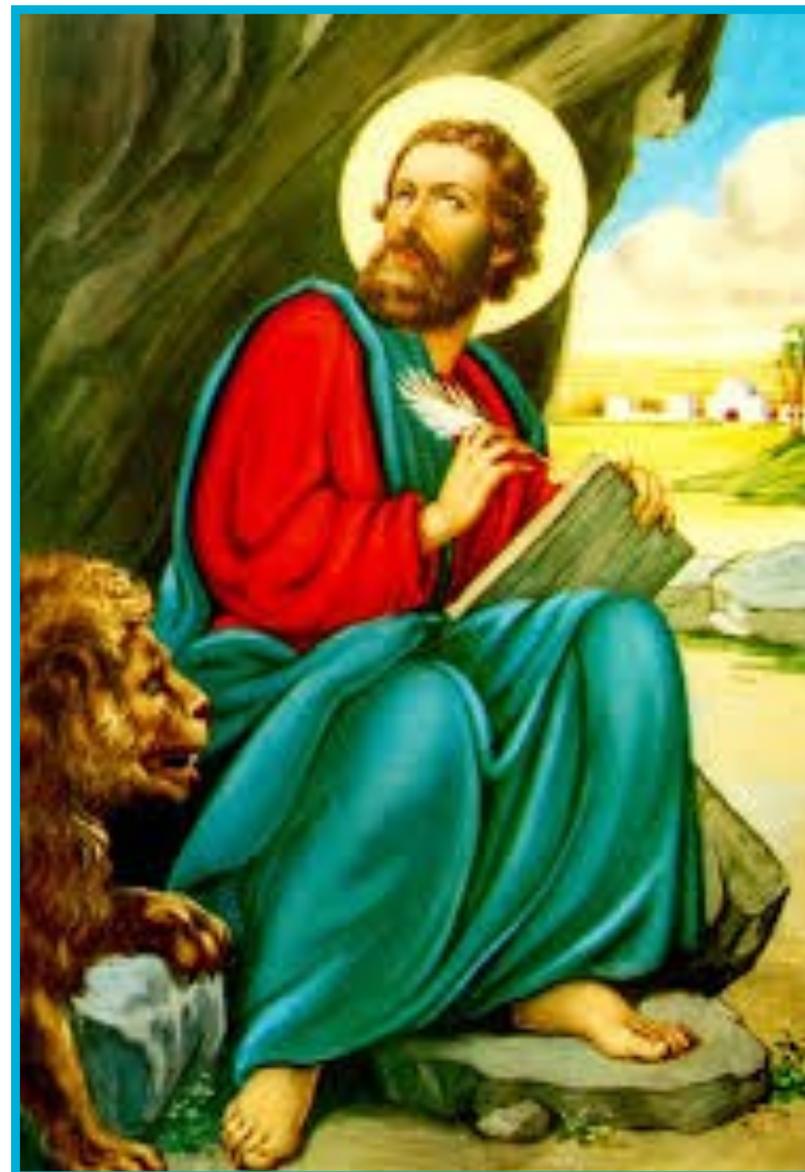




## ***THE GOSPEL OF MARK***

**CHAPTER 6: 1-56**



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

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

Mark wrote down Peter's account of the 'good news'. Peter was one of the first twelve of Jesus' disciples, and the first to publicly recognize Him as the Messiah. Peter, through Mark, shows us that Jesus fulfills all the criteria of the Servant-Messiah our Ransom, who was prophesied by Isaiah some 750 years earlier (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:5-7; 52:13-53:12). Jesus is portrayed as a slave, caring for people and serving God (Mark 1:32-35). There are therefore no details of His birth, only of the beginning of His service (Mark 1:1,9).

\*\*\*\*\*

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

## **Mark 6: 1-56**

Douay Rheims Version

*Christ teaches at Nazareth: he sends forth the twelve apostles:  
he feeds five thousand with five loaves; and walks upon the sea.*

1. And going out from thence, he went into his own country; and his disciples followed him.
2. And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were in admiration at his doctrine, saying: How came this man by all these things? and what wisdom is this that is given to him, and such mighty works as are wrought by his hands?
3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon? are not also his sisters here with us? And they were scandalized in regard of him.

4. And Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred.
5. And he could not (*He could not: Not for want of power, but because he would not work miracles in favour of obstinate and incredulous people, who were unworthy of such favours*) do any miracles there, only that he cured a few that were sick, laying his hands upon them.
6. And he wondered because of their unbelief, and he went through the villages round about teaching.
7. And he called the twelve; and began to send them two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.
8. And he commanded them that they should take nothing for the way, but a staff only: no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse,
9. But to be shod with sandals, and that they should not put on two coats.
10. And he said to them: Wheresoever you shall enter into an house, there abide till you depart from that place.
11. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you; going forth from thence, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony to them.
12. And going forth they preached that men should do penance:
13. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.
14. And king Herod heard, (for his name was made manifest,) and he said: John the Baptist is risen again from the dead, and therefore mighty works shew forth themselves in him.
15. And others said: It is Elias. But others said: It is a prophet, as one of the prophets.
16. Which Herod hearing, said: John whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead.
17. For Herod himself had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her.
18. For John said to Herod: It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother' s wife.
19. Now Herodias laid snares for him: and was desirous to put him to death, and could not.
20. For Herod feared John, knowing him to be a just and holy man: *and kept him ( And kept him: That is, from the designs of Herodias; and for fear of the people, would not put him to death, though she sought it; and through her daughter she effected her wish) and when he heard him, did many things: and he heard him willingly.*
21. And when a convenient day was come, Herod made a supper for his birthday, for the princes, and tribunes, and chief men of Galilee.
22. And when the daughter of the same Herodias had come in, and had danced, and pleased Herod, and them that were at table with him, the king said to the damsel: Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee.
23. And he swore to her: Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom.

\*\*\*\*\*

24. Who when she was gone out, said to her mother, What shall I ask? But she said:  
The head of John the Baptist.

25. And when she was come in immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying:  
I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish, the head of John the Baptist.

26. And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and because of them that  
were with him at table, he would not displease her:

27. But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a  
dish.

28. And he beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a dish: and gave it to  
the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29. Which his disciples hearing came, and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

30. And the apostles coming together unto Jesus, related to him all things that they  
had done and taught.

31. And he said to them: Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little. For there  
were many coming and going: and they had not so much as time to eat.

32. And going up into a ship, they went into a desert place apart.

33. And they saw them going away, and many knew: and they ran flocking thither on  
foot from all the cities, and were there before them.

34. And Jesus going out saw a great multitude: and he had compassion on them,  
because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them  
many things.

35. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him, saying: This is a  
desert place, and the hour is now past:

36. Send them away, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy  
themselves meat to eat.

37. And he answering said to them: Give you them to eat. And they said to him: Let us  
go and buy bread for two hundred pence, and we will give them to eat.

38. And he saith to them: How many loaves have you? go and see. And when they  
knew, they say: Five, and two fishes.

39. And he commanded them that they should make them all sit down by companies  
upon the green grass.

40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.

41. And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes: looking up to heaven,  
he blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave to his disciples to set before them: and  
the two fishes he divided among them all.

42. And they all did eat, and had their fill.

43. And they took up the leavings, twelve full baskets of fragments, and of the fishes.

44. And they that did eat, were five thousand men.

45. And immediately he obliged his disciples to go up into the ship, that they might go  
before him over the water to Bethsaida, whilst he dismissed the people.

46. And when he had dismissed them, he went up to the mountain to pray.

47. And when it was late, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and himself alone on  
the land.

48. And seeing them labouring in rowing, (for the wind was against them,) and about  
the fourth watch of the night, he cometh to them walking upon the sea, and he  
would have passed by them.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Placed it in a tomb.* S. Jerome says that the body of S. John was buried at Sebaste, the former Samaria, where also the prophets Elisha and Obadiah were buried. Moreover, S. John wrought so many miracles at Sebaste that Julian the Apostate ordered his body to be burnt, but the Christians secretly conveyed away his relics.

49. But they seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it was an apparition, and they cried out.

50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he spoke with them, and said to them: Have a good heart, it is I, fear ye not.

51. And he went up to them into the ship, and the wind ceased: and they were far more astonished within themselves:

52. For they understood not concerning the loaves; for their heart was blinded.

53. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Genezareth, and set to the shore.

54. And when they were gone out of the ship, immediately they knew him:

55. And running through that whole country, they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56. And whithersoever he entered, into towns or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

*1 Christ is contemned of his countrymen. 7 He giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits. 14 Divers opinions of Christ. 27 John Baptist is beheaded, 29 and buried. 30 The apostles return from preaching. 34 The miracle of five loaves and two fishes. 48 Christ walketh on the sea: 53 and healeth all that touch him.*

Ver. 1. *Going out from thence, i.e.,* from Capernaum, where He raised Jairus' daughter.

He went into His own country, *i.e.,* to Nazareth, where He was brought up.

Ver. 2. *They were in admiration at His doctrine:* literally, *they admired in His doctrine.* This is a Hebraism. For the Hebrews use  $\text{אֶת}$  as a preposition of contact either corporal or mental in the place of an accusative. Thus they say, *I touch in the hand,* instead of, *I touch the hand; I believe in God,* instead of, *I believe God; I admire in wisdom, for I admire wisdom.*

Ver. 5. *And He could not do any miracles there. Could not, i.e., would not,* because He did not think it proper to give what was holy to dogs, that is, to force His miracles upon unbelieving and ungrateful citizens. So *could notis* used for *would not* (Gen. xxxvii. 4, and John vii. 7). "Because," says Victor of Antioch on this passage, "two things must coincide for the attaining of health, namely, the faith of those who need healing, and the power of him who will heal; therefore, if either of these be wanting, the blessing of a cure will not readily be attained."

Ver. 6. *He wondered because of their unbelief.* This seems to conflict with what is said in Luke iv. 22, *And all bare Him record, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.* I answer, that the

inhabitants of Nazareth wondered, indeed, that Jesus, the son of a carpenter, their well-known neighbour, should be so wise and eloquent, and yet were incredulous with respect to His doctrine and person, that He was in very deed the Messiah or Christ. And that this was so is plain from what Luke subjoins.

Ver. 13. *They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.* Some are of opinion that this anointing was the same as that of which S. James speaks in his Epistle (v. 14), that is to say, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. So Bede, Theophylact, Lyra, and others, who think that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was at this time instituted by Christ, and that the Apostles by His command conferred it upon the sick, although they had not as yet been ordained priests.

But the contrary seems more probable.

1. Because the priest alone is the minister of this sacrament; but the Apostles were not yet priests, for Christ created them priests afterwards.
2. Because the Apostles here anointed all sorts of sick persons, those not baptized, and those not about to die. But Extreme Unction is conferred only upon those who are baptized, and in danger of death.
3. All who were here anointed by the Apostles were healed. But this is not the case in Extreme Unction, which has primary reference to the health and strength of the soul.
4. Because the Council of Trent (Sess. 14) says that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was hinted at in S. Mark, but was commanded and promulgated to the faithful by S. James, the Lord's brother. This anointing, therefore, was a type, and as it were a prelude, of the institution of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, not the sacrament itself. This, then, was a miraculous anointing, or a gift of miracles, bestowed upon the Apostles for a time, that they might by its means confirm their preaching of Christ. It was not the sacrament itself. So S. Genoveva and many holy authorities were wont to heal the sick by means of oil blessed by them and sent to the sick. Victor of Antioch gives the reason why they used oil rather than wine,—“oil, amongst other things, assuages the affliction of labours, cherishes light, and promotes gladness.” Oil, therefore, which is used in the holy anointing, signifies the mercy of God, the healing of disease, and the enlightenment of the heart. In a similar way the baptism of John was not a sacrament, but a type and prelude of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Ver. 16. *Which Herod hearing, said, John whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead.* It was as if he said, The soul of John has passed into Jesus, and so there, as it were, by rising again, has become more divine, and works such great and stupendous miracles. Luke (ix. 7) says that Herod doubted at first, but afterwards, on account of the universal fame of the miracles of Jesus, believed that John had risen again in Him. So S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Augustine, and others. For the opinion of Pythagoras concerning the metempsychosis or transmigration of souls was then very prevalent. S. Chrysostom says, “How great a thing is virtue! for Herod fears even the dead man.” For, as Rabanus says, “it is agreed by all that the saints shall have greater power when they rise again.” So also Bede.

Ver. 17. *For Herod himself had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison*

widely spread abroad as to lead Herod to suspect that John had risen again in Jesus. This led Jesus to retire into the desert lest Herod should kill Him also.

Lastly, some think that John suffered on the 29th of August, because the Church keeps the Feast of the Decollation of S. John the Baptist on that day. Baronius, however, thinks that this day is kept in memory of the Invention of the head of S. John.

Ver. 28. *And brought his head in a dish: and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother.* S. Chrysostom (*in Matt. Hom. 49*), S. Austin (*Serm. 36, de Sanctis*), S. Ambrose (*lib. 3, de Virgin.*) enlarge upon the indignity, yea, the sacrilege, of this murder. Apostrophising Herod, the latter cries, “Behold his eyes, even in death the witnesses of thy cruelty! He turns them away from the sight of thy dainties. His eyes are closed, not so much by the constraint of death, as by horror at thy luxury. That lifeless golden mouth, whose sentence thou couldst not endure, is silent, and yet it is dreaded.”

S. Jerome says that Herodias insulted the severed head, and punctured his most holy tongue with a needle; upon which the Father exclaims, “Do not boast thyself so much because thou hast done what scorpions and flies do. So did Fulvia to Cicero, and Herodias to John, because they could not bear the truth; they pierced the tongue that spoke the truth with a needle” (S. Jerome, *Apolog. cont. Rufin. sub finem*).

Wherefore the just vengeance of God burned against all who were concerned in this crime. Herod was defeated by Aretas. Afterwards he was banished with Herodias to Lyons, and deprived of his tetrarchy and everything by Caligula, at the instigation of Agrippa, the brother of Herodias, as Josephus relates (xviii. 10). Moreover, the head of the dancing daughter was cut off by means of ice. Hear what Nicephorus says, “As she was journeying once in the winter-time, and a frozen river had to be crossed on foot, the ice broke beneath her, not without the providence of God.

Straightway she sank down up to her neck. This made her dance and wriggle about with all the lower parts of her body, not on land, but in the water. Her wicked head was glazed with ice, and at length severed from her body by the sharp edges, not of iron, but of the frozen water. Thus in the very ice she displayed the dance of death, and furnished a spectacle to all who beheld it, which brought to mind what she had done.” Hear also L. Dexter (*in Chron. A.C. 34*), “Herod Antipas, with Herodias his incestuous mistress, was banished first to Gaul, and afterwards to Ilerda in Spain. Herodias dancing upon the river Sicoris when it was frozen, fell through the ice, and perished miserably.”

passage in support of what they say. Neither have I been able to find any in which the word *speculator* is used for an executioner (*carnifex*), with the exception of this one in S. Mark. *Spiculator*, then, becomes *σπεκουλάτωρ* in Greek. For the Greeks often change the vowel *i* into *e*, as the Italians also do.

*He commanded his head to be brought in a dish.* Thus did the savage season his feast with this horrible spectacle of cruelty. Bede adds, he wished all his guests to be associated with him in his cruelty. Moreover, S. Gregory says (*Moral. lib. 3, c. 4*), “God afflicts His own with infirmities, because He knows how to reward them in the highest. If God exposes to anguish those whom He loves, what are those about to suffer whom He rejects?”

S. John, then, has many laurels—

1st That of doctor;  
2nd of virginity;  
3rd of martyrdom;  
4th of a prophet;  
5th of a hermit;  
6th of an apostle;  
7th of the precursor, index, and baptizer of Christ.

You will ask, At what time was John put to death?

1st Abulensis says it cannot be determined.

2nd. Bede, and from him Baronius (A.C. 33), Maldonatus, and Barradi think that John was slain about the time of the Passover in Christ’s thirty-third year. They support this view, because Matthew says (xiv. 13) that Christ departed into the wilderness when He heard of the death of John, and there fed the 5000, an event which happened about the time of the Passover (John vi. 4).

3rd. And very probably, our Salianus (*Annal. tom. 6, in fin. ad ann. Christi 32, num. 20*) thinks that John suffered at the end of the thirty-second year of the life of Christ, probably in December. He proves this, because Nicephorus (*lib. 1, c. 19*) says that John at his death was thirty-two years and a half old; that is, at the completion of Christ’s thirty-second year. For John was born on the 24th of June, and was just six months older than Christ, who was born on the 25th of December of the same year. He gives us a second reason, because although Christ’s departing into the desert (Matt. xiv.) occurred about the time of the Passover, yet John’s death preceded it by some considerable time. For Christ departed not so much on account of John’s death, as because the fame of His own miracles had so greatly increased that many thought John had risen again in Him. But this took place when some considerable time, comparatively speaking, had elapsed after John’s death. That is to say, John’s being put to death took place in December, and Christ’s retiring into the desert about the following March. And the intervening period must have been taken up by the miracles which Christ wrought after John’s death, and by the fame of them being so

*for the sake of Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her.* This Herod was not the Great, who was called Herod of Ascalon, who slew the infants of Bethlehem, but his son, surnamed Antipas, who arrayed Christ in a white robe and mocked Him. He it was who beheaded John the Baptist.

You will say, Herod Antipas was only a tetrarch, for so Matthew calls him (xiv. 1). Why, then, does Mark here call him a king? I reply, he calls him king because he was the chief potentate in his tetrarchy, equal to a king in his kingdom. Wherefore he assumed the name of king, and it was given him by others, even by S. Matthew himself (xiv. 9).

*In prison.* Josephus adds that John was incarcerated in the fortress of Macher, on the confines of Galilee and Arabia, where he was beheaded. This prison was made famous by S. John, for the place, says Philo (*lib. de Joseph.*), was not so much a prison as a school of discipline. Seneca says (*in Consolat. ad Albinam*), “When Socrates entered his prison, he was about to deprive the very place of ignominy, for that could not seem to be a prison where Socrates was.” Whence S. Cyprian (*lib. 4, epist. 1, ad Martyr.*) says, “O blessed prison, which your presence has made illustrious: O darkness, brighter than the sun himself, where the temples of God have been!” The same (*lib. 3, epist. 25*) says concerning the chains of the martyrs, “They are ornaments, not bonds. They do not link the feet to infamy, but glorify them for the crown.” Wherefore S. Ambrose says (*lib. de Joseph. c. 5*) “Let not the innocent be distressed when they are the victims of false accusations. God visits His own, even in their prison. Then, therefore, is there the more help where is the greater peril. And what marvel is it if God visit those who are in prison, who speaks of Himself as shut up with His people in prison? I was in prison, He says, and ye visited Me not” (Matt. xxv. 44).

On account of Herodias. *His brother’s wife.* You will say that Josephus (*lib. xviii. Ant. c. 7, 9*) says that she was the wife of another Herod, who was the brother of Philip and Herod Antipas. I reply that Josephus is in error in this matter, as well as in many others; unless you choose to suppose that Herodias was previously married to Herod Antipas. Josephus falls into another mistake in the same place, when he says that John was put to death not because of Herodias, but because Herod was afraid lest, on account of the concourse of the people to John, an insurrection might occur.

Whether Herodias married Herod whilst her husband Philip was alive, or after his death, commentators are not agreed. But it is certain that either way it was an illicit marriage, and involved incest, to which was added adultery, if Philip were still alive. For by Leviticus (xviii. 16) it is forbidden for a brother to marry his brother’s wife if there were offspring of the marriage, and Philip had left this dancing daughter, whom Josephus calls Salome. But I say that Herod did marry Herodias during his brother’s

lifetime, and against his will, and so committed a threefold sin,—the first, adultery; the second, incest; the third, violence. This is proved: 1st Because Josephus expressly asserts it (*lib. xviii. Ant. c. 7*). 2nd Because the incestuous marriage took place about the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar; for that was when John began to preach, as is plain from Luke iii. 1; but Philip died in the twentieth year of Tiberius, as Josephus affirms (xviii. 6), where he praises him for his justice and modesty. 3rd Because the Fathers everywhere accuse Herod of adultery, because he took away his wife from his brother, who was of a meek disposition, whilst he was yet living. Thus Herod took advantage of his gentleness.

Ver. 20. *For Herod was afraid of John, knowing him to be a just man and a holy.* At first, therefore, it was only Herodias who wished to kill John, as the rebuker of her adultery. Herod did not assent, as Mark here signifies, and Luke (ix.). But afterwards she persuaded Herod, which she did the more easily, because, as Josephus asserts, he was of a malignant disposition, and prone to cruelty; and he was incensed against John on account of his frequent reproofs. “Herodias was afraid,” says Bede, lest Herod should some time or other come to a proper mind under John’s rebuke, and dissolve the marriage, and restore Herodias to his brother Philip.”

Ver. 22. *And when the daughter of the same Herodias had come in, and danced, and pleased Herod.* That female dancers were formerly introduced into their feasts by the Jews out of luxuriousness appears from Josephus (*lib. xii. Ant. c. 4*). That there was a similar fashion among the Greeks we learn from Xenophon’s *Symposium*, and from Lucian’s Dialogue *de Saltatricibus*, where he shows by many examples, and by the opinions of philosophers, that dancing enervates even a manly mind. Truly saith *Ecclesiasticus* (c. 9), “Use not much the company of a female dancer, nor listen to her, lest perchance thou perish through her influence.” Truly saith Remigius (*on Matt. xiv.*), “The shameless woman brought up a shameless daughter, teaching her to dance instead of to be modest. Nor was Herod less to be blamed for allowing a woman to make a theatre of his palace-hall.”

Ver. 25. *I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist.* You will say, John the Baptist was not, then, a martyr, because Herod slew him not because of his faith, nor because of his rebuking him for his adultery, but for the sake of pleasing this dancing girl, and fulfilling his promise. I answer by denying the conclusion. For, 1st This girl asked the head of John at the instigation of her mother, who wished to cut off John for reproving her adultery. Herodias, therefore, was the virtual cause of John’s death, because she impelled Herod to behead him. 2nd Herod assented to her. Knowing the malignant disposition of his wife, he gave way to her, and killed John. 3rd Herod himself desired to kill John, as Matthew says expressly (xiv. 5); but he did not dare to do it through fear of the people, who made great count of John as a holy man. Lastly, many are of opinion that probably all was done collusively and of set purpose—namely, that Herod had suggested to Herodias that she should send her dancing daughter in to supper, and that she should ask for the head of John; that thus he might have from his promise a colourable pretext for killing him; and that this is the reason why Christ calls him *a fox* (*Luc. xiii. 32*). S. John, therefore, was

a victim of chastity, because he died a martyr for it, like S. Paul, S. Matthew, S. Clement, and many others.

Moreover, S. Gregory Nazianzen assigns a loftier cause for the early death of John from the hidden counsel of God (*Orat. 20*). “Who,” saith he, “was the precursor of Jesus? John, as a voice of speech, as a lantern of light; before Whom also he leapt forth in strength, and was sent forward to Hades by Herod, that there likewise he might preach Him who was shortly to come.” The same Nazianzen (*Orat. 39*) teaches that S. John, by the spirit of prophecy, was aware of this his martyrdom. For he says, “I ought, O Christ, to be baptized by Thee; yes, and for Thee.” For he had found out that he was to be baptized by martyrdom. For he knew what was to come; that as after Herod Pilate would reign, so Christ would follow him after life was over.

Ver. 26. *The king was sorry, i.e.,* he pretended to be so, say SS. Hilary and Jerome. For he really wished John to be killed, as Matthew says. Wherefore the *Gloss* on the fourteenth of S. Matthew says, “Herod’s sorrow was like Pilate’s repentance” And the *Interlinear*, “The dissembler showed sorrow in his face, but was glad in his heart.”

But more simply. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius think that Herod was really sorry is the meaning of SS. Matthew and Mark. For though he wished John to die, yet he was sorry for his cruel and shameful death, that he should have killed so great a prophet for the gratification of a dancing girl.

*For his oath’s sake.* Herod made a pretext of his oath; for he knew that in such a case, that is, at such an iniquitous and sacrilegious a request of the girl, it was not binding. However, he thought it a king’s part not to retract it before the nobles, according to the saying, The word of the king is the king. Thus this worldling acted. Whence S. Augustine says, “A girl dances, and a mother rages, and there is rash swearing in the midst of the luxurious feast, and an impious fulfilment of what was sworn.” For, as S. Isidore says, faith ought to be broken in wicked promises; that is, an impious promise which is fulfilled by a crime.

Ver. 27. *But sending an executioner,* that is, a hangman; for soldiers were executioners and attendants of the prætors, and were armed with javelins (*spicula*). Hence they were called *spiculators*. (the word in the Vulgate translated *executioner* is *spiculator*). Our Gretzer (*lib. 1, de Cruce, c. 25*) is of opinion, from Suidas, that hangmen (*carnifices*) were called *speculatores* (for the Greek has *σπεκουλάτωζα*, which is really a Latin word, and the same as *speculator*), Gr. *ὀπτηζας*, because it was their office to spy out the plans and movements of an enemy, to be around princes as their bodyguard, and to execute those whom they condemned. So also Franc. Lucas on this passage, Lipsius on Tacitus, and some others. These assert that Suetonius and Tacitus call a *carnifex, speculalar*. But they cite no