

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Antioch, the capital of Syria, was the home of the next two authors, John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia. They studied together under Diodore of Tarsus at this great centre of theological thought, but they acquired very dissimilar reputations. Whereas Chrysostom was recognized by the Church as a saint and a doctor, Theodore was condemned as a heretic more than a century after his death at the Second Council of Constantinople (553).

John Chrysostom's life was much more troubled than that of his fellow-student. Theodore's unimportant diocese of Mopsuestia afforded him leisure for study and a flow of theological writing which established him in a position of great influence in the Church; even Julian of Eclanum, Pelagius' disciple and St Augustine's adversary, found a welcome with Theodore, a fact which did no good to the latter's reputation for orthodoxy in the critical eyes of the following century. John, on the other hand, remained longer as a priest at Antioch, where he won deserved fame as a preacher (his nickname Chrysostom means 'golden-mouthed') before being chosen in 397 to rule the troublesome See of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Empire. Here his outspoken criticism of the rich, including the Emperor's wife, led to his exile in 403. He died in 407, while being conveyed to a still more remote place of banishment.

It is probable that both he and Theodore preached their baptismal sermons as priests at Antioch.¹ If so, the two men

¹ Cf. P. W. Harkins, *St John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions*, pp. 15-18 (*Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 31).

must have held the office of catechetical preacher there in close succession.² Chrysostom explains baptism in advance; he gives his reasons for this procedure in section 28 of the sermon reproduced here. However, unlike the other three sets of baptismal sermons, Chrysostom's do not include a systematic explanation of the Eucharist. The two sets of the instructions, however, though explaining almost identical ceremonies, differ enormously in treatment: Theodore's genius is speculative, Chrysostom was more concerned with stirring the emotions and giving moral instruction.

Both preachers make much of the awe which the sacraments should inspire. In his treatise *On the Priesthood*, Chrysostom elsewhere elaborates upon the awesome aspect of the Eucharist in what seems to modern taste too vivid and literal detail:

Fearful and most awesome were the rites before the coming of grace . . .

But if you examine the ceremonies of the age of grace, the old things that seemed so fearful and awesome you will find to be trifles . . . When you see the Lord sacrificed and lying [on the altar], and the high priest standing by the victim and praying over it, and everyone stained red with that precious blood, do you feel you are standing on earth among men? Are you not transported at once to heaven? ³

There are extant three sets of baptismal sermons preached by Chrysostom. The Greek texts have to be sought in three different editions, not all of them at all easy to obtain.⁴

² But see Theodore, BH 3.27, note 65, last paragraph, and p. 173, n. 1.

³ III. iv. 176-7 (PG 48.642). For the application of the concept of awe to the Eucharist, cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, MC 5.9 and E. Bishop, 'Fear and Awe attaching to the Eucharistic Service', in R. H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Cambridge Texts and Studies, 1909, pp. 92-7.

⁴ *Sources Chrétiennes*, vol. 50, ed. A. Wenger; *Varia Graeca Sacra*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St Petersburg, 1909); and PG 49. 221-40, ed. B. de Montfaucon. The sermon translated in the following pages is No. 2 of the Wenger collection. P. W. Harkins, *op. cit.*, translates all three sets. For convenience references to the sermons are given to this omnibus edition, with the initial ACW.

The following sermon comes from a collection of eight recently found on Mount Athos. I am grateful to the help of my friend Michael Bossy, S.J., in making this translation.

BAPTISMAL HOMILY II.

1. Today I am going to speak a few more words to those who have been enrolled¹ among the household of Christ, to teach them the power of the weapons which they are about to receive and the indescribable goodness of the love God shows to the human race. I hope that as a result they may approach him with great faith and confidence and enjoy his generosity more liberally.

God's generosity even towards sinners

Consider, my beloved, the abundance of God's goodness from the beginning. For if, without your having worked for it nor shown any qualification, he thinks you worthy of such a gift and pardons all the sins you have committed in your life, what return are you likely to merit from a loving God if after such great kindness you learn to be grateful and determine to make a contribution of your own?

2. In human affairs nothing similar has ever been seen. On the contrary, many men on many occasions, after undergoing many labours and troubles in hope of recompense, return home empty-handed. Those from whom they expected a return have proved ungrateful for all their exertions, or else they have themselves often been snatched away from this world before they could fulfil their own aim. But in the service of our Master we need never suspect anything of the sort. Even before we begin our efforts and offer anything of our own, he forestalls us and shows his own generosity, so that his many kindnesses may induce us to take thought for our own salvation.²

¹ They have given in their names; cf. Introduction, pp. 7-8.

² We cannot show ourselves worthy of grace without grace. Cf. Ambrose, S 5.10 with note 22.

3. And so from the very beginning he has never ceased to bless the human race. For as soon as he created the first man, at once he put him to dwell in the garden of Paradise and gave him a life of ease, allowing him the freedom of all that was in the garden except for a single tree. But once the man had intemperately allowed himself to be deceived by the woman, he rode roughshod over the command that was given to him and abused the great honour that had been paid him.

4. Here too you can see the extent of God's love for man. It would have been just if one who had been so ungrateful for the benefits prepared for him had been judged unworthy of any further pardon and set outside God's providence. Not only did God not do this, but he was like a loving Father with an undisciplined son. In his instinctive love for the boy, he does not measure punishment by the fault; nor does he completely let him go free, but chastises him with moderation so as not to drive him to greater evil and the shipwreck of his life. In the same way God in his goodness expelled man for his great disobedience from this comfortable way of life and condemned him to toil and hardship so as to check his pride for the future in case he should kick over the traces again.³

It is almost as if God had said to him:

5. 'This ample ease and freedom which you enjoyed has led you to this act of grave disobedience and has made you forget my commandments. You had nothing to do, and this has given you thoughts above your own nature⁴ ("It is idleness that is the teacher of all vices"⁵). Consequently I am condemning you to toil and hardship, so that by working the land you may have a continual reminder of your own disobedience and of the worth-

³ The punishment is a blessing in disguise. Ambrose and others said this of the punishment of death, which put a happy limit to man's sinful life (S 2.17). JC's point, however, is that the sense of loss roused the first man to sorrow.

⁴ An allusion perhaps to the Greek proverb: 'Being a man one should think human thoughts' (cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1177 b 32).

⁵ Ecclus 33.27.

lessness of human nature. For since you have had great dreams and refused to remain within your own limits, I order you to go back to the dust from which you have been taken. "You are dust and to dust you shall return."⁶

6. To increase his sorrow and make him perceive his own fall, God made him dwell not far from Paradise⁷ and walled off his entry into it, so that the continual sight of what he had forfeited by his heedlessness might serve as a perpetual warning and make him in future more careful to keep the commands that were given to him. For when we do not remember as we should how fortunate we are in the enjoyment of some blessing, as soon as we are deprived of it the sense of loss makes us take great notice of it and increases our distress. And this is just what happened then in the case of the first man.

7. If you wish to learn of the evil demon's treachery and our Master's resourceful plan, consider what the devil has tried to effect in man by his deceit and what kindness our Master and Protector has shown towards man. That evil demon, in envy of man's home in Paradise, by promising him greater hopes, deprived him even of what he had already. In leading him to dream of an equality with God⁸ he brought him to the punishment of death. Such are his incitements: he not only deprives us of the blessings we have, but attempts to face us with a fall from a greater height. But even so, God in his love did not abandon the human race. He showed the devil the futility of his attempts and showed man the extent of the care he has for him — through death he gave him immortality. Just think. The devil threw man out of Paradise; the Master brought him into heaven. The profit is greater than the loss.

8. But as I said at the start — and this is the reason for these remarks — God considered that one who was heedless of such blessings was worthy once more of his great kindness. So if you,

⁶ Gen 3.19.

⁷ This midrashic detail occurs frequently in JC and in the Syriac fathers. Cf. R. Murray, 'The Rock and the House on the Rock', p. 336.

⁸ Cf. Gen 3.5: 'You will be like God.'

who are the soldiers of Christ, try to be grateful for these indescribable gifts that are being granted to you and if you are vigilant to preserve them once they are granted, who can say what kindness you will win from him, if you succeed in preserving them? He it was who said: 'To everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance.'⁹ One who makes himself worthy of what he has already received deserves to enjoy greater blessings still.

The need of Faith

9. I ask all of you who have been found worthy to be inscribed in this heavenly book¹⁰ to bring a generous faith and a firm resolve. What is performed here requires faith and the eyes of the soul: we are not merely to notice what is seen but to go on from this to imagine what cannot be seen.¹¹ Such is the power of the eyes of faith. The eyes of the body can only see what falls under the sense of sight, but with the eyes of faith it is just the reverse. They see nothing that is visible, but they see what is invisible just as if it lay before their eyes. For faith is the capacity to attend to the invisible as if it were visible. 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.'¹²

10. What is the meaning of these words? Why have I said that one must not attend to the visible but develop spiritual eyes? I will tell you. I said it so that when you see the font with its water and the hand of the priest touching your head, you will not think that this is mere water nor that it is simply the hand of the bishop¹³ that is laid upon your head. It is not a man who performs the rites but the gracious presence of the Spirit who sanctifies the natural properties of the water and who touches

⁹ Mt 25.29.

¹⁰ See note 1.

¹¹ Cf. Ambrose, S 1.10; 3.12.

¹² Heb 11.1.

¹³ 'Priest' and 'bishop' are presumably synonyms.

your head along with the hand of the priest.¹⁴ I was right, then — was I not? — to speak of the need we have of the eyes of faith if we are to believe in what is unseen instead of despising what our sense perceives.¹⁵

11. As you know, baptism is a burial and a resurrection: the old self is buried with Christ to sin and the new nature rises from the dead 'which is being renewed after the image of its creator.'¹⁶ We are stripped and we are clothed¹⁷, stripped of the old garment which has been soiled by the multitude of our sins, clothed with the new that is free from all stain. What does this mean? We are clothed in Christ himself. St. Paul remarks: 'As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.'¹⁸

EXORCISMS

12. Since you are on the threshold of the time when you are to receive these great gifts, I must now teach you, as far as I can, the meaning of each of the rites, so that you may go from here with knowledge and a more assured faith. So you need to know why it is that after the daily instruction we send you off to hear the words of the exorcists.¹⁹ This rite is neither a simple one nor a pointless. You are about to receive the heavenly King into your house. So those who are appointed for this task, just as if they were preparing a house for a royal visit, take you on one side after our sermon, and purify your minds by those fearful words, putting to flight all the tricks of the evil one, and so make the house fit for the presence of the King. For no demon, how-

¹⁴ Ambrose (S 1.15) and Theodore (BH 3.9) explain that it is the bishop's blessing of the water which makes the Holy Spirit present in the baptismal water.

¹⁵ Ambrose (S 1.9ff.) uses Naaman's contempt of the Jordan to illustrate the sense of anti-climax the candidate may feel when he sees the font.

¹⁶ Col 3.10; cf. Rom 6.4,6.

¹⁷ A reference to the stripping before baptism, which he mentions without comment in sect. 24. Cf. Introduction, pp. 20-21.

¹⁸ Gal 3.27.

¹⁹ Cf. Introduction, pp. 9-11.

ever fierce and harsh, after these fearful words and the invocation of the universal Lord of all things, can refrain from flight with all speed. And, in addition, the rite imprints great reverence in the soul and leads it to great sorrow for sin.

13. The wonderful, unbelievable thing is that every difference and distinction of rank is missing here. If anyone happens to be in a position of worldly importance or conspicuous wealth, if he boasts of his birth or the glory of this present life, he stands on just the same footing as the beggar in rags, the blind man or the lame. Nor does he complain at this since he knows that all such differences have been set aside in the life of the spirit; a grateful heart is the only requirement.

14. Such is the effect of these marvellous, awesome words and invocations. But something else is made known to us by the outward attitude — the bare feet and the outstretched hands. Just as those who suffer bodily captivity show by the appearance they present their dejection at the disaster that has struck them, so do those men who have been captives of the devil. As they are about to be freed from his tyranny and go beneath the yoke that is easy²⁰, first of all they remind themselves by their appearance of their previous situation²¹ and try to understand what they are being saved from and what they are hastening to. This then becomes for them a reason for greater gratitude and thankfulness.

The Duties of Sponsors

15. Will you allow me now to address some words to your sponsors²² so that they may know the rewards they are worthy of if they show great care for you and the punishment that will ensue if they become negligent? Consider this, my beloved. Those who act as guarantors for money accept a greater responsibility

²⁰ Cf. Mt 11.30: 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

²¹ In another sermon (ACW 10.14-15) JC explains in greater detail how this posture denotes captivity. He adds there the detail that the candidate, like the captive, is stripped. Cf. Introduction, p. 9.

²² On the sponsors, cf. Theodore, BH 2.19.

than the debtor who receives the money. If the borrower proves generous he lightens the load of the guarantor, but if not he prepares a greater crash for him. It is for this reason that the Wise Man offers his advice: 'If you offer yourself as surety, be concerned as one who must pay.'²³ If those who stand as surety for money are responsible for the full sum, those who guarantee that others will pay their account of virtue in matters of the spirit have an even greater duty to show vigilance, advising, counselling, correcting with a paternal affection.

16. They should not consider that what they are doing is a routine action. Rather they should be fully aware that they will share the credit if they guide their charges to the path of virtue by their advice, but that if they are negligent, then grave condemnation will fall upon them. For this reason it is the custom to call them 'spiritual fathers', in order that they may learn from their office the affection they owe to their charges in giving them spiritual instruction. For if it is a noble thing to lead those who are in no way connected with us to a desire of virtue, we have much greater duty to fulfil this obligation to one whom we have received to the position of our spiritual son. To sum up, negligence brings no small danger to those of you who are acting as sponsors.

RENUNCIATION OF SATAN AND CONTRACT WITH CHRIST

17. I turn now to the sacraments and the covenant between yourself and the Lord into which you are about to enter. In business, when a man wishes to entrust his affairs to another, it is necessary for a contract²⁴ to be signed between the two parties. The same is true now, when the Lord of all things is about to entrust to you affairs that are not mortal and passing away and decaying, but spiritual and heavenly. The contract is

²³ Ecclus 8.13.

²⁴ Ambrose also regards the renunciation of the devil as a contract (S 1.5).

also called a pledge of faith,²⁵ since we are doing nothing that can be seen but everything can be discerned by the eyes of the spirit. Meanwhile it is necessary for the contract to be signed, not with ink on paper but with the spirit in God. The words that you pronounce are inscribed in heaven, the agreement spoken by your lips remains indelibly before God.

18. Now consider once again the posture of captivity. The priests who introduce you first of all tell you to kneel down and pray with your hands raised to heaven, and by this attitude of body recall to your mind the one from whom you have been delivered and the other whom you are about to join. After that the bishop approaches each in turn and demands your contracts and confessions²⁶ and instructs each one to pronounce those fearful and awesome words: *I renounce you, Satan.*

19. Tears and deep sighs now force themselves upon me. I have recalled the day on which I too was judged worthy to pronounce these words. As I reckon up the weight of the sins which I have gathered from that day to this, I am confused in mind and stung in conscience as I reflect upon the shame with which I have covered myself by my subsequent negligence. And so I beg all of you to show some generosity towards me, and since you are about to approach our king — he will receive you with great alacrity, he will dress you in the royal robe²⁷ and will grant every kind of gift that you desire, at least if you seek spiritual gifts²⁸ — beg a favour for me too. Pray that God may

²⁵ JC uses the word 'faith' in two senses: (1) a pledge; (2) belief. Ambrose has a similar play on words in S 1.8.

²⁶ In Cyril the 'contract' takes the form of a confession of faith (MC 1.9). Although JC gives an explicit Contract (sect. 21), perhaps a confession of faith followed; cf. Harkins, *op. cit.*, p. 222, note 39.

²⁷ Probably an allusion to the White Garment. JC only hints at it in this sermon when he comes to describe the rite of baptism (sect. 27, last sentence), but there is an unmistakable reference in a later sermon of this series: 'They (the newly-baptized) have put on the royal robe; they almost outshine the sky and appear brighter than the stars' (ACW 4.3; cf. Introduction, pp. 28-30). There is another hint in sect. 25 of this sermon.

²⁸ 'Earnestly desire the spiritual gifts' (1 Cor 14.1).

not ask an account of my sins but grant me pardon, and for the future count me worthy of his support. I have no doubt that you will do this in your affection for your teachers.

20. But I must not allow myself to lose the thread of my argument any more. The priest then instructs you to say, *I renounce you, Satan, your pomp, your worship and your works*. There is great power in these few words. For the angels who are present and the invisible powers rejoice at your conversion and, receiving the words from your lips, carry them to the common master of all things, where they are inscribed in the books of heaven.

21. Have you seen the terms of the contract? After the renunciation of the Evil One and all the works he delights in, the priest instructs you to speak again as follows: *And I pledge myself²⁹, Christ, to you*. Do you see the overwhelming goodness of God? From you he receives only words, yet he entrusts to you realities, a great treasure. He forgets your past ingratitude; he remembers nothing of your past; he is content with these few words.

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

22. Then once you have made this covenant, this renunciation and contract, since you have confessed his sovereignty over you and pronounced the words by which you pledge yourself to Christ, you are now a soldier and have signed on for a spiritual contest. Accordingly the bishop³⁰ anoints you on the forehead with spiritual chrisms³¹, placing a seal on your head and saying: *N. is anointed in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*.

²⁹ Cf. Introduction, pp. 19-20. The Greek word *suntassomai* can mean simply 'I pledge myself; I make a contract', but sect. 22 shows that JC also took it to mean 'I enlist'.

³⁰ The words 'the bishop' do not appear in the Greek in sections 22-3.

³¹ In JC the anointing with chrisms precedes the anointing with olive-oil. See Introduction, pp. 20-21. JC does not connect the 'seal' with the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the 'seal', cf. Introduction, pp. 32-3.

23. Now the bishop knows that the Enemy is enraged and is sharpening his teeth going around like a roaring lion³², seeing that the former victims of his tyranny have suddenly defected. Renouncing him, they have changed their allegiance and publicly enlisted with Christ. It is for this reason that the bishop anoints you on your forehead and marks you with the seal, to make the devil turn away his eyes. He does not dare to look at you directly because he sees the light blazing from your head and blinding his eyes. From that day onwards you will confront him in battle, and this is why the bishop anoints you as athletes of Christ before leading you into the spiritual arena.³³

STRIPPING AND ANOINTING WITH OIL

24. Then after this at the appointed hour of the night³⁴, he strips you of all your clothes, and as if he were about to lead you into heaven itself by means of these rites³⁵, he prepares to anoint your whole body with this spiritual oil so that his unction may armour all your limbs and make them invulnerable to any weapons the Enemy may hurl.

³² Cf. 1 Pet 5.8.

³³ In these sections JC confuses the metaphors of the soldier and the athlete.

³⁴ Evidently there is a considerable interval after the anointing with chrisms; the candidates leave the church and return later for the rest of the ceremonies. In another sermon of a different series JC states explicitly that the renunciation etc. takes place on the Friday (ACW 11.19. Cf. Harkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-2; Wenger, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80). In our sermon, however, although there is no explicit day allotted to the renunciation, the lack of any indication of a change of day leaves a strong impression that the renunciation is made on Saturday. Hippolytus also gives an interval in the ceremonies, which is spent in prayer, presumably in the church (*Ap. Trad.* 20.9). Hippolytus, however, divides the ceremonies at a different point.

The Greek does not specify who performs the stripping and the anointing. The bishop probably delegated this menial and messy office to a deacon or a priest, as in Ambrose's rite (S 1.4), or perhaps in the case of women to a deaconess (cf. Harkins, *op. cit.*, p. 225).

³⁵ This language is reminiscent of that of the Mystery Religions. Cf. Introduction, pp. 57-60.

BAPTISM

25. After this anointing he takes you down into the sacred waters, at the same time burying the old nature and raising 'the new creature, which is being renewed after the image of the creator.'³⁶ Then by the words of the bishop and by his hand the presence of the Holy Spirit flies down upon you³⁷ and another man comes up out of the font, one washed from all the stain of his sins, who has put off the old garment of sin and is clothed in the royal robe.³⁸

26. To give you a further lesson that the substance of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is one³⁹, baptism is conferred in this form. As the bishop pronounces the words, *N. is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*, he plunges your head into the water and lifts it up again three times, by this sacred rite preparing you to receive the visit of the Holy Spirit. For the bishop is not the only one who touches your head; Christ also touches it with his right hand. This is shown by the actual words of the bishop who

³⁶ Col 3.10. Cf. Rom 6.4; Col 2.12.

³⁷ This is the only reference to the giving of the Spirit. JC's rite is unusual in not allotting a specific rite for this purpose (cf. Introduction, p. 32f.; Theodore, BH 3.27 with note 65). The terms in which JC describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the *candidate* (*epiphotesis*, *ephiptatai*) belong to the kind which the other authors apply to the descent of the Holy Spirit (or the whole Trinity) on the *water* in response to the Epiclesis (cf. Ambrose, S 1.15; Theodore, BH 3.9).

³⁸ See note 27.

³⁹ A piece of polemic against heretics who deny the full divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Theodore (BH 3.20ff.) and, less explicitly, Ambrose (S 1.19; cf. 6.5-9) also take the opportunity that this part of the ceremony affords to develop a similar argument. The possession of unity of being (*homoousios*) by the Father and the Son was defined at Nicaea, 325 A.D.

JC's argument is not worked out as thoroughly as Theodore's. His thought seems to be that the fact that the three Persons share one substance is shown by: (1) the three immersions coupled with one trinitarian formula; (2) the part played by the Son (whose minister the bishop is) and the Holy Spirit (who ordained the bishop).

baptizes you. He does not say, 'I baptize N.', but rather, 'N. is baptized'. This shows that he is only the minister of the grace and merely lends his hand since he has been ordained for this by the Spirit. It is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the indivisible Trinity, who bring the whole rite to completion. It is faith in the Trinity that bestows the grace of remission of sin, and the confession of the Trinity that grants us the adoption of sons.⁴⁰

THE KISS

27. The ceremonies that follow are well able to teach us the afflictions from which those who have been counted worthy to receive this sacred rite have been set free and the blessings which they have been granted. As soon as they come up from those sacred waters all present embrace them, greet them, kiss them, congratulate and rejoice with them, because those who before were slaves and prisoners have all at once become free men and sons who are invited to the royal table. For as soon as they come up from the font, they are led to the awesome⁴¹ table which is laden with all good things. They taste the body and blood of the Lord and become the dwelling place of the Spirit;⁴² since they have put on Christ, they go about appearing everywhere like angels on earth and shining as brightly as the rays of the sun.⁴³

⁴⁰ The mention of a 'confession of the Trinity' suggests that the candidate makes a profession of faith at the moment of immersion, as in Cyril (MC 2.4), Ambrose (S 2.20) and the *Ap. Trad.* (21.12-18). However in no contemporary source is there evidence for the use of *both* the minister's declaration ('I baptize you' or 'N. is baptized') *and* the profession of faith by the candidate during immersion. JC's words should therefore be taken to mean what Theodore says more explicitly: the bishop professes faith in the Trinity when he says 'N. is baptized in the name' (BH 3.15-16); the candidate subscribes to this profession by bowing down under the water (3.18-19).

⁴¹ JC applies the language of awe more fully in his sermon *On the Priesthood* (quoted on p. 156).

⁴² Again JC associates the gift of the Holy Spirit not with a specific rite of confirmation, but with another part of the initiation.

⁴³ Cf. Mt 13.43. Another oblique reference to the White Garment; see note 27.

Conclusion

28. It is not without good reason and careful thought that I have explained all these things to you in advance, my loving people. Even before you actually enjoy them, I wanted you to feel great pleasure as you fly on the wings of hope.⁴⁴ I wanted you to take up a disposition of soul worthy of the rite and, as the blessed Paul advised you, to 'set your mind on things that are above'⁴⁵, raising your thoughts from earth to heaven, from the visible to the invisible. We see such things more clearly with the eyes of the spirit than the perceptions of the senses.

29. But since you have come near the royal entrance-hall and are about to approach the very throne where the king sits distributing his gifts, show complete unselfishness in your requests. Ask for nothing worldly or natural, but make a request that is worthy of the giver. As you step out of the sacred waters and express your resurrection by the act of coming up from them, ask for alliance with him so that you may show great vigilance in guarding what has been given to you, and so be immune from the tricks of the Enemy. Pray for the peace of the Churches. Intercede for those who are still wandering. Fall on your knees for those who are in sin so that we may deserve some pardon. You were once diffident; God has given you great assurance. You were once slaves; he has enrolled you among the chief of his friends. You were once captives; he has raised you up and adopted you as sons. He will not refuse your demands; he will grant them all, true again in this to his own goodness.

30. In this way too you will draw God to still greater kindness. When he sees you showing such concern for those who are your own members⁴⁶ and anxious about the salvation of others, be-

⁴⁴ Contrast this passage with the reasons given by Cyril (MC 1.1) and Ambrose (S 1.1) for not explaining baptism until after it has been received.

⁴⁵ Col 3.2.

⁴⁶ 'We are members one of another' (Eph 4.25).

cause of this he will count you worthy to receive great assurance. Nothing so warms his heart as our compassion for our members and the affection that we show for our brothers, the great forethought we show for the salvation of our neighbour.

31. And so, dearly beloved, in this knowledge, prepare yourselves with joy and spiritual delight to receive this grace so that you may enjoy the gift in its abundance. And so may we all together, living lives that are in keeping with the grace we have received, be counted worthy to win the eternal and indescribable blessings through the grace and loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ with whom to the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power, honour now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.