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Another Athanasius : four Sahidic homilies attributed to St. Athanasius of Alexandria. Introduction, editions, translations

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Homily on Luke 11: 5-9, attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria

Title.

0 A homily by the man who bears Christ and the son of the apostles, saint Apa Athanasius, the archbishop of Alexandria, which he delivered at the time when the clergy and the great of the land of Isauria came to him and asked him: "Let us hear from you a word of consolation, for we are thirst after your sweet words. We beg the Spirit that dwells within you that you explain to us the saying from the holy Gospel according to Luke about the friend concerning whom the Lord said: 'Whom of you shall have a friend and go to him in the middle of the night ...?' - and about the three loaves that he asked on loan; and also as to whether God gives himself in the hands of everyone who shares in the Eucharist or not," and that he would tell them about Jonathan and David. He told a short story about the canons that were provided by the three-hundred-and-eighteen bishops and also commended the brothers of the community at Tabennese and the miracles that happened through them at the time that he went to them at their monasteries. And about the intention, as well as the thought of the heart, at which God looks, whereas he does not look at arduous asceticism, but when God sees the intention, he gives everyone the ability to fulfill his will. In the peace of God. Amen.

Prologue.

1 The trouble that you have endured is not in vain, but gladdened us today as when Jacob saw the face of Esau and said: "I saw your face as one who saw the face of God."¹ And also it is said through the mouth of the true God of the universe, Christ: "What the eye will behold, the heart will seize."² This is our state now. For the Holy Spirit, when it sees the heart of men receiving light from that light without blemish, tries hard to make us perceive the knowledge of the life of the holy intelligibles,

¹ Gen. 33: 10.

² I could not identify this quotation.

desiring that in the end they see each other in the way the harvester collects in his basket the harvest, which is you now.

2 For you are blessed by the Lord, O people loving Christ, and blessed is the one who invited you to his holy faith, Christ. When the one who possesses herds of cattle, wise children and virtuous women rejoices with full joy, knowing that no sorrow whatever has hold of him, then who will put to shame the leaders of the churches, that is us, each and everywhere, when they see all the nations of every country gathering in a single unity of spirit, glorifying and worshiping a holy, boundless Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

3 When people who lead this earthly life see their possessions prospering nicely and (then) troubles befall them and sorrows, due to their enemies, they will be consoled by their possessions. For even if everything has happened to them, they are firmly supported by their possessions and their wealth, for they are theirs. In this way, too, the envy of him who plots against us, I mean Satan, arises against us from time to time, higher than the waves of the sea. But through the wisdom of the captain of truth, I mean the Messiah, the hypostatic Word, Christ, (God) governs his church and restores it to tranquility.

4 Those who fight us He puts to shame, but us, we arise and stand straight.³ Even if the heretics robbed us of our house for a while, they have not been able to rob what is inside of the house. Let those people become master of the treasury, we in turn will seize the money that is inside. If we are fined, we will joyfully accept the robbery of our possessions, for the commandment obliges us to this. For the glory of the children of the church is not to do injustice to others, but their glory is to keep accepting injustice always, while they are hoping firmly for a kingdom of heavens.

5 In order that we do not lengthen the prologue too much so that the sermon drags on excessively, let us return (to our subject), as we know that the question gives us lots to do. For I see that the road is long and I,

³ Cf. Lk. 21: 28.

this most humble one, I am not good in running, but may your holy prayers help us so that we will be able to pay off the debt that you have claimed.

Material exegesis of Luke 11: 5-9.

6 This is the point of departure of the argument: the evangelist and wise physician, Luke, spoke thus: "Whom of you shall have a friend and go to him in the middle of the night and say unto him: 'Friend'"⁴ O, wisdom of him who desires what is profitable for mankind! For if a man answers another man's call in his need at the time of noon, there is no great charity, but if he answers him in the middle of the night, when he needs something, it is obvious that his charity has doubled. Thus it is that the Lord said: "When the man goes to his friend in the middle of the night."

7 Now if he goes to him, these are the words that he will say to him in supplication: "You know, my brother, my poverty and that there is no one who will have mercy upon me except you. It is a friend who has come to me, for if he were a stranger, I would shirk from him, but he is a friend. I know, my brother, your munificence: therefore I came to you. I know that you will give me everything I need. Give me three loaves only and do not give me anything besides."

8 When he had asked him like this, the other answered from inside, putting his intention to the test: "Do not cause me trouble, he said, do not ask me what is beyond my ability, for the time is advanced. If you had come during day time, I would have given all you need. My children are in bed with me and I am not able to get up to give you. You say: 'Give me' – I, for my part, know that it is not the time to console you." Then, when he kept importuning him, as he knew him – and his friend saw the distress of him who asked of him, since he was a kinsman, he got up and gave him all he needed. He asked him for three loaves only and he gave him all the needs that he was in want of.

⁴ Lk. 11: 5.

Spiritual exegesis of Luke 11: 5-9.

9 Hitherto, we have approached the problem materially. Let us now investigate it spiritually, because the lamp is not hidden under a bed, according to the word of the Lord, no, but it is put on the lamp stand, so that everyone will see the light.⁵

10 Our teacher, Christ, did not say: "Who will have an enemy ... ?", but "a friend." Who, then, is this friend? It is God. Man asks God all the time, for He is his friend when he obeys his commandments. We do not need a demonstration at his point, for He himself has said with his divine mouth to his disciples: "You are my friends, if you obey my commandments."⁶

11 He said: "He went to him in the middle of the night." For all the time of man's life that he will spend sinning is night, just as the prophet says: "Your mother is likened to the night."⁷ When a man loves sin, you will find that the demons urge him forward towards it until he believes that they desire his salvation. He does not know that they are plotting in a wicked way against his soul.

12 Therefore, the Gospel did not say: "the friend went to his friend at the time the sun was just about to set", but it said: "in the middle of the night." For you will find that everybody is heavy with sleep for a while at the time he is going to bed. When the middle of the night has come, for sure many are waking. Thus also you will find that the man who is going to approach sin will find it sweet in the beginning, before he knows salvation, because its ease weighs heavy upon him. Surely when he comes to know it in the middle of his life, which is the middle of the night, he will return to God in tears and cry out: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to your great mercy."⁸

13 "A friend has come to me from a journey", that is repentance, which touched my heart. Rightly he said: "A friend came to me from a journey."

⁵ Mt. 5: 15; Mk. 4: 21; Lk. 11: 33.

⁶ Jn. 15: 14.

⁷ Cf. Hos. 4: 5.

⁸ Ps. 50: 2.

He did not say: "An inhabitant of this same city is with me", for he had not yet become his fellow-citizen. Look into the matter and investigate it and grasp the idea precisely. At the time when Nathan went to King David and blamed him for what he had done,⁹ he said that a foreign man had come to visit him,¹⁰ meaning sin, which is a stranger. Here, however, it is said: "It is a friend who came to me", I mean repentance.

14 Come, let us inquire into the words of the Lord that he spoke in the parable and we will understand its full meaning. He said: "Ask and you shall be given, knock and there will be opened to you."¹¹ Now, listen to the words of the request: "Is not true friendship in eating and drinking? O my brother, if you persist in not giving me, I will be put to shame before him who has visited me!" That is: "When you leave me to my sins, O God, the merciful, everyone who has done your will, will mock me. Even worse, the devil will rejoice over the perdition of my soul. Look, the friend has come to me. I beg you, my Lord, do not let him go, but give me what he can accept. Give me just three loaves on loan!"

15 What are these three loaves for which he asks? These are prayer, fasting and tears. "Behold, repentance has come to me, he said, and I will reconcile myself with it through these three." But perhaps some quarrelsome person will tell me that these things are not the three loaves. I will give you again proof from the Scripture.

16 When the prophet had stumbled as a man,¹² surely you know who said: "My tears became for me like bread?"¹³ As for fasting too, another one, namely Moses, said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the words of God."¹⁴ Similarly, also the author of the Proverbs, Solomon, says about prayer: "To man shall be given the yield of his lips."¹⁵ As for the loan, "If you give me these three things, O my Lord, I will give you

⁹ 2 Sam. 12: 1-14.

¹⁰ Cf. 2 Sam. 12: 4.

¹¹ Mt. 7: 7; Lk. 11: 9.

¹² Cf. 2 Sam. 12: 13.

¹³ Ps. 41: 3.

¹⁴ Dt. 8: 3.

¹⁵ Prv. 18: 20.

my body in a pure state and my heart as a sacrifice and my mouth that it blesses you, for I know that this is your will. Because, as for the friend who came to me, he said, I do not have anything to eat that I can offer him. The table is not well provided for him who came to me. Now, you are my friend, do not let me down in front of him!", that is: "As I am defiled by fornication, give me the chance to wash myself through chastity and moderation. Let my hands, my Lord, be cleaned of injustice and my tongue be purified of false swearing. I believe that I will please the repentance that came to dwell within me."

17 But let us see what the other told him, when he had made his request. Indeed, he told him in harsh tones: "Do not bother me!" For it is not the custom of God to satisfy the demands of one who asks from him immediately, without putting his intention to the test. As is said in Deuteronomy: "He will test you and examine you, so that what is in your heart appears."¹⁶

18 "Do not bother me, he said, for I already closed my door. Your sins have made me wroth with you." - "No, my brother, if the night had passed, you could surely blame me and say: 'Look, the day has risen, go and work, in order to earn something that you can eat', but I came to you in the middle of the night. If I had spent all my life in sinning, O my Lord, for sure you would say: 'The time has passed to open the door of repentance for you', but I came to you before the number of the days of my life are fulfilled."

19 He said: "My children are with me in bed." That is to say: "See, the heirs, who are the just, already received their inheritance. They went to rest in return for their sufferings which they faced in the world. I cannot take their bread and give it to you while you are not counted in their number yet." Listen, however, also to the words of this other one: "I know, he said, my Lord, that I have not proved worthy to call myself a son of yours, but give me, so that I become indebted to you for what you gave me when I asked you."¹⁷ I have also heard, my Lord, about a

¹⁶ Cf. Dt. 13: 3.

¹⁷ Cf. Lk. 15: 19.

Canaanite woman, who came to you, asking for the healing of her daughter,¹⁸ to whom you granted the document of all her sins, as a child,¹⁹ while saying to her: 'Great is your faith, go in peace. You too are counted among the believers.'²⁰ Now then, my Lord, I will not leave you as long as you have not given me the loaves for which I asked you."²¹

20 When the friend saw his persistence, he got up and gave him not only three loaves, but he got up and gave him everything he needed. That is, when man returns to God and asks Him for little, He will also help him so that many good things will come to dwell inside him that induce him to repentance.

21 You have seen, O my beloved, the great mercy of God, how He listens to those who ask him and has pity on them even if they have fallen into the pit of all kinds of sins. When the right thought arises in your heart, do not hesitate to ask God. But if you change your mind, the evil enemy will immediately say to you, as he does not want you to escape him: "If you once again ask God about your sins, he will not listen to you for you are impious." Do not then listen to him, but remember right away what you have heard in the parable of the Lord.

Saint Pachomius and the wicked rich man Phoibamon.

22 Listen now and I will recount you a miracle that happened in my own time, me, your father Athanasius. Undoubtedly your piety have heard about what happened to me through the envy of the sons of the devil, the filthy Arians. At the time when I went to the south of Egypt, to the blessed man and prophet Pachomius, the archimandrite of Tabennese, the man who truly bore God, I saw standards of behaviour at that place that are not human standards but angelic ones, ordained by God. For all men who through their (i.e. the brethren's) agency will obey their teaching by (observing) the commandments which they impose upon them, will be saved, as the story will show us when we proceed.

¹⁸ Cf. Mt. 15: 22.

¹⁹ Cf. Mt. 15: 26.

²⁰ Cf. Mt. 15: 28.

²¹ Cf. Gen. 32: 26.

23 There was a man living in Diospolis, that is Hoou,²² who was very rich and whose name was Phoibamon. This man was extremely merciless and unjust and he wickedly deprived the poor who worked for him from their salary. They often went to the monastery, to the man of God, Pachomius, and used to tell him their sufferings, for he was a good man and merciful for everyone, but in particular for the poor. And the old man would blame that merciless man, saying: "Spare your soul and have mercy upon the poor." But that man told him with a shameless face: "Apa, your concern are your mortifications and your asceticism, but accounting for my business is mine."

24 It happened once, when they were celebrating the Eucharist in the monastery, with a large crowd gathering, that merciless rich man, Phoibamon, had come too and at the same moment the man of God appeared. When the poor who had been treated unjustly entered the congregation, they began to shout his name and disturb the Eucharist. But he stood there silently as if he did not care at all about the oppressed who were shouting. When the holy Apa Pachomius saw the shamelessness of that man, he pronounced the following verdict over him: "I believe by Christ, the patron of those who are screaming, who is God, that He will not let you open your mouth and that you will not leave this place where you are standing until God judges their case."

25 And immediately his mouth shut and he stood motionless, so that everyone thought that he had become like a stone without life. When he had suffered a lot from the heavy chastisements that were inflicted upon him invisibly, he moved his head as if he asked, by indicating his finger, for a writing tablet. And when they had given him one, he wrote with his hand as follows: "I believe, my holy father, that if God grants me mercy from the torments that I suffer and my mouth will open, I will not only do justice to the poor to whom I was unfair, but also leave all my business behind and go to the monastery and become a monk with you and repent for the sins that I have committed until the day of my visitation (i.e. my death)."

²² I.e. Diospolis Mikra, modern Huw.

26 And immediately his mouth opened. He spoke, while everybody gazed at him. A great fear came over all those who saw him. Then, when the Eucharist had come to an end, the people went to their homes except for those alone who had been treated unjustly. They remained standing just as the man of God, Pachomius, had instructed them. Then the man, that is Phoibamon, wrote his testament in three parts. He gave one part (of his possessions) to the poor, another part destined for the needs of his wife and his children, and another one he gave to the community of the saints. He remained with the holy Apa Pachomius and became a monk with him.

27 Some days later, the bishop of a city called Kebt,²³ which is (located) to the south of them, went to rest (i.e. died). And by God's decree, the clergy seized him and made him bishop over it. We will tell you for what reason he obtained this thing. After he had become a monk, he saw the crowd of the brothers, how numerous it was, and he did not stay among them but preferred to become an anchorite on his own. And thus he left the monastery and wandered to the south, in those districts, and stayed in a place on his own, living in solitude. For this reason, then, the inhabitants of the city chose him and ordained him as their bishop, for habitually the members of the holy community do not accept a dignity of this kind, because of their great humility. He became a bishop who was famous in that whole district, achieved great acts of asceticism and was merciful in particular for the poor and the distressed, supplying them with all they needed, without ever rejecting anybody who appealed to him.

28 You have seen, O my beloved, that if the sinner turns back to God and performs his will, He will not only receive him joyfully, but He will raise him and glorify him all the more. If I wanted to recount all the miracles of that one (i.e. Pachomius), many books could not contain them.²⁴ Nevertheless, I will tell you one more, in order that we save up the remainder.

²³ I.e. Koptos, modern Qift.

²⁴ Cf. Jn. 21: 25.

29 Those holy monks are such men that nobody who is defiled by any sin is able to approach the altar unless they discover him through the Holy Spirit that dwells within them. I saw also that when some of his sons in that place in private considered committing a sin, the man of God, Pachomius, knew it before they had performed the act and thus he stripped them of the monastic habit and dispelled them from the rank of the monks in ignominy. You have seen, O my beloved, that he who will direct his heart towards God will become entirely one with the Holy Spirit. Let us, for our part, emulate these holy men and chase from ourselves every negligence that is inside us ... for ... these, while we admire the ascetism of the saints.

The friendship between Jonathan and David.

30 Let us return to the remainder of the question after which your piety inquired. For you spoke about

Jonathan and David, (inquiring) for what reason they enjoyed such friendship.²⁵ Listen and I will tell you. It is not the ones who are produced by the (same) womb that are friends, but it is the ones who are produced by practice: these will not be able to separate forever. Do you want to understand? Listen.

(Vat. Copt. 145, f. 15r) Jonathan and David, (inquiring) for what reason they obtained such friendship. Listen, I will tell you. The ones who are produced by the (same) womb are not (friends) according to love but according to the flesh. On the contrary, it is the ones who are produced by practice: these will not be able to separate forever even when they are free to choose. Do you want to know the truth? Listen.

31 Cain and Abel were brothers to each other, and they were born from the same father and the same mother, yet Cain killed his brother Abel.²⁶ Jonathan, however, and David were strangers to each other,

Cain and Abel were brothers to each other, and they were born to their one mother and the same father, (yet) one arose against the other and killed him. Jonathan, however, and David were strangers

²⁵ 2 Sam. 1: 26.

²⁶ Cf. Gen. 4: 1-8.

yet Jonathan died for David out of his free will. Even if this was not stated explicitly, Holy Scripture testifies thus.²⁷ And Jonathan went to meet David and when he had found him, he spoke with him and David told him all his complaints. And Jonathan said to David: "I will find out what is in my father's heart and I will tell you tomorrow." And not only did Saul not speak with Jonathan about David in a peaceful way, but Saul even plotted to take Jonathan's life, when he attempted to hit him with the spear. And also in these circumstances Jonathan did not fear the menace of his father, seeing the full measure of evil. And he went secretly to David, concluding a covenant with him and preserving his good disposition towards him.

to each other, (yet) Jonathan died for David out of his free will. Even if this was not stated explicitly, the Holy Scriptures testifies (f. 15v) thus: And Jonathan went to meet David and once he had found him, he spoke with him and David told him all his complaints. And Jonathan said to David: "I will find out what is in my father's heart and I will tell you tomorrow." And not only did Saul not speak with Jonathan in a peaceful way, but Saul even wished to take Jonathan's life, when he attempted to hit him with the spear. Also in these circumstances, Jonathan did not fear the plot of his father, seeing the full measure of his evil. For he went secretly to David, concluding a covenant with him and preserving his disposition towards him.

32 The people of this present age, however, not only do not die for their friends, but they deliver their friends onto death for a glass of wine and a small piece of bread, let alone for gold or silver and other things of that kind. If you will not watch your disposition, then you have stopped being a human and have become an animal. For the disposition represents the rational faculty: When you take the animal nature, then resign from being called man.

The people of this present age, however, not only (f. 16r) do not die for their friends, but they deliver their friends to be killed for a glass of wine and a piece of bread, let alone for gold and silver and things of this kind. If you will not watch your disposition, you have stopped being a human and have become an animal. For the animal disposition is irrational: When you take the animal nature, resign from being called man.

²⁷ 1 Sam. 20.

33 Die for your friend, not for evil but for good. For there is a friend whose friendship is perdition because of the forbidden commerce which they (the friends) have with each other. If you really want your friendship to last, then teach your friend not to fall into sin.

Die for your friend, just not for evil. For there is a friend whose friendship is perdition because of the forbidden commerce which they (the friends) have with each other. If you really want your friendship to last, then teach (your friend) not to fall (f. 16v) into sin.

The heretic Carpocratius.

34 I would like to give a long speech about these things, but I know that there is a limit to everything, according to the word of the wise Solomon.²⁸ For I remember that your love asked about faith, (inquiring) how we shall keep it. I will tell you a story that happened in my time and that of our fathers, in those days when I followed my holy father Apa Alexander, the archbishop,²⁹ as I was a deacon at that time.

I would like to deliver a full speech about these things, but I know that there is a limit for everything according to the word of the wise man. Also I remember that your love asked about the upright faith, (inquiring) how we shall keep it. I will recount to you a story that happened in the days of our fathers, in those days when I was a deacon, following my father, Alexander, as I was a deacon at that time.

35 It happened, when the council of our holy fathers, the bishops, had gathered in Nicaea, at the order of the pious emperor Constantine, that there was someone called Carpocratius,

It happened, when the holy council of the bishops had gathered in Nicaea, at the order of God and the pious emperor Constantine, that there was someone called Carpocratius,

whose name is not even worthy to be pronounced, who was also sitting at the council. And when our holy fathers established the canons of the faith, while the Holy Spirit was with them, giving them guidelines, that impure one reacted with foolish talk and argued with them.

²⁸ Cf. Ecc. 8: 6.

²⁹ I.e. Alexander of Alexandria (312-328).

36 And when he continued contradicting the truth, saying that what our fathers said is not the truth, but that they erred in the faith, then the emperor Constantine summoned him and said to him: "How have you come to know that it is not the truth what our fathers say? Are then ... you?" The one whose name is not worthy to be pronounced, Carpocratius, who is covered with curse and shame, answered: "It is not true that Christ spent nine months in the womb of Mary, the Holy Virgin, but they were seven months." The one who bears Christ, Apa Alexander of Constantinople, for he too was sitting in the council, replied: "By no means shall we believe thus as you say, but we believe that Christ experienced, in his mercy for mankind, everything man that does, except for sin."³⁰

37 And when that foolish and impure fellow kept contradicting, saying that this was not the truth, the emperor decreed in this way, that

the two cloaks, that of the holy archbishop Apa Alexander and that of the defiled Carpocratius, be taken and both be thrown into the fire. And the one that would burn, would be his whose faith is vain. And they were taken and thrown into the fire according to the order of the emperor. Immediately, the judgment became manifest and God glorified those who fight for his faith. The cloak of the impure wretch burned and became worthless right away as it fell into the fire. By contrast, the one of the holy Archbishop, Apa Alexander, remained unharmed as it was before and even, in a miraculous way, became more lustrous.

(Vat. Copt. 145, f. 17r) the two cloaks, that of the holy archbishop Apa Alexander and that of the accursed Carpocratius, be taken and both be thrown into the fire. And the one that would burn, would be his whose faith is vain. And they were taken and both thrown into the fire according to the order of the emperor. Immediately, the judgment of God became manifest and God glorified those who fight for his faith. The cloak of that wretched one, Carpocratius, burned and became entirely worthless right away as it reached the fire. By contrast, the one of the holy Apa Alexander, remained unharmed as it was before and even became much more lustrous.

³⁰ Cf. Heb. 4: 15.

38 At that moment, the crowd of the Senate cried out: "One is the son of Mary! Jesus prevailed! Jesus is glorified! True God from true God! Christ is our God! He is consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And one is the faith of the three-hundred-and-eighteen holy bishops, the patrons of the entire inhabited world." After Carpocratius had been put to shame before such a distinguished assembly, the emperor ordered to excommunicate him. As for the bishops, they obtained the fullness of the trophy of triumph and returned to their fatherland while God glorified them.

Right away, the crowd of the Senate cried out: "One is the son of Mary! (f. 17v) Jesus Christ prevailed! Jesus Christ is glorified! He is true God from true God! Jesus Christ is our God! He is consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And one is the faith of the three-hundred-and-eighteen bishops, the patrons of the entire inhabited world." After Carpocratius had been put to shame in the middle of such a distinguished crowd, the emperor ordered to excommunicate him. As for the bishops, they obtained the trophy of triumph and returned to their residences while God helped them and the emperor and the Senate glorified them.

39 Therefore, O my sons, take care not to transgress the canons that you were taught and which I entrusted to you, and not to listen to these foreign teachings, but to believe in the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Such is the strength and the hope of all Christians. Take care that you walk in the dignity of the vocation by which you have been called.³¹ It is written that: "Circumcision is of value if you obey the law",³² that is to say: even if you are baptized but do not observe the commandments of

Therefore, my beloved and my sons, take care not to transgress the canons that you were taught (f. 18r) and which I entrusted to you, and not to follow foreign teachings, and to believe in the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Such is the strength and the salvation of all Christians. Take care that you walk in the dignity of the vocation by which you have been called. It is written that: "Circumcision is of value if you obey the law", that is to say: even if you are baptized but do not observe the commandments of baptism and

³¹ Cf. Eph. 4: 1.

³² Rom. 2: 25.

Christianity, you will not profit in any way.

Christianity, you will not profit in any way.

On Holy Communion.

40 As for the other problem, about which your piety has also inquired with my ignorance, to wit: whether or not God gives himself upon the altar into the hands of everyone who will go to communion - this matter is easy to understand for everyone. If indeed someone who is defiled with filth will not dare to sit down with the king of this world, who is himself a man like everybody, then will God himself give his body into the hands of a sinful man? Just as, once more, no man who is full of sores and whose sores emit pus is able to lay down at the table of the emperor and eat with him, in the same way God will not suffer that the impure partakes of his body.

As for the other problem, about which your piety has inquired with my ignorance, to wit: whether or not God gives himself upon the altar to everyone who will go to communion – everyone can easily understand this matter. (f. 18v) If someone who is defiled with filth will not dare to sit down with the king of this earth, even though he is himself a man like everybody, then will God himself give his body into the hand of a sinner? Just as, once more, no man who is full of sores and whose sores emit pus and who stinks foul will dare to lay down at the table of the emperor and eat with him, in the same way God will not suffer that those who are impure with sin partake of his table together with those who did his will.

41 For this matter of receiving the holy mysteries befits the man who purifies himself first, knowing that if he receives (them) in state of defilement, he will be subject to judgment. Do you think, O man, that you will be able to hide before Him who knows the depth of the heart of each of us?³³ He who stands near the holy altar?

This matter of receiving the holy mysteries befits each man who purifies himself before he partakes from them, knowing that if he receives (them) in state of defilement, he will be subject to judgment. Do you think, O man, that you can hide before Him who sees the depth of the heart, that is God, who stands near the table, knowing ...

³³ Cf. Rev. 2: 23.

42 May it be ... that we become holy, so that we will come to resemble Him in his glory, so that moreover we will receive these great boons "which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human mind has conceived, the ones that He has prepared for those who love him"³⁴ and keep his commandments, through the grace and the charity of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, this one to whom is the glory together with his good Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

³⁴ 1 Cor. 2: 9.