your enemies before sundown, and never despair of God's mercy. Behold, these are the instruments of the spiritual craft (*instrumenta artis spiritualis*). When we have ceaselessly fulfilled them day and night and they are imputed to us on Judgment Day, then the Lord will reward us with the reward he promised: 'The eye has not seen, the ear has not heard, it has not entered the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him.'"

22. The faithful are to be warned that everyone, from the least to the greatest, should learn the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. They should be told that in these two declarations lies the essence of the Christian faith. And unless they learn these two declarations and

¹ Benedict's Rule has "abbot" in place of "priests and teachers."

believe them with all their heart and recite them frequently in prayer, they cannot be catholic. For it is ordained that no one can be anointed, baptized, receive another from the font,¹ nor hold anyone to be confirmed before a bishop unless he has memorized the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, save those who cannot yet speak because of their young age.

23. They should be told that every day, if not more often, at least twice a day, that is, in the morning and evening, they shall say the Creed or the Lord's Prayer or either of the two prayers, "May He who made me have mercy on me" or "God, show grace to me, a sinner"; and they should give thanks to God for their daily sustenance and for deigning to make them in his image and for separating them from the animals. By such actions, adoring only God their creator, let them also call on the saints, that they might deign to intercede before the divine majesty in their behalf. Let them do these things in whatever church is closest to them. But if they are on a journey, or if for some reason they find themselves in the woods or out in the fields, wherever they are at the hours of matins or vespers let them do this, knowing that God is present everywhere, as the Psalmist says: "His Lordship is everywhere" and "If I ascend to the heavens, you will be there," etc.

24. On the Lord's day — the day when God created light, the day when he rained manna in the desert, the day the Redeemer of the human race rose from the dead for our salvation, the day when the Holy Spirit descended on his disciples — on this day, this should be the observance: besides the prayers and solemn masses and those tasks which pertain to eating, nothing else should be done. And if it is necessary to voyage or travel on this day, permission shall be given, but on the condition that masses and prayers not be overlooked on this account.

It is meet (*conveniendum est*) that on the sabbath day the Christian² should come to church with lights. And on the vigils [of the feast days] and at the office of matins. They should come with offerings to the solemnities of masses. And when they gather at church, for no reason should they talk or be heard, nor should there be any quarrels

¹ I.e., act as baptismal sponsor.

² "*Christiano*," a "noble masculine," i.e., a masculine noun that probably stands for Christians of both genders and all ages.

(*iurgia*), but they should devote themselves to God in celebration, that is, in offering the offices and alms and feasting spiritually in praise of God with friends, neighbors, and pilgrims (*peregrinis*).

25. They shall be warned that they should delight in showing hospitality, refusing no one welcome; and if they do offer welcome to someone, let them receive no reward, except what he who received [welcome] might give of his own free will. They shall be told how many have pleased God for offering hospitality, for the Apostle says, "They have pleased God by receiving angels," and again, "Give welcome without grumbling" (Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9). The Lord himself said, "I was your guest, and you welcomed me" (Matt. 25:35). Let them know, then, that whoever loves hospitality receives Christ in [receiving] guests. But the kind of hospitality that requires a reward to be given before receiving a guest in a house is not only inhuman but also cruel, for what God has ordered us to do to obtain the heavenly kingdom is done instead to gain earthly things.

26. One must preach that they beware of perjury and avoid it entirely, knowing that this is a grave sin forbidden by the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospels. We have heard that some consider this sin unimportant and assign a somewhat light penance to perjurers. These should know that perjury ought to receive the same kind of penance as adultery, fornication, homicide, and other criminal acts. If anyone who has committed perjury or any other criminal sin does not want to come to confession for fear of the hardship of a long penance, he shall be expelled from the church — both from communion and from association with the faithful — so that no one may eat, drink, or pray with him or receive him in his home.

27. They must be told to abstain also from false witness, knowing that this is a very great sin, one prohibited by the Lord himself, who said on Mount Zion, "Thou shalt not bear false witness" and "Thou shalt not bear false witness with impunity" (Exod. 20:16; Prov. 19:5). Let him who commits this sin know also that he shall suffer the penance given above for perjury or the damnation and excommunication described above. They shall also be told that it is the greatest iniquity (not to say stupidity) to fall into such a

great sin for love of gold, silver, clothing, or any other thing, or (what happens too often) because of drunkenness, and so it may be punished by seven years of strict hardship (*in arta aerumna*) or by expulsion from the church. For as the Lord says, "What does it profit a man if he gains the world but loses his soul" (Matt.16:26)? But then, what seems honorable to others is actually cruel to themselves.

28. We urge you to be ready to teach the people. Whoever knows Scripture, let him teach the Scriptures. If he does not know Scripture, let him at least say this to the people, which is well known: "That they shall renounce evil and do good, seek peace and follow it, because the eyes of the Lord look down on the just and his ears hear their prayers; but his countenance frowns on those who do evil, and he deletes their memory from the land." Therefore no one can excuse himself for not having the language for instructing anyone. For if he sees someone erring, then insofar as he is able, whether by argument or entreaty or threat, he shall lead him from evil and urge him to perform good works.

And when with God's help we gather together in synod as one, let each one know to tell us how much he has worked with the aid of the Lord, and what fruits he has harvested. And if by chance anyone lacks our aid, let him admonish us with charity, and we, with charity, will not delay in bringing him aid so far as we are able.

29. You shall admonish the faithful that they shall pray regularly and with zeal. This should be the manner of prayer, that after saying the Creed as the basic statement of his faith, he shall first say three times: "You who made me, have mercy on me," and three times: "God, show grace to me, a sinner." If time and place allow it, let him pray to the holy apostles or martyrs to intercede for him. And armed with the sign of the cross on the forehead, with his eyes, hands and heart lifted up, let him give thanks to God. And if there is not enough time to do all this, let this suffice: "You who made me, have mercy on me" and "God, show grace to me, a sinner," and then the Lord's Prayer with groaning and contrition of heart.

30. Indeed, every day in our prayers, once or twice or as often as we can, we should confess our sins to God, as the prophet says: "I made my sin known to you, and I did not

hide my injustices. I said, I will confess my injustices against myself, and you will forgive the wickedness of my sin” (Ps. 31(32):5). Then having made confession in prayer to the Lord with groaning and tears, one should recite Psalm 50 or 24 or 31 and others that pertain to the matter. And thus prayer is completed. Because confession that we make to priest brings us this assistance: we wash away the stain of sins with mutual prayers¹ and having received from them by their healthful counsel the most salvation-giving injunctions of penance. But confession which we make to God alone aids us in this way: that as much as we are mindful of our sins, so much is the Lord unmindful of them (*obliviscitur*); conversely, as much as we forget our sins, so much the Lord remembers, as he says through the prophet: “And I will not remember your sins.” But remember what the prophet David attested when he said: “For I recognize my iniquity, and my sin is always before me” (Ps. 50:5).

31. Confessions shall be given for all sins, whether they are committed in works or in thought. There are eight chief vices. Scarcely anyone is found without them. The first is *castrimargia*, that is, a gluttonous belly; the second fornication; the third acedia or melancholy; the fourth avarice; the fifth vainglory; the sixth envy; the seventh wrath; the eighth pride. Whenever anyone comes to confession, he shall be diligently questioned as to how and when he committed the sin to which he confesses, and the penance shall be adjudged to him (*iudicari*) according to his fault. He should also be urged to make his confession for evil thoughts. He should also be enjoined to make his confession for the eight principal sins. And the priest should say the name of each sin, one by one, and receive his confession of it.

32. The hungry should be fed, the thirsty given drink, the naked clothed, the infirm and the imprisoned should be visited, and guests welcomed; for the Lord said, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty, and you gave me to drink" (Matt. 25:35), etc. In these ways one acts spiritually on oneself in acting corporeally on others. But none of these things profit one at all in attaining eternal life, if one lives with excess, pride, envy — in short, if one lives basely and dissolutely and shuns other good works. Whoever sees

¹ Carolingian-era penitentials insist that the priest prays for forgiveness with the sinner.

that he does not have Christ, who said, "I am the living bread come down from the sky" (John 5:41); whoever sees that he does not have charity, which is the soul's food; then he will be hungry. But if he adheres to Christ with good works and fills himself with sweet charity, then he shall sate his hunger entirely. Whoever lacks the teaching that flows from the Holy Spirit and holy Scriptures will thirst. But if he drinks from the waters of the Word of God and refreshes his mind with the sweetness of the spiritual cup, then he shall satisfy his thirst. He who sees himself bare of justice or other good works and dresses in justice or other virtues, without doubt clothes his nakedness. . . . Whenever he does these things in spirit, he feeds Christ, offers drink to Christ, and clothes Christ in himself, for he is part of Christ's body.

33. The faithful of the holy church of God are to be warned to teach their sons and daughters and to show their parents obedience, for the Lord said, "Son, honor your father" (Eccl.7:29). And parents should behave moderately towards their sons and daughters, since the Apostle said, "And you, parents, do not provoke your sons to anger" (Ephes. 6:4). But this must also be told them: that if by reason of parental affection they wish to overlook the faults of their sons, the Lord will not permit them to do so unless they do suitable penance, since it is easier for the sons to bear the parents' scourge than to incur the wrath of God.

34. The people shall be warned that this is true charity: that they love God more than themselves, and "their neighbor as themselves" (Mark 12:31), and to make what is long short, "Do nothing to others unless you would want it done to you" (Matt. 7:12). For whoever thinks charity lies in food and drink and giving and receiving errs more than a little. As the Apostle says, "The kingdom of God does not lie in food and drink" (Rom. 14:17). But when these things are done with charity, then they are reckoned among our virtues and good works.

35. Those who are involved with business and trade should be warned not to desire earthly gain more than sempiternal life. Whoever thinks more on earthly things than of their soul's salvation will soon stray from the path of truth, and in the words of a wise

man, "has lost his inner depths in his outer life." In this as in everything else one must follow the word of the Apostle, who said, "Let no one profit at the expense of his neighbor, nor trick him in business. For God is the judge of all these things" (1 Thess. 4:6). Just as those give tithes and alms who work in the fields and labor in other ways to produce food, clothing, and other things necessary for human uses, so also should they who for their needs practice business. God has given each man a skill by which he is fed; and from that skill which produces the body's needs each one should also care for the needs of his soul, which is far more necessary to him.

36. The first week before the beginning of Quadragesima,¹ confessions should be made to priests, penances received, enemies reconciled, and all fights pacified. And each other's debts shall be forgiven from the heart, that one might say more freely, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Thus, entering the period of blessed Quadragesima with with clean and purified minds, let them arrive at Holy Easter renewed through penance, which is a second baptism. For just as baptism purges sins, so does penance. But because a sinner cannot be baptized a second time, the Lord gave us this medicine of penance, that it might wash away sins after baptism.

Holy Scriptures show that sins are forgiven in seven ways: first in baptism, which is given for the remission of sins. Second through martyrdom; for as the Psalmist says, "The Lord imputes no sin to the blessed" (Ps. 31:2). Thus, according to this same declaration of David, sins are remitted through baptism, covered (*teguntur*) in penance, and not imputed through martyrdom. Third through alms, according to Daniel, who said to the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar: "Redeem your sins through merciful alms for the poor" (Dan. 4:14). And again: "Water extinguishes burning fire, alms extinguish sin" (Eccl. 3:33). And the Lord in the Gospel: "Give alms, and you will be made clean" (Luke 11:41). Fourth, if anyone remits the sins of one who has sinned against him: "Forgive and it will be forgiven you; give and it will be given you" (Luke 6:37-38). And again: "So your Father will forgive your sins, if you forgive each other from your hearts" (Mark 11:25). Fifth, if anyone through his preaching and good works turns another from error, according to what the Apostle said: "If anyone makes a sinner turn from the error of his

¹ I.e., Lent.

ways, he will save his own soul from death and cover a multitude of his sins" (James 5:20). Sixth, through charity (*caritas*): "The love (*caritas*) of the Lord covers a multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8) through Jesus Christ our Lord. Seventh, through penance, as David said: "I have writhed in my anguish, while the thorn is fastened" (Ps.31:4). . . .

37. Quadragesima should be kept with the strictest observance, so that fasting is never broken, save on Sundays, which are freed from abstinence; for those days are the tithes of our year,¹ and we should keep them with religion and as sacred. One shall never be released from fasting on those days. At other times it is customary for someone to be released from fasting out of charity, but this ought never be done at this time. For at other times fasting is assigned by someone's own will or decision; but during these days fasting is an order of God that cannot be suspended. Furthermore, at other times to fast is to acquire a reward for abstinence. But in this period, save for the sick or very young, anyone who does not fast gains for himself a punishment, because these days were consecrated to sacred fasting by Moses and Elijah and by the Lord himself.

38. On days of fasting alms must be given. And food or drink that one is accustomed to take when one does not fast should instead be given to the poor, since fasting while saving food for dinner brings an increase of food, not of reward.

39. Some think that they fast when they eat as soon as they hear the signal for the ninth hour. But they are not credited with fasting unless the office of vespers has been celebrated before they eat. For before one can take food one must go to mass and hear the solemnities of the mass or the office of vespers and give alms. However, if anyone is constrained by necessity so that they are unable to come to mass, then around the time they think vespers is, they should break their fast after finishing prayer.

40. During these days one must abstain from nearly all pleasures (*deliciarum*) and live soberly and chastely. Those who can abstain from sheep, cheese, fish, and wine have great virtue. Those who because of infirmity or some kinds of work cannot so abstain

¹ From Gregory the Great, *Homilia in evangelia*, I, 16.5.

shall still fast until solemnly celebrating vespers, and shall drink wine not to a point of drunkenness but only for the sake of nourishing the body. But to abstain from milk, butter, and sheep and not fast is the height of madness and beyond all reason. It is debauchery and drunkenness from wine that are prohibited, not milk and sheep. For the Apostle did not say, “Do not eat milk and sheep,” but “Do not get drunk on wine, for therein lies all debauchery” (Eph. 5:18).

41. Every Sunday during Quadragesima one should take the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, save those who have been excommunicated. And on [the days of] the Lord’s Supper [Good Friday], the vigil of Easter [Holy Saturday], and the Resurrection of the Lord [Easter Sunday], absolutely everyone should take communion (*penitus ab omnibus communcandum est*). And all shall observe these days of Easter week with equal devotion (*aequali religioni*).

42. During these days of fast there shall be no strife and no disputes, but one shall devote oneself to praise of God and necessary work. Against those who continue disputes and conflicts during Quadragesima and who demand debts from debtors, the Lord says through the prophet: “Behold, on the day you fast you do what you want and demand payment from all your debtors. Behold, you fast with strife and conflict and with impiety you fight and strike blows” (Isaiah 58:3-4).

43. On these holiest of days one must abstain from spouses and live chastely and piously, so that these holy days can be passed with sanctified heart and body. And thus one will arrive at the holy day of Easter, for the fast is worth almost nothing when one is polluted with conjugal work and prayers, and when vigils and alms are not offered.

44. The people shall be admonished never to long abstain from the most holy sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord or come to it thoughtlessly. Rather with full diligence and prudence they shall choose a period when they shall abstain for a time from conjugal work, purge themselves of vices, adorn themselves with virtues, offer alms and prayers, and thus come to the sacrament. For just as it is dangerous for the impure to

come to such a sacrament, so it is also dangerous to abstain from it for a long period of time, save only those who have been excommunicated and cannot communicate when they want but only at fixed times, and some religious leading holy lives, who communicate nearly every day.

45. That private masses celebrated by priests on Sundays shall not be celebrated in public, lest the people [attending them] then abstain from the solemnities of the public masses canonically celebrated at the third hour. But the worst practice is this: on the Lord's day and on feast days, some hear the mass celebrated, even masses for the dead, then leave and for the entire day from morning on devote themselves to drink and their bellies rather than to God.

The people must be admonished to take no food until the office is completed; and all shall gather at the public holy mother church¹ to hear preaching and the solemnities of the mass; and priests at oratories shall never celebrate masses before the second hour unless they take care that the people do not stay away from the solemnities. Rather priests, whether in areas around the town or within it, and the people, as we have already said, shall gather as one for the public celebration of masses, except for women consecrated to God, who by rule (*mos*) do not go out in public but remain enclosed within the cloister of the monastery.

¹ I.e., the cathedral church of Orléans.