

SERVASANTO DA FAENZA: PREACHING AND PENANCE IN THE WORK OF A  
THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCISCAN

By

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Servasanto da Faenza: Preaching and Penance in the Work of a Thirteenth-Century

Franciscan

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My dissertation, *Servasanto da Faenza: Preaching and Penance in the Work of a Thirteenth Century Franciscan*, uses a careful study of the sermons and preaching material of the Franciscan Servasanto da Faenza in order to shed light on the Franciscans' role as preachers and confessors and on the place of penance in their ministry, which played a formative role in the views of Christianity of their lay audiences. His preaching material shows that penance was a significant concern and that it was central to his conception of his and his fellow friars' mission to the laity of medieval Europe. For him the task of penance was not purely negative, that is, to wipe away sin. Rather, it was also positive, to lay the foundation for the growth in virtue that would let one "see" the highest good, God. Partly, as a result of this, Servasanto clearly preached penance in largely a positive way. To him confession was less about going to a harsh judge than going to skilled, sensitive, and discrete doctor of souls who would seek to cure the person

sick with sin. Indeed, ultimately, penance was less an act of judgment than an act of love, as one should be driven by penance by a sorrow for sin that sprang from a sincere love of God. The positive nature of this preaching, its ubiquity, and the well-known popularity of the Franciscans as preachers and confessors, among other factors, suggests that previous tendencies to see medieval penance as part of a story of surveillance and repression should be revised. The laity were not helpless objects of social control terrified by a harsh and threatening penitential regime; rather, penance offered significant opportunity for lay choice and agency, supporting the work of popular friars like Servasanto and choosing them as preachers and confessors.

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## Abbreviations

*De exemplis- Liber de exemplis naturalibus*

*De virtutibus- Liber de virtutibus et de vitiis*

*NHP- New History of Penance*

*Penitentia- Summa de Penitentia*

*ST- Summa Theologie*

*AFP- Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*

*AFH- Archivum franciscanum historicum*

*RLS- Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones*

## Manuscripts of Servasanto's Works Cited

De exemplis: Ms Firenze conv. soppr. G.I.695

De virtutibus: Ms Firenze conv. soppr. E.VI.1046

Penitentia: Ms Firenze conv. soppr. G.VI.773

De communi sanctorum: Vat. Lat. 1261

Dominicales: Vat Lat. 5933

De sanctis: Vat. Lat. 9884

## List of Illustrations:

Figure 1: Late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Panel Painting by Antonio Veneziano, p.162

## Introduction

This project studies the sermons and preaching material of the Franciscan preacher and confessor, Servasanto da Faenza,<sup>1</sup> in order to shed light on the role of the mendicant friars as preachers and confessors in late medieval society. The mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans, founded by Pope Innocent III at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, have long been a major focus in scholarship on the medieval Church and its role in society. They have also been a popular subject of study in recent years with the appearance of books on the history of the orders,<sup>2</sup> their preaching,<sup>3</sup> involvement in combating heresy,<sup>4</sup> apostolic poverty controversies,<sup>5</sup> and biographies of notable individuals<sup>6</sup> as well as other aspects of the orders' histories. Indeed, whole journals, including the *Archivum franciscanum historicum* and the *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*, are devoted to the study of these mendicant orders and deal with a wide

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<sup>1</sup> Livario Oliger OFM, "Servasanto da Faenza OFM et il suo *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*," in *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle, Per la storia della teologia e della filosofia* (Rome, 1924). For more on Servasanto see Chapter 1.

<sup>2</sup> John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to the Year 1517*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages*, (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2006); C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: the Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society*, (London; NY: Longman, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> David d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985; Ibid., *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Christopher T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Katherine Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Christine Caldwell Ames, *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Nold, *Pope John XXII and His Franciscan Cardinal: Bertrand de la Tour and the Apostolic Poverty Controversy*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after St. Francis*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: a New Biography*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2012).



range of subjects related to their history.

The orders, especially the Dominican order, were founded in part to combat the popular heresies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>7</sup> They also served to bolster the range and authority of the popes, who found in them a corps of dependable and well-trained agents, repaying papal protection with loyal service,<sup>8</sup> and who could implement his policies throughout western Christendom through an order answerable only to him. In them, the Pope further found loyal and well-trained agents to staff the medieval inquisitions.

Mendicant involvement in inquisition, especially the role of the Dominican order, has been much studied to the point that some have referred to “the inseparable identification of Dominicans and inquisition.”<sup>9</sup> This identification has been repeated in scholarly studies and popular culture<sup>10</sup> such that to think of the Dominicans almost is to picture an order of inquisitors.<sup>11</sup> This identification has recently been studied in major international conferences, including one in February 2002, with many of its papers recently having been published as *Praedicatores, Inquisitores: The Dominicans and the*

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<sup>7</sup> On the Cathars see Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars*, (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998); on another significant group of twelfth-century heretics, the Waldenses, see Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe*, (Oxford and Malden, MA 2000), and Gabriel Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent: Persecution and Survival c1170-1570*, (Cambridge and New York, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> See C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars...* chapter 10, “In the Service of the Papacy,” 181, and Michael Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages*, (Woodbridge, UK and Rochester, NY 2006), chapter 6, 60.

<sup>9</sup> Grado Merlo in his introduction to the volume *Praedicatores, Inquisitores. I. The Dominicans and the Medieval Inquisition. Acts of the First International Seminar on the Dominicans and the Inquisition*, ed. Wolfram Hoyer, O.P., (Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 2004), cited here from Edward Peter’s review essay of the volume, “*Quoniam Abundavit Iniquitas*: Dominicans as Inquisitors, Inquisitors as Dominicans,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, 91 (2005), 105-121; 107.

<sup>10</sup> I might mention the novel by Umberto Eco and subsequent movie of the same name, *The Name of the Rose*, (1980, English, 1983).

<sup>11</sup> Though even Christine Caldwell Ames, who takes a very strong view on the identification between the Dominican order and inquisition points out both that only a minority of Dominican friars ever participated in inquisition and that other orders and individuals than Dominicans also served as heresy inquisitors. See her *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 5.

*Medieval Inquisition*.<sup>12</sup> In the volume, both Dominican and secular scholars probe the link between the Dominican order and inquisition with some like Christine Caldwell Ames, taking the strong position that Dominicans' work as inquisitors formed an essential part of their mission,<sup>13</sup> and others, like Laurent Albaret, arguing for a "distinct separation between Dominican inquisitors and the order."<sup>14</sup> Other recent works dealing with the Dominicans' role in inquisition and combating heresy include Michael Tavuzzi's book, *Renaissance Inquisitors*, on how the inquisition in the later Middle Ages changed and became more zealous as its control passed into the hands of more observant members of the order.<sup>15</sup> More recently, Christine Caldwell Ames has written her own study, *Righteous Persecution* on the supposedly close relationship between the Dominican order and inquisition.<sup>16</sup> She argued that their pastoral foundation and apostolic purpose was closely linked with their participation in inquisition,<sup>17</sup> and that the Dominicans saw their work as fulfilling and not contradicting their founder's mission.<sup>18</sup>

Ames's concern was to reclaim the inquisition for religious history<sup>19</sup> by focusing on the link between the Dominicans and the medieval inquisitions. Scholars' interest in the mendicant friars' participation in inquisition has generally been limited to the Dominican order. In both the scholarly and popular mind, it sometimes seems as if

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<sup>12</sup> Hoyer OP ed., *Predicatores, Inquisitores* (2004).

<sup>13</sup> As she also does in her book, *Righteous Persecution*, see my 16n on this same page.

<sup>14</sup> Cited here from Peters, "*Quoniam abundavit iniquitas*" 108, 6n.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Tavuzzi, *Renaissance Inquisitors: Dominican Inquisitors and Inquisitorial Districts in Northern Italy, 1474-1527*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Christine Caldwell Ames, *Righteous Persecution: Inquisition, Dominicans, and Christianity in the Middle Ages*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Ames, *Righteous Persecution*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> She refers to R.I. Moore's famous thesis in *Formation of a Persecuting Society*, (Oxford; New York: Blackwell, 1987), and other modern theories of repression that she believes deal too much with the social and political perspectives and do not sufficiently account for the religious context.

Franciscans might be more associated with resistance to inquisition rather than support of it. Stephen O'Shea's popular book, *The Friar of Carcassonne*, tells of resistance to the inquisition ca. 1300, giving a starring role to the Franciscan Brother Bernard Délicieux.<sup>20</sup> Only a few years earlier, Alan Friedlander published a similar study called, *The Hammer of the Inquisitors*, also concerning Brother Bernard's anti-inquisitorial activities.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, Franciscan involvement as inquisitors has not been wholly ignored. In Florence, Daniel Lesnick points out that they assumed inquisitorial duties from the Dominicans in 1254,<sup>22</sup> and Holly Grieco has similarly observed that though Dominicans have more generally been linked with inquisition in scholars' minds, the Franciscans too embraced a role as inquisitors.<sup>23</sup>

If significant scholarly interest in mendicants and inquisition has been more weighted toward the Dominican order, the same cannot be said of scholarly interest in the mendicant orders' commitment to the *vita apostolica*. This is especially the case as related to apostolic poverty, a central interest of St. Francis and crucial issue in later debates in the Franciscan order. This interest among historians in apostolic poverty and later controversies over it was largely given its impetus by Herbert Grundmann's classic, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*.<sup>24</sup> Grundmann argued that a religious movement swept society beginning in the twelfth century. It was characterized by a

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<sup>20</sup> Stephen O'Shea, *The Friar of Carcassonne: the Revolt against the Inquisition in the Last Days of the Cathars*, (Walker and Company, 2011). An impression also conveyed by the movie based on *The Name of the Rose*.

<sup>21</sup> Alan Friedlander, *The Hammer of the Inquisitors: Brother Bernard Délicieux and the Struggle Against the Inquisition in Fourteenth-Century France*, (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> Daniel R. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: the Social World of Franciscan and Dominican Spirituality*, (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 59.

<sup>23</sup> Holly J. Grieco, "Franciscan Inquisition and Mendicant Rivalry in Mid-Thirteenth Century Marseille," *Journal of Medieval History*, 34:3 (2008): 275-290.

<sup>24</sup> Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

desire to live the apostolic life, which especially meant a commitment to apostolic poverty. In allowing St. Francis and his followers to live in apostolic poverty and engage in limited preaching, Grundmann credited Pope Innocent III with saving the apostolic poverty movement for the Church.<sup>25</sup> Grundmann's study was highly influential and further studies of the Franciscan order and their adherence to apostolic poverty followed. Thirty years later Malcolm Lambert wrote the study, *Franciscan Poverty*, focusing on the struggle in the Franciscan order to maintain Francis's original ideal of poverty in a changing order. Other recent works on Franciscan poverty include David Burr's books studying the later Franciscan struggle over poverty, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: the Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy* and Burr's subsequent, *The Spiritual Franciscans: from Protest to Persecution in the Century after St. Francis*.<sup>26</sup>

Besides their salutary interest in the mendicants' role in combating heresy and their concern for apostolic poverty, scholars have also studied mendicant education and theology, including the thought of specific individuals. William Courtenay, who has written several books on medieval universities,<sup>27</sup> has also written several articles specifically on mendicant education. This includes writing on how the lectorate programs of the mendicant orders at Paris served to provide the order with teachers for

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<sup>25</sup> Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 55.

<sup>26</sup> David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: the Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), *Ibid.*, *The Spiritual Franciscans: from Protest to Persecution in the Century after St. Francis*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). For two other recent studies of apostolic poverty in the Franciscan order see, Patrick Nold, *Pope John XXII and His Franciscan Cardinal...* and on Franciscan women see Joan Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty: Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the Struggle for a Franciscan Rule for Women*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> William J. Courtenay, *Parisian Scholars in the Early Fourteenth Century: A Social Portrait*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); *idem*, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

convents and schools,<sup>28</sup> and on Franciscan learning more particularly,<sup>29</sup> a subject that has also attracted interest by scholars looking at the Reformation and pre-Reformation era.<sup>30</sup> Of particular recent importance is Bert Roest's extensive study, *A History of Franciscan Education*, covering from Franciscan origins to the Protestant Reformation.<sup>31</sup> Roest surveys how the Franciscan pastoral mission led them to seek theological education and introduces the reader to those studies.

Individual mendicant theologians, prominent in the schools, have also long drawn and continue to draw the attention of historians and scholars in other disciplines as well. Unsurprisingly, Thomas Aquinas has drawn a great deal of attention with Étienne Gilson's *Le Thomisme*, translated to English as *The Christian Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, established as a classic survey of Aquinas,<sup>32</sup> while more recent works on the great Dominican theologian and philosopher include those by Leonard Boyle and Jean-Pierre Torrell,<sup>33</sup> as well as the philosopher Eleanor Stump.<sup>34</sup> Among Franciscan theologians who have drawn attention are Bonaventure,<sup>35</sup> considered by many to be a second founder of the Franciscan order,<sup>36</sup> and John Duns Scotus.<sup>37</sup> The study of many of

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<sup>28</sup> William J. Courtenay, "The Instructional Program of the Mendicant Convents at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century," *The Medieval Church: Universities, Heresy, and the Christian Life. Essays in Honor of Gordon Leff*, ed. Peter Biller and R.B. Dobson, (Woodbridge; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1999), 77-92.

<sup>29</sup> William J. Courtenay, "Franciscan Learning: University Education and Biblical Exegesis," *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, ed. Michael F. Cusato and Guy Geltner, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 55-64.

<sup>30</sup> Jeremy I. Cato, "Franciscan Learning in England, 1450-1540," *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 97-104.

<sup>31</sup> Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education c.1210-1517*, (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Étienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, (New York: Random House, 1956).

<sup>33</sup> Leonard Boyle and Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Facing History: a Different Thomas Aquinas*, (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> Eleanor Stump, *Aquinas*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>36</sup> Though Michael Robson suggests that many historians would now shy away from this title. See his *The Franciscans*, 86.

these individuals has taken what D'Avray called the form of attempting "to salvage the lost originality and creativity of the past," by studying "great men and near great men in the history of thought."<sup>38</sup>

These aspects of the history of the mendicant orders generally, and of the Franciscan order more specifically, heresy, poverty, education, and individual theologians, have long drawn attention and continue to draw it today. An aspect of the Franciscan order, however, that has received less attention is the role that penance played in the ideals of its founder, in the mission of its members, and in its influence on relations between the late medieval Church and lay society. This comparative scholarly neglect of the friars' penitential preaching is all the stranger when one considers the importance of penance to Francis of Assisi himself. For the Franciscans and especially Francis, penance was at the heart of the order's origins. As Augustine Thompson has recently observed in *Francis of Assisi*, Francis saw his conversion as a turning from his former life to a life of penance; for him this is exactly what "doing penance" implied: conversion from a previous life to a changed heart.<sup>39</sup> Much of what made Francis so unique, however, was that he not only practiced penance, but sought to call others to it as well. Initially attracted by the eremitical ideal, Francis, according to Celano's life of him, heard Matthew 10:7-9, "preach as you go saying, 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand...'"<sup>40</sup> He quickly began to preach penance "with great fervor of spirit and joy of mind... with simple words but largeness of heart edifying his hearers."<sup>41</sup> Acknowledging the popular

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<sup>37</sup> A. Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars...*239.

<sup>39</sup> Thompson, *St. Francis of Assisi...*16.

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence, *The Friars*, 32.

<sup>41</sup> Celano, *Vita Prima*, I.10.23.

desire for preaching, Innocent III took the extraordinary step of allowing Francis to take this office, hitherto reserved only for the clergy, on the condition that he preach only moral exhortation and repentance.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, C.H. Lawrence has noted that a major theme of Francis's and his companions' preaching was the need for repentance and penance to the point that when preaching in the March of Ancona, on being asked who they were, they replied, "we are the penitential men of Assisi."<sup>43</sup>

The penitential origins of the order continued to color its development and the order's sense of mission in later generations. Besides preaching penance so widely, St. Francis founded a penitential confraternity, "The Order of Penitents," and in later centuries, the friars were well-known as sponsors of these religious confraternities. Many of these confraternities were specifically devoted to penance. Following Francis, they placed stress on the incarnate life of Christ and on the Eucharist, but also provided an important forum for penitential sermons and encouraged penitential exercises.<sup>44</sup> When Pope Nicholas IV approved a Franciscan rule for lay groups, the relationship between confraternity and friars devoted to penance was reinforced as "those lay people who entered into some sort of formal association with the Franciscans were known as brothers or sisters of penance."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Grundmann, *Religious Movements...* 55-58.

<sup>43</sup> Lawrence, *The Friars*, 36.

<sup>44</sup> John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, (Oxford, 1994), 114. On the confraternities, see also Mariano D'Alatri, *I Frati Penitenti di San Francesco nella Società del Due e Trecento*, (Roma, 1977), *Ibid.*, *Il Movimento Francescano della Penitenza nella Società Medioevale*, (Roma, 1980), Gilles Gérard Meersseman, *Ordo Fraternalitatis: Confraternite e Pieta' dei Laici nel Medioevo*, (Roma, 1977).

<sup>45</sup> Lester Little, *Liberty, Charity, Fraternity: Lay Religious Confraternities at Bergamo in the Age of the Commune*, (Bergamo: Lubrina; Northampton, MA: Smith College, 1988). Little gives the example of the Franciscan "Congregation of Penance" at Brescia, "dating from the late thirteenth century... They were to attend mass together one Sunday each month at the Franciscans' Church; they were to go confess their sins at least two times a year...; they were to observe the same fasts as the friars themselves observed; they were

Given that penance was an important aspect of Francis's own conception of his religious mission to the laity and that Franciscans continued to be influential in expressions of lay penitential activity in the later Middle Ages, it is worth exploring whether penance should also be considered, along with poverty and the defense of orthodoxy, as a central mendicant ideal, a defining feature of their message to the Christian community, and one of their general contributions to the general tenor of devotional life in the later Middle Ages.

Scholarly debate on medieval penance has a long history, being virtually born out of debates over the character of the late medieval Church and, by extension, over the causes of the Reformation. R. Emmet McLaughlin, in an article in the *New History of Penance* has observed that from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the historical study of sacramental penance had largely been driven "by confessional apologetic and intra-Catholic theological politics."<sup>46</sup> Reformation Protestants alternately attacked Catholic sacramental penance as overly oppressive and tyrannizing the conscience, and as so lax as to encourage sin.<sup>47</sup> In response, Catholic writers came to the sacrament's defense, including Odorico Rinaldi in the seventeenth century. An Oratorian, a member of the

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to carry out cooperative works of charity."

See also Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

One might suggest that further evidence of the Franciscan Order's continuing interest in penance lies in criticisms of the order, such as FitzRalph's charge that the friars were only popular as confessors because they gave easy penance in order to ingratiate themselves with the wealthy. On which, see Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages*, 149. One thinks too of Chaucer's friar: Ful swetely herde he confessioun/And plesaunt was his absolucioun/ He was an esy man to yeve penaunce/ Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce/ For unto a povre ordre for to yive/ Is signe that a man is wel yshryve/ ("General Prologue, *Canturbury Tales*: lines 221-226). That the friars were so criticized for their work as confessors suggests a strong continuing interest in penance.

<sup>46</sup> R. Emmet McLaughlin, "Truth Tradition, and History: the Historiography of High/Late Medieval and Early Modern Penance," in *A New History of Penance*, Abigail Firey ed., (Leiden and Boston, 2008), 19-71.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 21.



order founded by St. Philip Neri, who had especially encouraged the sacrament of confession, Rinaldi unsurprisingly suggested a more positive view of late medieval penance. He both defended the mendicants as confessors from the secular clergy and presented earlier heresies on penance as the forerunners of Luther.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the secularization of penance studies from the nineteenth century onward, this confessional debate has continued with little change even to the present. Many of those early secular critiques followed reformation Protestants in assuming that penance was so unnatural that “only fear of punishment could explain its success among the populace.”<sup>49</sup> Later critics continued to see penance as burdensome, including more secular scholarship after World War II. In the 1970s, scholarship continued this state of affairs as it saw the growth of the secular tradition and social theory accompanied by the rebirth of the “oppression thesis,” the idea of medieval penance as oppressing the consciences of the laity. Here Steven Ozment continues to represent the Protestant tradition of seeing the medieval Church as oppressing consciences. In his *Age of Reform*, he wrote, “what Protestants set out to overcome was a perceived oppressive superstition—teachings and practices that burdened the consciences and pocketbooks of the faithful...”<sup>50</sup> Secular critiques continued, enriched by the theories of Foucault,

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<sup>48</sup> R. Emmet McLaughlin, “Truth Tradition, and History,” 25.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 31. One writer, Count C. de Lasterie, argued that popes allowed mendicants to hear confession as a tool to build papal power. See his, Count C. de Lasterie, *The History of Auricular Confession*, trans. Charles Cocks, 2 vols. (London, 1848), cited here from McLaughlin, “Truth, Tradition, and History,” 30.

<sup>50</sup> Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550: an Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 210. See also Ozment’s *The Reformation in Cities: the Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), and Tentler’s, “The *Summa* of Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control,” in *The Pursuit of Holiness*, ed. Trinkaus and Oberman (Leiden, 1974), 103-137.

Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977) confirmed some of Ozment’s arguments, but took a more nuanced approach in pointing to a Church need to

reducing the laity to objects of social control.<sup>51</sup>

Twentieth-century Catholic writers presented a more positive picture of late medieval Catholicism that included suggesting the scholastic era as a time of growing interiority of religion,<sup>52</sup> which meant that “a rigorous but external system of discipline by which the Church forgave sinners gave way to an [increasing] emphasis on contrition.”<sup>53</sup> Similarly, writing from the 1950s to the 1980s, Leonard Boyle, “generally credit[ed] the clergy with good intentions, some learning, and much effort,” seeing a more moral rather than legalistic understanding of penance.<sup>54</sup>

More recently, the authors who have contributed to *A New History of Penance*, edited by Abigail Firey, have sought to break with the essentially confessional debate that has continued to color the study of penance even through the modern period. The authors of the fascinating *NHP* have generally disagreed with the notion that coercive power drove penitential activity,<sup>55</sup> have questioned the dichotomy between the interior and exterior lives of the individual, and have rejected the notion of an emerging interiority.<sup>56</sup> Firey does not specifically replace the “Oppression Thesis” with another, but points to

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balance its responsibility to dispense penance with its responsibility for social discipline. Cited here from McLaughlin 60.

<sup>51</sup> McLaughlin, “Truth, Tradition, and History,” 64-66. See also Weitsche de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan*, (Leiden and Boston, 2001). De Boer connected a growing interiority in Catholic Reformation with the view of confession then as a form of intrusive social control. If one is to hold then, as I do, that Medieval Europe saw a substantial focus on interiority, then one will have to confront the implication that medieval Europe would also represent confession as a form of social control.

<sup>52</sup> Karl Müller, “Die Umschwung in der Lehre von der Busse während des 12. Jahrhunderts,” *Theologische Abhandlungen. Carl von Weizsäcker zu seinen siebenzigsten Geburtstage*, (Freiburg, 1892), cited here from McLaughlin, “Truth, Tradition, and History,” 38-39.

<sup>53</sup> McLaughlin, “Truth, Tradition and History,” 39. As an example of this, McLaughlin refers to Nikolaus Paulus who “cited dozens of *pastoralia*, works of edification, and *artes moriendi*, to prove that whatever scholastics may have said, the faithful were taught on the ground that only sorrow occasioned by love of God was sufficient to receive forgiveness in confession, 41.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>55</sup> Abigail Firey, “Introduction,” *NHP*, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Abigail Firey, “Introduction,” *NHP*, 7.

different lines of research that have been opened by its rejection. She points to the authors' desires to understand "penitential impulses among ordinary... penitents and also the institutional organization and supervision of penitential activities."<sup>57</sup> She suggests that disengagement from the Oppression Thesis "opens further avenues in exploring the ways in which penance channeled social and political power."<sup>58</sup>

In her introductory essay, Firey notes the importance of the Fourth Lateran Council's decree dealing with penance, *Omnis utriusque sexus*, which required all laity who were of age to confess annually to their own priests.<sup>59</sup> While there is continued debate over the importance of penance in late antique and early medieval practice,<sup>60</sup> the famous decree of the Fourth Lateran Council and the initiative of the popes have been typically thought to mark a turning point in the history of penance.<sup>61</sup> Many authors in the *NHP*, however are less inclined to see *Omnis utriusque sexus* as the defining moment in the history of penance. Joseph Goering, for instance, has suggested that the key point in the development of penance was "the creation throughout Europe of schools and universities where students were introduced to a common tradition through a common curriculum of study and where they developed common methods of thinking about and of

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 4. She mentions for instance Kevin Uhalde's article in the same volume arguing that late antique penance was not a full "social death," as well as Karen Wagner's observation "that in the central Middle Ages 'penance was done for and with, not to someone,'" as preparing "the foundations for the exercise of power by penitents in the Early Modern Period."

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 2. For the decree see, Norman Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (London and Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1:245.

<sup>60</sup> See "Chapter 1," where I discuss the significance of the Fourth Lateran Council.

<sup>61</sup> McLaughlin, "Truth, Tradition, and History," 22. He attributes this tendency to stress the importance of the Fourth Lateran Council and papal initiative to Protestants of the Reformation and post-Reformation era. This allowed them to present Catholic sacramental penance as an innovation and attack Catholic claims of the "continuity and immutability of Church teaching."

teaching about penance.”<sup>62</sup> Yet for all the wealth of scholarship on penance studies, it does not focus specifically on the impact of the mendicants specifically.

Even if the reasons for it are much debated, a consensus exists regarding increased clerical concern with penance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in both pastoral and theological contexts. The degree to which and how such concerns were communicated to the laity, had a meaningful impact on the laity, and were a part of lay life are, however, still open questions. R. Emmet McLaughlin, for instance, has noted that the laity were only required to confess annually, and has thus questioned how much of an impact new clerical concern with penance actually had, since penitential theology could only have an effect on the laity when they confessed.<sup>63</sup>

Penance historians’ difficulty in answering some of these questions and assessing the lay experience of penance, how the developments of schools reached the laity, and how the laity encountered penance are probably partly a result of the types of sources they use, and more still, of the types they do not. Typically penance historians have relied heavily on penitentials and confessors’ handbooks.<sup>64</sup> Such sources have often been

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<sup>62</sup> Joseph Goering, “The Scholastic Turn (1100-1500): Penitential Theology and Law in the Schools,” *NHP*, 219-237; 219.

<sup>63</sup> R. Emmet McLaughlin, “Truth, Tradition, History,” *NHP*, 68-71.

<sup>64</sup> For instance, Robert Meens, “Penitentials and the Practice of Penance in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,” *Early Medieval Europe*, 14 (2006), 7-21. A great many doctoral dissertations treating penitential texts from the eighth and ninth centuries were inspired by Raymund Kottje’s 1977 announcement “of a research project designed to produce a reliable edition of all the existing early medieval penitentials from the European mainland. This project has since then resulted in a number of dissertations written by Franz Bernd Asbach, Franz Kerf, Günther Hägele, and Reinhold Haggemüller, treating important penitential texts from the ninth century. Cited here from Robert Meens, “The Historiography of Early Medieval Penance,” in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey, (Leiden/Boston 2008).

Other scholars have situated penitentials in a grand narrative of public and private where public confession in Late Antiquity slowly gave rise to private confession in the later Middle Ages, though recent scholars have questioned this long-held assumption. See, Abigail Firey, *NHP* 5-7. See for example, Claudia’s Rapp’s essay in the same volume “Spiritual Guarantors at Penance, Baptism, and Ordination in the Late Antique East,” 121-148.

valuable and illuminating in the study of penance, but they are also limited.<sup>65</sup> They share the weakness of other normative sources in that they express how penance ought to be done, but do not show either that it was done or the frequency with which it was done. Penitentials show how the clergy wanted confession to operate, but since the laity were required to confess only annually, they do not show the extent to which changing penitential ideas had any effect on the laity or how frequently the laity would have encountered those ideas.

The very timeline, however, established by penance historians suggests a possible direction one might take to answer these questions. At the same time universities developed traditions of thinking and writing about penance and the Fourth Lateran Council required annual penance on the faithful, the early Franciscans were beginning to flourish as preachers of penance and moral reform. As the order grew, the friars, in addition to composing *summae*, university dictations, confessor handbooks, and other genres, became well known for and produced preaching material in great abundance. This material holds promise for answering some of the questions penance studies have raised, but not been able to answer. Historians of penance, for instance, often wonder to what extent theological ideas about penance actually had an impact on the laity, who would only have actually been required to attend confession annually. It may be, however, that such historians have been looking for such evidence in the wrong place, and are even mistaken about the assumption that the main way the laity would have

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<sup>65</sup> This is not to suggest that penitentials were the only sources used by penance historians. Sarah Hamilton, for instance, in her well regarded recent study of early medieval penance has used a wide range of sources including the prescriptive, narrative, and documentary, including liturgical sources, which had been little used previously. See, Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance: 900-1050*, (The Boydell Press, 2001).

encountered penitential ideas would have been their own annual experience of it.<sup>66</sup> Put together with medieval sermons on penance, a popular subject of preaching from the time of St. Francis,<sup>67</sup> the primary lay experience of penance may actually have been through preaching. The laity may only have confessed annually, but they heard sermons weekly, sometimes even daily. Repeated annual preaching on the same topic, penance, in both Lent and Advent, would have actually represented a substantial impact of penance on the lay religious experience, and led to what David D'Avray has called "the dry drip method of inculcating beliefs."<sup>68</sup>

In short, while the confessional was one important place where the clergy interacted with the laity regarding penance, the laity would have encountered penitential ideas in the pulpit far more frequently. David D'Avray in particular has stressed the importance of sermons as a place of interaction between the clergy and laity. He has shown that sermons are valuable sources for several reasons. First, in *The Preaching of the Friars*, he noted that in the past sermons may not have been frequently recognized as valuable sources since they are not generally useful in the quest to recover "the lost

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<sup>66</sup> For which view see, Karen Wager, "Cum aliquis venerit ad sacerdotem: Penitential Experience in the Central Middle Ages," *NHP* 201-18. She does not discuss the coming of the friars and the next article, Goering, "The Scholastic Turn," does not show much interest in the question, being content to study the impact of universities on penitential theology.

<sup>67</sup> See my discussion below on St. Francis being given permission to preach penance. His remarkable success in preaching, given he was only allowed to preach penance, indicates the popularity of penitential preaching. Actually the subject was probably a popular one even before him. At least part of the attraction of the Cathars must have been their consolamentum ceremony and the superficial attraction of their solution to the problem of evil. A sophisticated theology of penance spread to the laity by preaching would have done much to counter both of these attractions. On the Cathars literature is profuse, see Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars*, (Blackwell, 1998), Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages*, (Harlow, England and New York, 2000), and Claire Taylor, *Heresy in Medieval France: Dualism in Aquitaine and the Agenais, 1000-1249*, (Rochester and Woodbridge, UK, 2005).

<sup>68</sup> David d'Avray, "Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons," *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History, and Sanctity*, ed. Nicole Bériou and David d'Avray, (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994), 3-19; 9.

originality and creativity of the past.”<sup>69</sup> Their use is similarly limited in the “attempt to link ideological with social development.”<sup>70</sup> Though sermons may possess a limited utility for these ventures, D’Avray has shown that they may be used, not for the study of great men and great ideas, but for the study of attitudes of the articulate,<sup>71</sup> and has himself written on the themes of death and marriage in medieval preaching.<sup>72</sup>

D’Avray’s contention that sermons represent ideas shared by a broad swath of society is based on his argument that sermons represent a form of mass communication and possibly the only one in a culture without print.<sup>73</sup> D’Avray pointed out how even just one model sermon might be copied and reused multiple times, preached ‘live’ “again and again to different audiences.”<sup>74</sup> Further, the number of surviving sermons, though substantial, only represents the “tip of the iceberg of lost codices and quires.”<sup>75</sup> Medieval sermons suffered tremendously high loss rate, far higher than most medievalists had previously been inclined to suspect. Many were lost as early modern printers used supposedly otherwise useless sermon manuscripts to bind new books; mendicant libraries suffered high loss rates, while many sermon books were not attached to libraries at all and so in special danger of being lost.<sup>76</sup> Considering the tremendous loss rate of sermon

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<sup>69</sup> D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 258.

<sup>70</sup> D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 258. D’Avray also suggests that sermons are limited in their ability to tell us what ordinary people thought; though they get one closer to answering that question than most other sources, ultimately, “sermons take us to water, but do not let us drink.”

<sup>71</sup> David d’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 259.

<sup>72</sup> David d’Avray, *Death and the Prince: Memorial Preaching before 1300*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), *Medieval Marriage Sermons: Mass Communication in a Culture without Print*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> He mentions this thesis in all his books, but most recently in *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*, where he devotes the first of four chapter to demonstrating this point.

<sup>74</sup> D’Avray, *Medieval Marriage*, 37.

<sup>75</sup> D’Avray, *Medieval Marriage*, 37.

<sup>76</sup> D’Avray, *Medieval Marriage*, 40-53. D’Avray lists other evidence as well about high loss rates of sermon manuscripts including that many sermon manuscripts would have been carried about in unbound

manuscripts, that a model sermon could be used on multiple occasions for different audiences, and that the friars themselves copied sermon manuscripts in high numbers,<sup>77</sup> D'Avray concludes, "these considerations entitle us to regard mendicant preaching as a social force in the same sense as a mass medium."<sup>78</sup>

Greater attention to mendicant interest in penance and penitential activities and their interactions with the laity in these domains may contribute to a revision of certain views of Church interactions with the laity in this period and even of some modern characterizations of the later Middle Ages in general. One influential model of viewing the later Middle Ages tends to see the late medieval Church as in decline, and oppression as a major, and sometimes defining, characteristic of relations between Church and laity. Huizinga's *Waning of the Middle Ages* serves as a classic example of the view of the late Middle Ages as a time of decline,<sup>79</sup> while some, like Steven Ozment, have seen the decline and faults of the late medieval Church as explaining the need for the Protestant Reformation.<sup>80</sup>

Attention to mendicant concern with heresy, inquisition, poverty, and even theology has sometimes contributed to this view of the late Middle Ages. Scholarly interest in the relationship between the friars and inquisition, as well as the fact that the popes found the mendicants to be well-trained and loyal inquisitors and servants, has sometimes led to studies of the late medieval Church that have focused on its increasing

quires, which were particularly vulnerable to being lost.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>79</sup>Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages: a Study of the Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. Frederik Jan Hopman, (London: E. Arnold and Co., 1924).

<sup>80</sup>Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform*.



institutional strength and its effort “control” lay religiosity through crusade and inquisition. R.I. Moore’s *Formation of a Persecuting Society* is one influential example of this interpretation. Moore sees the persecution of heretics as part of a larger attempt at social control extending to other groups like Jews and lepers that was a necessary and inevitable consequence of the growing power and centralization of institutions such as the medieval Church.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, Dyan Elliot’s recent study sees this repression as the defining feature of the Church’s role in late-medieval society, creating an “inquisitional culture.”<sup>82</sup>

Focus on theology and the great theologians has too sometimes caused some scholars to see the later Middle Ages as a time of decline. Étienne Gilson, probably the greatest Thomist scholar of the twentieth century, saw Aquinas as the ideal synthesis of faith and reason. His admiration for Aquinas, however, led Gilson to see all that came afterward as a decline into confusion, with late medieval Occamism and nominalism standing as the clearest examples of this.<sup>83</sup> A focus on the mendicants and apostolic poverty has often led to a tendency to write their history in terms that David D’Avray has called “the law of spiritual gravity,” where the story is characterized by the impetus of a saintly founder, rise and peak, followed by inevitable controversy, abuse, and decline.<sup>84</sup>

This is not, of course, the only view of the late medieval Church. Other historians have stressed the vivacity of the late medieval Church and Christianity and its continued

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<sup>81</sup> R.I. Moore, *Formation of a Persecuting Society*, (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1987).

<sup>82</sup> Dyan Elliot, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, (Princeton 2004).

<sup>83</sup> Ozment, *The Age of Reform*, 12-15. Gilson’s thesis of Aquinas as peak and all after as decline is highly controversial and has been questioned, most notably by Heiko Oberman in his important book, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

<sup>84</sup> D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 11.

appeal to the laity. Influential examples of this view include Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*,<sup>85</sup> and Euan Cameron's *The European Reformation*.<sup>86</sup> Duffy argues that "late medieval Catholicism exerted an enormously strong, diverse, and vigorous hold over the imagination and the loyalty of the people up to the very moment of the Reformation."<sup>87</sup> He pointed to the strong attraction that late medieval Catholicism continued to exert over the laity and criticized approaches to late medieval Catholicism that saw it as a time of decay and decline.<sup>88</sup> For him, as for Cameron, the Protestant reformers rebelled less against the failings of the medieval Church than against its successes. As Cameron put it, "the flaws and blemishes on the visible institution [of the Catholic Church] could be partly excused by the contact which it promised to the reliable, trustworthy divine economy of human salvation by dispensing grace in the sacraments."<sup>89</sup>

Close study of the mendicants' involvement in penance and their continuing emphasis on it may be able to contribute to the debate on how late medieval Christianity and the Church should be characterized, whether coercive and in decline or else showing vivacity and continuing to appeal to lay society. It may not be wholly clear which side a study of penance would support. One might see a mendicant emphasis on penance as contributing to the oppressive quality of the medieval Church as, indeed, some have.

Thomas Tentler, for instance, spoke of the *Summa confessorum* as "an instrument of

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<sup>85</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>86</sup> Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

<sup>87</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 479. "It has been one of the principal contentions of this book, however, that into the 1530s the vigour, richness, and creativity of late medieval religion was undiminished, and continued to hold the imagination and elicit the loyalty of the majority of the population."

<sup>89</sup> Cameron, *The European Reformation*, 417.

social control.”<sup>90</sup> Mary Mansfield too, in *The Humiliation of Sinners*, suggested that late medieval penance imposed a significant burden of guilt on the laity.<sup>91</sup> One might hold that penance itself was oppressive, an intrusion into private conscience forced on a resistant laity by a coercive Church. Alternately, however, an emphasis on mendicant concern with penance could highlight the activity and creativity of the late medieval Church. It might emphasize the lay demand for mendicant friars as confessors, the reasons for this popularity, and how penitential activities provided an important opportunity for lay initiative in confraternities and popular penitential movements. Hence, examination of penance might reveal a more positive view of medieval Church/lay relations than has sometimes been supposed, which could in turn suggest the need to revise the idea of the medieval Church as coercive and in decline.

Part of the issue may turn on what exactly is meant by *penitentia*, penance. *Penitentia* could refer to different things.<sup>92</sup> It might refer to the interior state of contrition of a person genuinely sorry for sin, that is, “being penitent,” or it might refer to the work of satisfaction, or work of penance, that was imposed by the priest as part of the process of penance. It might also refer to the whole process of penance, including contrition, confession to a priest, and the work of satisfaction.<sup>93</sup> Some understandings of penance are more likely to support a view of penance as coercive than are others. One definition used in the thirteenth century held that “the sacrament of penance is that of absolution of

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<sup>90</sup> Thomas Tentler, “The *Summa* of Confessors,” 103-137.

<sup>91</sup> Mary Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth Century France*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 293. Here she endorses this view that Steven Ozment argues in *The Reformation in Cities*, (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1975)

<sup>92</sup> As Mary Mansfield observes in *The Humiliation of Sinners*, 17.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. “Sometimes medieval writers applied the word *penitentia* to the whole process, sometimes to part of the process, but never argumentatively to exclude one aspect or the other.”

a priest having jurisdiction.”<sup>94</sup> This understanding of penance, combined with a tendency to see *penitentia* primarily as the work of satisfaction assigned by a priest is typically seen as more likely than other understandings to support a view of penance as punitive and coercive,<sup>95</sup> since they stress the power and authority of the priest. For this reason, those who view penance in a more oppressive way are likely to stress the role of the priest and the Church in the process.<sup>96</sup>

Understandings of penance that stress inner contrition and the role of the penitent invite one to see penance in a milder way, with more room for lay initiative and creativity. One common view of penance, connected with Peter Lombard, held that “penance is the repenting of past evils and not committing them again.”<sup>97</sup> Traditionally this understanding of penance has been thought as more positive and less likely to be oppressive since it focused less on the role of the priest and more on the interior state of the individual, where much of the initiative was left to the penitent himself whose responsibility it was to feel sorrow over his own sin. He might be helped in this by a priest but, in the end, the responsibility for this sorrow for sin was the penitent’s own.

Preaching material can address this question of exactly what *penitentia* was. Was it sacramental penance, the interior sorrow felt for sin, the work of penance, or all of the above? Which of these did preachers tend to stress, internal contrition (penitence), or the process as a whole? Unlike confessor manuals, written to help the clergy hear

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<sup>94</sup> Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 105.

<sup>95</sup> Though it need not necessarily do so. This understanding of penance that stresses priestly power could easily be consistent with seeing the priest as a learned and sensitive doctor who could free the penitent from a dangerous disease at the request of the penitent. Likewise, the work of satisfaction could be seen as more medicinal than punitive as I discuss in my chapter 3.

<sup>96</sup> Like, for instance, Dyan Elliot in *Proving Woman*, who stressed the authority of confessors over holy women, especially what she saw as the punitive and coercive nature of such relationships.

<sup>97</sup> Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 105. Alan of Lille espoused a related definition when he said that penance was repenting past evil and intending not to commit them again.

confessions, preaching manuals and especially sermons show how “penance” was portrayed “on the ground” to the laity. So far, it has been clear despite the wealth of scholarship on the mendicants, the place of penance to them has often been overlooked. Similarly, despite the wealth of scholarship on penance, the value of penitential sermons has been largely overlooked.

A promising way to investigate some of these questions, how penitential ideas reached the laity, how penance was presented to them, and what picture of church lay relations that picture of penance supports, is a case study of the preaching material—both sermons and treatises—of the Franciscan friar Servasanto da Faenza (d. ca.1300).<sup>98</sup> Ideally, to show that penance was indeed a widespread theme presented positively, one would survey a number of influential preachers. Unfortunately, this is not practical in this study given the scarcity of edited sermon collections and studies on the penitential sermons of other preachers. Nonetheless, I do use some available works from roughly contemporary preachers, like Ranulphe of Houblonnière and John of Wales, to make some comparative assessments with Servasanto. Indeed, given this relative scarcity, it is all the more important to undertake a study of Servasanto’s works in their entirety as a chance to see how often and in what way penance appears in his preaching work. Ideally, this will contribute to a future corpus of similar studies yet, even now, such a study can point to probable trends in medieval religion. Servasanto was not a towering figure like his contemporaries Aquinas and Bonaventure, but he must have had at least some impact in his local community, Florence, for nearly 400 of his sermons and several other

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<sup>98</sup> Livario Oliger OFM, “Servasanto da Faenza OFM et il suo *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*,” in *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle, Per la storia della teologia e della filosofia* (Rome, 1924). For more on Servasanto see my next chapter.

preaching treatises survive, including one treatise, the *Summa de penitentia*, specifically devoted to preaching on penance. As a friar who composed both sorts of works, sermons and other treatises, Servasanto can be studied as an approach to these questions about transmission of penitential ideas, attitudes about penance, what “penance” was, and the lay experience of penance.

Servasanto da Faenza himself seems to have primarily seen penance as turning from sin to God, in a way that stressed one’s own sorrow for sin.<sup>99</sup> While he occasionally mentions “works of penance” or “exterior penance” to refer to works of satisfaction, in general his conception of *penitentia* is far broader.<sup>100</sup> For him *penitentia* could just as easily refer to the tears of contrition, the inner state of sorrow for sin that Servasanto argued should be driven by love of God. In one sermon, he wrote about the human soul cured by the bitterness of penance saying, “there is no fault so grave it is not wiped away by the bitterness of penance and not washed away by tears.”<sup>101</sup> This fits with the way Servasanto tends to present penance throughout his works. He may have meant *penitentia* to refer to the state of contrition or the whole process,<sup>102</sup> but in either case, the interior sorrow was, for him, central. He considered all the parts of penance as valuable

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<sup>99</sup> This is not to say that he thought that contrition was important to the exclusion of the other parts of penance. As I show in chapter 3, he considered all three parts of penance essential.

<sup>100</sup> “*Venerun nuptiae*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 ff.59r-60v; f.60r., a sermon for the feast of St. Agnes, refers to Agnes having prepared herself “per exteriorem penitentiam,” specifically with fasts and vigils.

<sup>101</sup> “*Cecus quidam sedebat*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39r-39v., “sed notandum quod licet omne peccatum que maxime hominem cecant nam cecant hominem humor avaritie cecat livor invidie cecat timor superbie et cecat ardor luxurie... enim tam non delictum est quod non corde amaritudine abstergetur et non fletibus diluatur...”

I discuss Servasanto’s conception of penance further in chapter 2 and 3.

<sup>102</sup> For instance, by *penitentia*, Servasanto probably meant to refer, at least sometimes, to the whole process of penance. In a sermon I discuss in chapter 3, “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r., he writes that “our penance should be sorrowful, with much bitterness in the heart,” (Dico quod nostra penitentia que debet esse via nostra ut sicut nunc quam nobis de est culpa nuncquam de sit et penitentia debet primo esse dolorosa multa amaritudine corde plena...). It would be redundant to say that contrition should be sorrowful, so here it seems more probable that Servasanto uses *penitentia* to refer to the whole process of penance, saying it should include proper contrition, interior sorrow for sin.

but often stressed its interior aspect writing how sorrow for sin should be driven by love of God<sup>103</sup> while the role of the priest was more to heal than to punish.<sup>104</sup> For him, *penitentia* often referred to either interior contrition or to the whole process. One good comparison seems to be to the late fourteenth century prior of S. Trinita, “[*penitentia*] consists in mourning for our bad deeds in the past and moreover in not committing further deplorable acts.”<sup>105</sup> This seems to suggest a view of penance that prizes only the interior state of sorrow. Perhaps to some extent it does, but he continues concluding, “hence true *penitentia* has three stages: contrition of the heart, confession with the mouth, and satisfaction for that which has been done.”<sup>106</sup> This seems close to Servasanto’s own view, where *penitentia* stresses the sorrow of the penitent as a key part, but that includes the whole process of sacramental penance.<sup>107</sup> Hence, for Servasanto *penitentia*, should be *dolorosa*,<sup>108</sup> but this *penitentia* referred to the complete process.

A study of Servasanto’s preaching material suggests that he preached to the laity what must have been a largely positive message of penance. The very nature of preaching as a medium supports this view. A preacher could not merely impose on his audience; he had to take their tastes, concerns, and interests into account. If he failed to

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<sup>103</sup> As in the sermon “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.42r-43r. I discuss this in detail in chapter 4.

<sup>104</sup> “*Quanto magnus es*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 ff.109r-111r. I discuss this further in chapter 3 on my section on confession.

<sup>105</sup> Delaruelle, Ourliac, Labande, *Storia della chiesa*, xiv. 2, 842. Cited from John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 114.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* 114.

<sup>107</sup> For this reason, I typically translate *penitentia* as “penance,” unless it is obvious he is using the word *penitentia* to refer to contrition to the exclusion of the other two parts of penance. This seems to me to be rare, as it seems rare for him to use “*penitentia*” to refer to the work of penance (as opposed to today, when one commonly speaks of a “penance” received from a priest).

<sup>108</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r., “... et penitentia debet primo esse dolorosa multa amaritudine corde plena... secundo penitentia debet esse pudorosa, non solum in corde sed in facie et in ore.” This suggests he often uses the term “*penitentia*” to refer to the whole process of penance; as for instance, do chapter titles in the *Exemplis* already discussed where he refers to “the three parts of penance,” “of the three already spoken of parts of penance together.”

do so, a preacher could rapidly find himself without an audience.<sup>109</sup> The popularity of the friars suggests that they did this effectively and that the laity, in general, responded positively to the friars' penitential message. The study of Servasanto's sermons and preaching material, which I undertake here, thus seems to support the view of penance as contributing to the florescence of the late medieval Church. This need not be the whole story; certainly some aspects of Church/lay relations must have appeared more negative and even punitive.<sup>110</sup> If the positive preaching of penance was not the whole story, however, it is at least an important part that has not before been significantly accounted for. Hence, a consideration of the friars' penitential preaching serves to balance the picture of the late medieval Church explaining both its draw and influence even if certain aspects of it may have appeared more negative.

Despite some challenges in working with sermon material, sermon material also evidently holds much promise. In my own work here, I will build on D'Avray's argument that sermons reflect widely held medieval attitudes on a subject, here penance, and that sermons represented a form of mass communication. In this way, I will be able to consider attitudes on penance, how people—at the very least, the articulate classes and friars—saw it, and how Church teachings were transmitted to and shaped by interaction with the laity. At the very least, sermons demonstrate clerical concerns and emphases, as well as showing how those concerns and emphases—in this case clerical interest on penance—were communicated to lay audiences. This can be further augmented by

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<sup>109</sup> As even so popular and famous a preacher as St. Bernardino of Siena found. See Cynthia Polecristi, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and his Audience*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 50-55.

<sup>110</sup> As with some of Dyan Elliot's extraordinary examples of the relationships between confessors and holy women. Though see also John Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).



considering, along with sermons, other manuals and treatises designed to instruct and aid the friars in their own interactions with the laity.<sup>111</sup>

The realization that sermons represent a form of mass communication, and possibly the only medieval form of it, is what makes them so valuable as sources on lay spirituality concerning penance. They hold the promise of getting the historian far closer to lay spirituality than he could ever hope to with the sources previously used for the study of penance. Sermons are certainly limited in that they do not represent snapshots of lay opinion, but it would be going too far to claim that they had no significant impact on lay audiences and their attitudes. As D'Avray has argued, to ask if the medieval laity were influenced by sermons is rather like asking if people today are influenced by reading newspapers.<sup>112</sup> One might deny this, but given how model sermons could be reused multiple times and how the already large number of surviving sermons represent the tip of the iceberg, it requires an extreme degree of skepticism to deny that ideas repeatedly preached in medieval sermons affected the attitudes of lay audiences.<sup>113</sup>

While D'Avray took his argument on sermons as mass communication that affected lay attitudes and applied it to medieval marriage sermons, the argument that penitential sermons impacted lay attitudes may be even stronger. In this case, the popularity of the friars as preachers and confessors is well-known.<sup>114</sup> They were

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<sup>111</sup> For instance, confessor handbooks like that of Thomas Chobham, which I review my first chapter. F. Broomfield, *Thomas Chobham, Summa Confessorum*, (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts and Paris: Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1968).

<sup>112</sup> David d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons...* 14.

<sup>113</sup> In *Medieval Marriage*, 19, D'Avray argues that preaching must have had an impact on lay audiences. He writes, "The argument of the present chapter makes the assumption that the cumulative repetition of much the same message by a powerful mass medium does have an effect on the thoughts of the people at the receiving end... Ideas repeated to great masses of people over many decades will have impinged in some way on the minds of a significant portion of the audience..."

<sup>114</sup> Michael Robson, "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors: the Pastoral Impact of the Friars," *A History*

especially in demand as preachers in the seasons of Lent and Advent, times one would expect them to preach on penance.<sup>115</sup> The claim that their penitential preaching had little impact on lay attitudes would be highly implausible. One would have to hold that the friars were popular as preachers and confessors, that they were especially popular in penitential seasons when they could be expected to preach on penance, that they preached on penance often, and yet in spite of this had little meaningful impact on lay attitudes regarding penance. This is not to say the laity were blank slates, but it does suggest that sermons should be an important part of forming a picture of lay spirituality.

In the next chapter I turn to further historical background of Servasanto and his works before turning in later chapters to his presentation of penance. bzx

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*of Pastoral Care*, (London; New York: Cassell, 2000) 126-147;130

<sup>115</sup> Robson, "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors," 132.

Also, in my chapter 2 I argue from an analysis of Servasanto's sermons that penance was indeed a central concern of his preaching and his concept of the friars' mission.

## Chapter 1: Servasanto da Faenza: Life, Works, and Historical Background

### *Servasanto da Faenza: Biographical Note*

Little is known about the friar Servasanto da Faenza. Even his name is uncertain as “Servasanto” may represent a symbolic name like “Bonaventura.” Several sources suggest a given name of “Jacobus.” An inventory of S. Domenico in Bologna refers to Servasanto as “Jacobus Servasanto.”<sup>1</sup> The manuscript Vat. Lat. 5933 opens with a title at the top of the first page saying, “sermones dominicales fratris Iacobi.”<sup>2</sup> The sermons are obviously the *dominicales* of Servasanto da Faenza, matching those in Schneyer’s list in his *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones*.<sup>3</sup> More tentatively, a late fifteenth-century inventory of the library at Siena attributes a series of sermons with the incipit “mihi autem absit” to a “Magistri Jacobi.”<sup>4</sup> The incipit matches that of Servasanto’s *Sermones de proprio sanctorum*,<sup>5</sup> and this may further suggest a given name to Servasanto of Jacobus/Giacomo. This is not certain though, as C. Frison has found a manuscript of Servasanto’s *Mariales* that refers to one “Iohannis Servasanti ordinis minorum.”<sup>6</sup> This underlines just how uncertain details about Servasanto are.

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<sup>1</sup> In *Fabio Vigili et les Bibliothèques de Bologne au debut XVIe siècle, d’après le Ms. Barb. Lat. 3185*, (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1943), 116.

<sup>2</sup> Vat. Lat. 5933 f.1r.

<sup>3</sup> Schneyer, Johannes Baptist, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150-1350*, (Münster: Aschendorff, 1969), 5: 376-399.

<sup>4</sup> K.W. Humphreys, *The Library of the Franciscans of Siena in the Late Fifteenth Century*, (Amsterdam: Erasmus, 1978), entry number 689.

<sup>5</sup> Though it is not impossible that this refers to another sermon collection by another author, the combination of an incipit known to refer to Servasanto’s sermon collection and a name attributed elsewhere to works by Servasanto is suggestive.

<sup>6</sup> C. Frison, “Fra Servasanto da Faenza, predicatore francescano del XIII secolo,” *Studi Romagnoli*, 39, (1988), 301-315; 303. He is referring to Cod. 55 of the Cathedral of Valencia.

Servasanto seems to have been originally from the town of Faenza in the province of Ravenna. B. Kruitwagen noted that in Servasanto's *Summa de penitentia* many exempla were from Faenza or the surrounding area. He proposed that the author came from the city or contado and belonged to the Franciscan province of Bologna.<sup>7</sup> As Oliger observed, while this is a plausible hypothesis, it does not follow necessarily.<sup>8</sup> There is, however, a piece of more direct evidence. A marginal note in an early fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Liber de conformitate* of Bartolomeo da Pisa says: "there was even from Faenza, brother Servasanto of Oriolo"<sup>9</sup> who made a most excellent tract concerning penance.<sup>10</sup> This, Frison, writes, follows the custom at the time whereby the name chosen by the religious at his entry into the convent would reflect his place of origin.<sup>11</sup>

Coming from Faenza, Servasanto entered the Franciscan order at Bologna where he received holy orders sometime between 1244 and 1260. He does not seem to be mentioned in any Bolognese charters or records.<sup>12</sup> P. Livario Oliger, however, has pointed to an interesting and informative exemplum in Servasanto's *Liber de virtutibus et de vitiis*. Servasanto tells the story of a bishop who ordained him to holy orders. This bishop showed insufficient concern for the poor, and "a certain tablet rolled back under his feet cast him to the earth and after a little while, with his life finished, I think that he

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<sup>7</sup> B. Kruitwagen, "De *summa de poenitentia* van fr. Servasactus (c.1300), *Neerlandia franciscana*, 2 (1919), 55-66, cited from Frison, "Fra Servasanto da Faenza," 306-307.

<sup>8</sup> Oliger, P. Livario OFM, "Servasanto da Faenza OFM et il suo *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*," in *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle, Per la storia della teologia e della filosofia* (Rome, 1924), 178.

<sup>9</sup> Presumably Oriolo Romano in Viterbo, just south of Tuscany.

<sup>10</sup> "Fuit etiam de Faventia frater Servasanus de Oriolo, qui fecit pulcherrimos tractatus de [...] et de penitentia [sic penetentia]," cited from Frison 307.

<sup>11</sup> Frison. "Fra Servasanto," 307.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 302, points that Servasanto's name is not conserved in any contemporary document in that archive, nor are there any other clear references to Servasanto.

was led into darkness, where no order dwells save eternal horror.”<sup>13</sup> Oliger suggested that this bishop who ordained Servasanto was probably Giacomo Boncambi O.P., bishop of Bologna from 1244-1260, who is referred to as having fallen in the road and died in October of 1260.<sup>14</sup> This would place Servasanto as having received his ordination not later than 1260.

Servasanto was certainly well trained and received a solid cultural preparation, as his prolific literary output indicates.<sup>15</sup> He cites a wide range of both Christian and pagan authors including Eusebius, Ambrose, Augustine, Isidore, Bede, Anselm, Boethius, Plato, Aristotle, Maimonides, Galen, Seneca, and Cicero among others.<sup>16</sup> Few exact details, however, are known about his education. He probably began his studies at Bologna where he entered the order, and may have continued on to study at the Paris *studium generale*.<sup>17</sup> Friars who were to become lectors would typically complete their education by studying at *studia generalia provinciae*.<sup>18</sup> Given the possibility that Servasanto lectured at Florence, it is possible that he also completed his education at the Paris general studium, which would not have been an unusual course for a lector.<sup>19</sup> Whether

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<sup>13</sup> Oliger, P. Livario OFM, “Servasanto da Faenza,” 179, “Econtra quidam episcopus, qui michi omnes sacros ordines dedit, qui tempore cuiusdam maxime caristie, quo pre ariditate famis multi cadebant in viis, ille palatium edificabat altissimum, in quo opere pro solo pane plures quam vellet manuales haberet. Itaque completo palatio de bonis pauperum, pauperibus nil dando, cum ab antiquo palatio per pontem factum transiret in novum, quedam tabula sub eius pedibus revoluta eum devolvit in terram et post modicum vita finita, puto quod in terram deductus sit tenebrosam, ubi nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. “... Finalmente però nella diocesi di Bologna ho letto il seguente passo relativo al vescovo Giacomo Boncambi O. (1244-1260): Cumque Maxumatio per gradus domus fallentes vesitgia fuisset misere devolutus, excessit e vita die 3 mensis octobris anno 1260.”

<sup>15</sup> Frison “Fra Servasanto da Faenza,” 310.

<sup>16</sup> Oliger, “Servasanto da Faenza,” 177.

<sup>17</sup> Frison, “Fra Servasanto da Faenza,” 309. The idea that he studied at Paris is speculative and despite its plausibility, there is little direct evidence for it.

<sup>18</sup> Alfonso Maierú, *University Training in Medieval Europe*, ed. and trans. D.N. Pryds, (Leiden, New York, Koln: Brill, 1994), 8.

<sup>19</sup> Oliger, “Servasanto da Faenza,” 180 also found several exempla from Paris in Servasanto’s *Liber de virtutibus et de vitiis*, though he acknowledges that these do not suffice to show that Servasanto himself

Servasanto did further study is unclear. He may have lectured at Paris, but the primary evidence for this is late or uncertain. Most tellingly in 1449, Giacomo della Marche referred to him as “*Magister Servasanti de provincia Tuscie...*”<sup>20</sup> The reference, however, is late and difficult to supplement with more direct evidence.

After his ordination, Servasanto seems to have spent some time wandering Italy before settling at the Franciscan convent of Santa Croce in Florence. In his *Liber de Virtutibus et de Vitiis*, he refers to an exemplum that he heard at Perugia,<sup>21</sup> while Frison writes that Servasanto was probably active in a range of Italian cities from which he drew exempla for his writings.<sup>22</sup> He probably settled at Florence by 1266 since he writes as if he knew Guido Novello, who was podestà from 1260-66.<sup>23</sup> Bartolomeo da Pisa, doubtless referring to Servasanto’s career at Florence, writes of a “Servasan” who was from the province of Tuscany and who “edited a shining book on the virtues and vices.”<sup>24</sup> Frison advances the hypothesis that Servasanto was a lector at Florence, while admitting that it is only a hypothesis.<sup>25</sup> It has, however, some degree of plausibility given Servasanto’s prolific literary output that was meant to educate his fellow friars in the art of preaching and hearing confessions. That Servasanto taught at Florence would help to explain why his brothers asked him to prepare at least one of the treatises for them.<sup>26</sup>

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studied at Paris.

<sup>20</sup> Frison, “Fra Servasanto da Faenza,” 306.

<sup>21</sup> Cited from Oliger, “Servasanto da Faenza,” 182.

<sup>22</sup> Frison, “Fra Servasanto da Faenza,” 310. Frison mentions Bologna, Siena, Florence, Perugia, and Orvieto as examples.

<sup>23</sup> Oliger, “Servasanto da Faenza,” 184, “Fuit et quidam bendarius senis Guidonis Novelli, qui dominam nostram vocavit vermiculosam. Ex cuius foraminibus corporis in tanta multitudine egressi sunt vermes, quod sub quasi momento consumpsit eundem.”

<sup>24</sup> Bartolomeo da Pisa, “de vitiis et virtutibus luculentam summam edidit frater Servasan, de provincia Tusciae, ac de poenitentia et eius tribus partibus,” from Frison, “Fra Servasanto...” 305.

<sup>25</sup> Frison, “Fra Servasanto da Faenza,” 309.

<sup>26</sup> See on his *Liber de virtutibus et de vitiis* below.

While at Florence, besides writing his treatises and possibly teaching, Servasanto carried on a ministry of preaching and hearing confessions. Certainly, it is implausible to think that he wrote so much on preaching without having preached himself, but here the evidence that he preached and taught is more direct. In one Assisi manuscript of his sermons, Servasanto, according to Bataillon, wrote that since he himself is now too old to preach, he has decided to prepare these model sermons for his younger confrères. Even more Bataillon suggests, “these models are so highly personal that it is highly probable that they are in great part sermons that he actually preached when younger.”<sup>27</sup> Finally, Servasanto himself relates an exemplum in which, through his preaching, he moved a man to confess to him. The man evidently had second thoughts, growing ashamed and withdrawing, but this still clearly shows Servasanto as both a public preacher and confessor.<sup>28</sup>

After years carrying out his ministry of preaching and confession and writing a series of preaching treatises and model sermons, Servasanto died shortly after the year 1285.<sup>29</sup> Frison, following Oliger, suggests that Servasanto finished his *Liber de virtutibus et de vitiis* between 1277 and 1285 and that he died shortly after that.<sup>30</sup> References to Guido Novello suggest he composed the treatise in Florence toward the

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<sup>27</sup> Fr. L.J. Bataillon, “Approaches to the Study of Medieval Sermons,” *Leeds Studies in English*, 11 (1980), 21. He is referring to Ms Assisi 520 f.99v., and is citing V. Gamboso, “Il sermoni fesitivi di Servasanto da Faenza nel codice 490 dell’ Antoniana,” *Il Santo*, 13 (1973), 19.

<sup>28</sup> Oliger, “Servasanto da Faenza,” 181; *De virtutibus*, f.74v. “Unde ipse vidi quod quadam violentia ad penitentiam duxi quemdam hominem desperatum, qui in quadam mea prédicatione mutatus est, me, prédicatione completa, secutus confiteri proponens. Cumque ad me venisset, vix potui facere quod sederet. Surgebat etiam sedens, se velle recedere dicens, confiteri non valeo. Sicque vix ab eo extorsi ut ad confessionem os aperiret, hoc peccatum eum mutum efficiens.”

<sup>29</sup> Frison, “Fra Servasanto da Faenza,” 311.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. and Oliger, “Servasanto da Faenza,” 186.

end of Guido's life.<sup>31</sup> It was a "mature work, written in advanced age,"<sup>32</sup> and Servasanto did not likely long survive it. He was buried in Santa Croce, where he had spent so much of his ministry.<sup>33</sup>

### *Sermons*

Servasanto's sermons have been gathered into four collections, *dominicales*, *de communi sanctorum*, *de sanctis*, and *mariales*. These sermons survive in 35 manuscripts with scattered sermons surviving in another eleven.<sup>34</sup> Many copies survive in Italian libraries; others are found in France, England, Spain, and Germany. Most copies are from the fourteenth century with some from the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>35</sup> A number of his *dominical* and *de sanctis* sermons were printed in early-modern editions by a printer believing them to be by Bonaventure. As is well known, mendicant libraries suffered high loss rates, with preaching material having been especially vulnerable.<sup>36</sup> An indication that something like this must have been the case with Servasanto's works is that not a single sermon collection of his survives in any Florence manuscript. Servasanto had spent much of his mature life preaching, and possibly teaching, at Florence and he wrote several treatises there, one at the explicit request of his fellow friars. Given this, it would be very surprising that not a single manuscript of his sermons should survive at Florence except for the fact that sermon material was so subject to

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<sup>31</sup> Oliger, "Servasanto da Faenza," 184.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>34</sup> See my Appendix One. This number does not include several examples of non extant sermon collections being listed in late medieval or early modern library inventories.

<sup>35</sup> See my Appendix One.

<sup>36</sup> David d'Avray develops this point in detail in *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 45. For example, in 1300, 92 friars lived in London, but "of the few books surviving there, not one would be classed as a model sermon collection or preaching aid."



being lost and having low survival rates. This suggests that there must have been a far higher number of manuscripts of his works than survive today.

Servasanto's sermons fit with the development of the sermon genre from the thirteenth century as it attained its "modern" form with a theme, explication of the theme, and division and subdivision confirmed by reason, exempla, and authorities.

Servasanto's sermons tend to follow this style closely as, for example, in his sermon "*Postquam convertisti me*," on the feast of St. Matthew.<sup>37</sup> He selects as the theme the verse, "After you have converted me, I did penance."<sup>38</sup> He divides this into two sections on God's mercy and His justice before subdividing the latter into four sections:

- mundialis ignominia in qua sumus
- iudicialis sententia quam timemus
- Infernalis miseria quam pati meruimus
- supernalis gloria a qua nos exclusimus<sup>39</sup>

That is,

Worldly ignominy in which we are  
The judicial sentence we fear  
The eternal misery that we deserve to suffer  
The eternal glory from which we exclude ourselves (by sin).

Servasanto is hindered from perfect rhymed subdivisions by the fact that "meruimus" is a deponent verb, but in other respects follows the standards of the genre. He then supports these subdivisions with reasons, for instance, arguing that sin makes one inwardly an

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<sup>37</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.131r.

<sup>38</sup> Jeremiah 31:19.

<sup>39</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.131v.

insensible animal,<sup>40</sup> with authorities like Augustine, who suggested that sin makes one a slave of as many masters as there are vices,<sup>41</sup> and with exempla like that of Mary Magdalen or the apostle Peter.<sup>42</sup> In this way, Servasanto follows the requirements of the genre of model sermons in the “modern” form, continuing the work from his treatises and providing his brothers with further preaching material.

Servasanto himself thus stands as a mid- to late-thirteenth century representative of the change in preaching style and content from the earlier Middle Ages. These changes were largely a result of changed purposes and audience of medieval preaching. Popular preaching in the early Middle Ages was relatively rare.<sup>43</sup> Preaching in the earlier Middle Ages was largely monastic: sermons were given by monks to other monks, but rarely to the laity.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, monastic sermons may have often been meant for devotional

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<sup>40</sup> “*Postquam convertisti me,*” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.131v. ... “dico quod nos primo movere debet ad penitentiam mundialis ignominia in qua sumus si tamen eam cognoscimus et penitus insensibiles brutales facti non sumus miseros enim facit populos peccatum.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. “...Et Augustinus dicit quo miser peccator servus est non unius domini, sed quod est gravius tot dominarum quot viciorum”

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. “Sequitur igitur apostolum Petrum qui post negationem flevit amare...et nihilominus Magdalen quae tantis lacrimis lavit maculas peccatorum...”

<sup>43</sup> This fact is not wholly uncontroversial; Thomas Amos has drawn our attention to the fact the Carolingian reform legislation called for more frequent preaching (Thomas Amos, “Preaching the Sermon in the Carolingian World,” *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Work in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas Amos, Eugene Green, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, 1989), 41-60). Nonetheless, as with penance, it does not follow that because preaching was prescribed that it was actually carried out. Alan of Lille seems to have assumed that only bishops preached, while the average priest was probably trained more for liturgy and less with preaching. Indeed, R. Emmet McLaughlin has observed that liturgy and not preaching was the main interest of the Carolingian reforms (R. Emmet McLaughlin, “The Word Eclipsed? Preaching in the Early Middle Ages,” *Traditio*, 46 (1991), 77-122. Here, see 79). David d'Avray, in “*The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris Before 1300,*” (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), has similarly concurred that the limited training of the parish priest in the Early Middle Ages would have meant limited preaching, a problem not really solved until the appearance of the mendicant friars in the thirteenth century.

<sup>44</sup> The First Lateran Council's Canon 16 held that monks should not engage in pastoral care, and Gratian, probably a monk himself, compared a monk out of his cloister to a fish out of water. See Carolyn Muessig, “What is Medieval Monastic Preaching? An Introduction,” *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, Carolyn Muessig ed., (Leiden: Brill, 1998). On p.6 see, “[A monk] is happy in his cloister since, just as a fish out of water cannot survive, so too a monk outside of his monastery [cannot survive]. Therefore, a solitary should remain still and keep silent, although he is dead to the world, he nevertheless lives for God.” On the prohibition against monk's preaching without permission, see Giles Constable, “The Second

reading and reflection as much as they were meant to have been preached. Such was probably the case, for instance, with Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on the Song of Songs.<sup>45</sup> Monastic sermons thus tended to be inward looking, dealing with a monk's spiritual progress, and were often styled around reflection of the different senses of Scripture,<sup>46</sup> rather than the style of division and subdivision common in the thirteenth-century milieu in which Servasanto wrote and preached. Monastic preaching concerned the monks' spiritual progress with the goal being to lead the monk to purity and finally to heaven.<sup>47</sup> Being meant for reading or monastic reflection, there was no need for the division and subdivision style that made the sermon more easily memorable by a popular preacher or a popular audience.

This began to change in the great religious revival of the twelfth century, which was characterized by the appeal of apostolic poverty,<sup>48</sup> greater personal holiness, moral reform of both Church and society, and increased public preaching. This increased demand for popular preaching necessitated a change in the sermon style to something more practical for preaching to a lay audience. This change in preaching style was most noteworthy in the twelfth-century schools. Among the schoolmen, the sermon became more public, preaching not only to monks, but to secular clergy, clerics, students, and

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Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries," *Traditio*, 9 (1953) 213-79, 276-7, cited here from Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching against the Cathars," *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, Carolyn Muessig ed., (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 163-181, 175-176.

<sup>45</sup> Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "The Twelfth-Century Monastic Sermon," *The Sermon*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 271-323; 291.

<sup>46</sup> Kienzle, "The Twelfth Century Monastic Sermon"... 271.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 306. See also, for example, Aelred of Rievaulx, "Two Sermons on the Nativity of the Lord," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, vol.37 (2002), 83-89. Aelred's style and content is not based on the division and subdivision that would later become common, and he proceeds according to scriptural exegesis based on the interpretation of scripture in its different senses. He urges the monk to "build a Bethlehem in his own soul."

<sup>48</sup> On which see the classic, Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

even the laity.<sup>49</sup> Preaching was no longer simply a matter for monastic contemplation, but rather “became a primary vehicle for the instruction of all walks of life.”<sup>50</sup>

Thus, at the hands of the twelfth-century schoolmen, was born the “sermo modernus” style of the Later Middle Ages. Sermons, Mark Zier, writes, became “brief, pointed, and presented with a flourish.” This newer style tended to prize the literal-historical meaning of the text rather than dwell on other interpretations of Scripture as was common in the monastic sermon.<sup>51</sup> The sermons tended to include more exempla and other source material like patristic authorities and lapidaries. The sermon itself, as it grew more public, was largely for the purpose of moral exhortation and instruction in the faith.<sup>52</sup> It began also to be based in the style of rhymed division and subdivision, as in Wenzel’s example of the anonymous Dominican preaching treatise or the sermon of Servasanto described above.<sup>53</sup> The treatise supports the “sermo modernus” style of preaching. It recommends selection of a biblical theme that is both edifying and a complete thought that is then divided in a way that helps make clear the meaning of the theme.<sup>54</sup> It then recommends that the subsequent subdivisions be supported and confirmed by authorities, reasons, exempla, and the Church fathers.<sup>55</sup> This made the sermon easier to remember for both preacher and audience and thus made it better suited to the popular preaching that became so common after the rise of the mendicant orders.

Servasanto’s sermons and his preaching treatises served different but somewhat

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<sup>49</sup> Mark Zier, “Sermons of the Twelfth Century Schoolmasters and Canons,” *The Sermon...* 325-362; 327.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>53</sup> Siegfried Wenzel, “A Dominican *Ars Predicandi* Treatise in Sermon Form,” *AFP*, 78 (2008), 51-78.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

overlapping audiences. The treatises were for his fellow friars who would use them to construct sermons themselves, while the sermons were for a mixed audience of clergy and laity since he might have preached or intended them to be preached to either group. The treatises should probably be considered, then, to be one degree further removed from the lay preaching audience than the model sermons, and perhaps even further if Bataillon is correct about Servasanto having preached some of these sermons over the course of his own career.<sup>56</sup> Where a sermon might be used fairly directly for preaching or else changed with the addition of different exempla, similitudes, reasons, or authorities, the treatises would be used to construct a sermon and so may be considered a step further removed from the audience of the preacher. They were intended more directly for the preacher than the sermons necessarily were, which were for both clergy and laity.

Nonetheless, this idea that Servasanto's treatises were more directly for a clerical audience and his sermons for an audience of mixed laity and clergy should immediately be qualified and it would be a mistake to separate the treatises and sermons too completely. Sermons that might have some indications of being delivered to a clerical audience could also be delivered to the laity with little change and might be easily appropriate for a lay audience as well. The message of penance and moral reform was hardly a message to be restricted to the laity. The friars recognized that the clergy too were in need of moral reform as they attributed the lack of preaching before them "to the personal failings and ignorance of the secular clergy."<sup>57</sup> Fulk of Neuilly, the famous twelfth-century crusade preacher, was thought to have been rendered a poor preacher by

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<sup>56</sup> Bataillon, "Approaches to the Study of Medieval Sermons," 21.

<sup>57</sup> Robson, "Michael Robson, "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors: the Pastoral Impact of the Friars," *A History of Pastoral Care*, (London; New York: Cassell, 2000) 126-147; 130.

his ignorance and immoral habits. As his moral character improved by attending the lectures of Peter Chanter at Paris, so too did his preaching improve.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, preaching material designed to provide the laity with moral instruction and exhortation to penance would also be well suited for preaching to the clergy.

The reverse was true as well. A sermon that might indicate itself as being delivered to the clergy could often, with little, modification be used for the laity as well. Such is probably the case with the St Matthew sermon, "*Postquam convertisti me.*" Servasanto occasionally refers to "my brothers" in one instance urging them to beware the judge from whom nothing can be hidden.<sup>59</sup> This suggests that this sermon may have originally been intended for or delivered to an audience of fellow friars. The material itself, however, is ideally suited to a lay audience as well: it strongly urges repentance and various motives to penance supported by a wealth of exempla and similitudes, which were considered especially effective for preaching to the laity.<sup>60</sup> There would be nothing, then, to prevent such a sermon from being used in preaching to the laity. Carol Muessig has pointed out that though Jacques of Vitry's sermons seem written largely for the clergy, many themes in them, including Last Judgment and guidelines of Christian behavior, would be well suited for preaching to the laity as well.<sup>61</sup> Commenting on this indeterminacy of audience, D'Avray has remarked that "it may be better to think of [sermons] as a cultural phenomenon in which both the clergy and laity participated in

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<sup>58</sup> Phyllis Roberts, "Sermons and Preaching in/and the Medieval University," in *Medieval Education* eds. Ronald B Begley and Joseph W. Koterski, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 83-98; 88.

<sup>59</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me,*" Vat. Lat. 9884 f.132v. "...Ergo, fratres mei, saltem timore ilius iudicii ubi non poterit quicquam abscondi a quo nulla via poterit declinari."

<sup>60</sup> D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars...* 231; see my discussion of the value of exempla and similitudes when I discuss Servasanto's *Exemplis* later this chapter.

<sup>61</sup> Carol Muessig, "Audience and Sources in Jacques de Vitry's *Sermones feriales et communes*," *Medieval Sermons and Society*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse et al, (Louvain-La-Neuve : Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'études médiévales, 1998), 188.

different ways and degrees.”<sup>62</sup> Gilbert of Tournai’s sermons, for instance, to the Paris clergy would have needed only minimal modification, or perhaps none at all, to be used also for the laity, leading D’Avray to conclude, “one is drawn to the conclusion that the line between clerical and popular preaching was a faint one, easy to cross when a model sermon collection was being put together... Preachers would need to give sermons to the laity much more often than to clerics, but in principle sermons from the same collection could be adapted to either sort of audience.”<sup>63</sup>

The treatises too, may show more indeterminacy of audience than an initial inspection might suggest. Their immediate target may have been the clergy, but the point was to provide the preacher with material that he could easily preach to the laity. For instance, with little modification, many chapters in the penance book could be drawn on very directly to make a sermon, something Servasanto himself seems to have done in several cases. For example, in the *Penitentia*, while discussing motives for penance, Servasanto includes material to allow a preacher to preach how the time allowed man for penance is very brief, instable, and irrevocable.”<sup>64</sup> In his Lenten sermon, “*In tempore accepto*,” these became subdivisions in his sermon on how the time given man for penance is brief and short, that the time given is itself unstable and so must be diligently

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<sup>62</sup> D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 64-65.

The sense in which the laity participated in preaching will be more evident after drawing conclusions based on the material in my chapters 3 and 4, but I will still observe here that the voluntary nature of attendance at medieval sermons means that a preacher had to take into account the tastes and interests of his audience. Otherwise an audience might vote with their feet, simply not attending the sermons of that preacher and finding one more to their liking. Hence, to at least a certain extent, it is likely that lay tastes and interests were communicated to preachers who had to take those interests, concerns, and tastes into account in their preaching.

<sup>63</sup> See also d’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 123-124.

<sup>64</sup> *Penitentia* f.77r-78v.; 77r. “Nam tempus nobis ad penitendum... divina concessum. Est valde breve. Est instabile... Est irrevocabile. Est inappetibile.”

attended to, and that the time given is irrevocable and so must not be lost.<sup>65</sup>

Both the treatises and sermons, then, despite some difference in audience were also in an important sense for both the clergy and laity. Sermons for the clergy could often easily be used also for the laity, while the material in the treatises could be preached to the laity fairly directly. Even if the material may have been most directly for the clergy to aid their preaching, the laity were still the final intended audience. For this reason, Muessig remarked that “the wall between the clerical and lay audiences disintegrates and a fluid exchange of ideas is found....”<sup>66</sup>

*Servasanto's Treatises: The Liber de exemplis naturalibus*

The earliest of Servasanto's treatises seems to have been his *Liber de exemplis naturalibus* (henceforth, *De exemplis*), which is largely a collection of exempla divided into several parts. It survives in 61 manuscripts, by far the most of any of Servasanto's works. Many of these manuscripts that have been dated are from the fourteenth century with a few from the fifteenth and perhaps a couple as early as the thirteenth. They are from a wide geographic range with copies in English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian libraries.<sup>67</sup>

The *De exemplis* is divided into three parts. In the first part, Servasanto writes

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<sup>65</sup> “*In tempore accepto*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39v-40r., “Dico quod tempus nobis ad penitentiam datum est breve et modicum... Secundo tempus est instabile et ideo est sollicite attendum... Tertio tempus irrevocabile et ideo non perdendum...”

<sup>66</sup> Muessig, “Audience and Sources in Jacques of Vitry's...” 201. She is referring specifically to Jacques of Vitry's *Sermones feriales et communes*, but this is evidently more broadly applicable as well as she refers to Jacques's desire to transmit orthodox doctrine and to provide the laity with learned preachers. The same can easily be said of Servasanto. See also his remark at the same place that: “The source and context of these sermons form a complete circle that embraces all members of the Christian community...”

<sup>67</sup> See my appendix 1 for a list of Servasanto's works and the manuscripts in which they survive. None of his other works approach the survival rate of the *Exemplis*.



about Catholic doctrine, in the second, about the sacraments, and in the third and the longest section, about the virtues and vices.<sup>68</sup> The first section is made up of 21 chapters and begins with the nature of God (He is eternal, perfect, unified in the Trinity etc.).<sup>69</sup> It then moves on to other topics in Christian doctrine: the Incarnation, the Last Judgment, the Resurrection of the Body, and eternal pains and glory.<sup>70</sup> The second section contained 17 sections on the seven sacraments enumerated by Peter Lombard the previous century.

The third part of the *De exemplis*, however, on the virtues and vices, is by far the longest.<sup>71</sup> Servasanto evidently considered this to be most important part of his work, having spent no less than 91 chapters on it. His contemporaries seem to have thought the same, as the third part of the *De exemplis* was sometimes copied without the previous two parts.<sup>72</sup> A Padua manuscript from the Biblioteca Antoniana is one of these. The third book of the *De exemplis* is surrounded in the manuscript by other preaching material.<sup>73</sup> If a work may be judged, in part, by the company it keeps, then it seems that the third part of Servasanto's work was regarded as especially useful by preachers as material for sermons.

This earliest of Servasanto's works is also the most basic, being primarily a collection of exempla. Servasanto's later works, his penance book and later book on the virtues and vices were not only collections of exempla, but included organized reasons

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<sup>68</sup> Martin Grabmann, "Der Liber de exemplis naturalibus des Franziskanertheologen Servas Sanctus," *Franziskanische Studien*, 7 (1920), 85-117.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 98 for a chapter list.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 98-101.

<sup>72</sup> See my appendix one for several examples of this.

<sup>73</sup> Ms. Padova Ant. 492, ff.1-60v Anonimus, postilla super evangelia dominicalia et ferarum quadragesimae; 61r-72v. Sermone varii; 73r-117v, Servasantis de Faenza O min., D. exemplis naturalibus. Tractatus de virtutibus et vitiis....; 118r-119r. Sermones; 119r-120r. de conversione S. Catherinae virginis.

and authorities. They were meant as complete books for preaching a sermon containing all that a friar needed in one place. The *De exemplis* was more of a reference to be mined for exempla and similitudes. It was evidently very popular. This is not surprising: exempla were long recognized as essential to good preaching. For instance, the early thirteenth-century theologian, Thomas of Chobham, in his own *Summa predicandi*, discussed the value of exempla and similitudes. He wrote that “it should be considered that everything which ought to be put over successfully will be introduced into the mind of the hearer much better through similitudes than through the simple and naked truth.”<sup>74</sup> Pointing to what he called the medieval “passion for similitudes,” David D’Avray has referred to Thomas’s suggestion that a preacher should be well armed with animal similitudes since they are especially loved by audiences.<sup>75</sup> Thomas of Chobham was hardly alone in his opinion. Étienne de Bourbon, in his own exempla collection from the mid-thirteenth century, remarked that exempla help to “instruct the ignorance of simple people, and they heap up and imprint more easily, longer, and tenaciously in memory.”<sup>76</sup> Humbert of Romans advised that because of their utility, the preacher “should have many exempla of this kind available.”<sup>77</sup> Similarly, an anonymous Dominican preaching treatise commented that men respond better to exempla and similitudes than rational argument,

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<sup>74</sup> Cited here from d’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars...* 230-231.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 231, Chobham writes, “the third thing is that [the preacher] should know the natures of animals and also of other things, because there is nothing which moves the hearts of an audience more than the properties of animals and of other things... for similitudes of things, because they seem to be something novel, move the soul more easily and in a more pleasurable way.”

<sup>76</sup> Cited here from Kimberly Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice: Memory, Images, and Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 194.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 195, “Since exempla move more than word, according to Gregory, and are more easily seized by the intellect and fixed more deeply in memory and are also heard more freely by many and attract many to sermons by a certain delight, it is expedient for men dedicated to the preaching office to have many exempla of this kind available, which they may use now in common sermons, now in *collationes* for persons fearing God, now in easy *collocuciones* for every kind of person and for the edification and salvation of all.

and that good rhetoric can be more effective than mathematical demonstration.<sup>78</sup>

Servasanto clearly agreed with his contemporaries regarding the value of exempla and similitudes. In a sermon on Mary Magdalen, “*Quem ad modum*,” he remarked that exempla allow a subject to be more easily grasped by the listener. Exempla had many benefits: “they aid in understanding, on account of which sacred Scripture uses many,”<sup>79</sup> appeal to men more than reason, and aid in memory. Servasanto practiced what he preached, using exempla and similitudes in an attempt to make material more accessible and interesting to the laity and for greater rhetorical effect. He would find similitudes useful for coloring perceptions of a topic as when in one sermon he compared the sinful soul to a beautifully ornamented person who falls in the mud<sup>80</sup> and suggested that as animals fear the lion, so Christians should fear the just judge whom he offends by sin<sup>81</sup>. He also told exempla, both Christian and pagan, including one of Alexander the Great as a young boy who showed such patience while suffering during a sacrifice that he makes an excellent model for Christians.<sup>82</sup>

In this concern to provide preaching material and the sense that exempla and

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<sup>78</sup> Siegfried Wenzel, “A Dominican *Ars predicandi*,” 67.

<sup>79</sup> “*Quem ad modum*,” Ms Vat. Lat. 5933 f.101v, “...secundo illud per exempla exponit ut facilius capiatur. Plurimum enim valent exempla et maxime sensibilia ad rerum intelligentiam propter quod multum exemplis utitur sacra scriptura.”

<sup>80</sup> “*Conversus sum*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.129r, “dico quod ad conversionem cum sancto apostolo faciendam movere nos debet culpa qua deum offendimus. Quid enim est culpa nisi quedam luctuosa fetens materia. Sed quae est persona pulchris ornata si in lutum caderet que citissime inde non surgeret si valeret. Sed quid anima pretiosus ergo si in lutum cecidit culpe numquid non cito se debet inde erigere.”

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., f.130v, “...timet animales omne(s) leonem et eius rugitum expavescit... ergo quomodo sic stulti sumus ut non timeamus ignem inflammantem ignem devorantem ignem indeficientem...”

<sup>82</sup> “*Proposito sibi gaudio*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42v, “legitur enim quod alexandro macedonum regi semel ydolis ymolanti puer nobilis cum thauribulo et incenso astabat, super cuius brachium carbo ardens delapsus est licet ergo ignis carnes adureret ita ut odor adusti corporis ad (v)ares omnium astantium perveniret puer tamen adeo patiens fuit propeter reverentiam sui regis quod non solum dolorem silendo pressit sed brachium omnio immobile tenuit tanquam vilipenderet penam ignis. Ergo, si tanta potuit esse patientia ob reverentiam regis mortalis demonibus ymolantis quanta deberet esse hominibus Christianis propter reverentiam summi regis.”

similitudes made up especially effective preaching material, Servasanto fits in with and illustrates the changes that preaching had undergone from the earlier centuries. The increased use of exempla especially stands out among the notable changes in the “*sermo modernus*” style. He clearly considered the virtues and vices to be appropriate topics for preaching. Many of his contemporaries seem to have agreed; the third section of *De exemplis*, on the virtues and vices, was sometimes preserved in manuscripts separately from the rest of the book. This was not unusual, as manuscripts of John of Wales’s works would sometimes also excerpt his section on confession and the virtues and vices. Preachers took what they found useful and it seems that Servasanto’s *De exemplis* treatise worked well.

While the longest part of Servasanto’s *De exemplis* is the third part, providing exempla on the virtues and vices, Servasanto did include a second section of the work in which he discusses the sacraments. Here, significantly, he spent most of his time on the sacrament of penance. He wrote a single chapter each on baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, but eleven chapters on penance including its value, the three parts of it, and different methods of satisfaction for sin.<sup>83</sup> Such a comparatively short section on the sacraments may make it seem that they were relatively unimportant to Servasanto. That this is not the case will be evident when one considers his *Summa de penitentia*, but even in this treatise, the space Servasanto spent on penance compared to the other sacraments combined with his concern to provide exempla on the virtues and vices is noteworthy.

What stands out, then, in his consideration of penance and especially his extended consideration of the virtues and vices is the centrality of moral theology to what

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<sup>83</sup> Grabmann, “Der Liber de exemplis naturalibus,” 98.

Servasanto saw as the preaching mission of himself and his fellow friars. This stress on moral theology fits with the development of penance and preaching the virtues over the previous century. Central to these changes were both the apostolic poverty movement and the development of moral theology in the twelfth century schools. The popular desire for holiness spurred by the Gregorian reform movement<sup>84</sup> began to have parallels in the twelfth century schools with the development of the doctrine of penance. At this time, penance became no longer solely the domain of the canon lawyers; moral theology began to develop and moral theologians took up the study of penance.<sup>85</sup> The twelfth century was not only characterized by the apostolic poverty movement, but also by intellectual revival.<sup>86</sup> Theology itself benefitted from this intellectual revival as a new moral theology developed that sought to deal with the old questions of penance, but in a practical way. Broomfield observes that “more topics came up for discussion; analysis of the sacrament grew subtle and penetrating, and deeper insight was obtained into its problems and implications.”<sup>87</sup>

To say that the study of penance was now taken up by the theologians is not to

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<sup>84</sup>Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 7-9. “Many who had been awakened by the Gregorian Reform Movement began to ask whether the ecclesiastical ordination of a priest should be the sole entitlement for carrying out the work of Christian salvation; whether the Church alone was called and ordained to realize the divine plan for salvation proclaimed by the gospels and the apostles solely through ecclesiastical representatives; whether each and every Christian might not be called by the command of the gospels and the example of the apostles to model his or her life on the gospels and apostolic standards...”

<sup>85</sup> Thomas Chobham, F. Broomfield. ed., *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1968), xv refers to the birth of moral theology and the effect on the confessor of this rapid advance in scholarship since it would mean he would have to both judge and counsel and be skilled in directing souls.

<sup>86</sup> Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, (Harvard University Press, 1927); C.N.L. Brooke, *The Twelfth Century Renaissance*, (New York; Harcourt: Brace and World, 1970).

<sup>87</sup> F. Broomfield ed., *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, xiii. “The Parisian theological schools shewed a tendency to follow the practical trend of William of Champeaux and Anselm of Laon, and this must have been strengthened by the long pontificate of Maurice of Sully, bishop of Paris from 1160 until his death in 1196. Maurice’s interests were largely practical, and his prestige among scholars and his authority as bishop must have helped turn the masters’ attention toward those subjects in which he himself was interested.”

say that the canonists abandoned it,<sup>88</sup> for the canonists themselves also began to use the new moral theology in their own writings and thought, as did Gratian in his famous *Decretum*.<sup>89</sup> In spite of continuing interest in penance by the canonists, it was the work of the moral theologians who reinvigorated the sacrament of penance and penitential thought in the twelfth century, a movement confirmed by the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>90</sup> Among those theologians were Peter Abelard, Peter the Chanter, Peter Lombard, and Alan of Lille.<sup>91</sup> Peter the Chanter was one of the central figures in the new theologians' interest in penance,<sup>92</sup> and was himself a student of Peter Lombard, who definitively ranked penance among the seven sacraments and whose *Four Books of Sentences* became the primary textbook for medieval students.<sup>93</sup> This increasing study of penance by the moral theologians involved a growing concern for contrition. In this the theologians were largely following Peter Abelard who had himself prized contrition as of primary importance for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>94</sup>

This growing influence of moral theology in the schools served the needs of Servasanto and his fellow preachers who sought to preach moral reform and penance, in large part by preaching the virtues and vices to the laity of the Middle Ages. For this reason Servasanto wrote his *De exemplis* as a way to make the preaching of virtue and

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<sup>88</sup> Though Broomfield does seem to take this position as he remarks that "...about the only subject not discussed by both the theologians and canonists was penance, which from the time of Gratian had come to be the almost exclusive preserve of the theologians" (xiii).

<sup>89</sup> Amedee Teetaert, "La Summa de Poenitentia de S. Raymond de Penyafort," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis*, 5 (1928) 52.

<sup>90</sup> F. Broomfield, *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, xxi.

<sup>91</sup> Amedee Teetaert, "La Doctrine Penitentielle de Saint Raymond de Penyafort O.P.," *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia*, 4, (1928), 121-181; 128.

<sup>92</sup> Teetaert, "La Summa de Penitentia.," 52

<sup>93</sup> On Lombard on penance see, Joseph Goering, "The Scholastic Turn (1100-1500): Penitential Theology and Law in the Schools," *NHP*, 219-237; 228.

<sup>94</sup> Teetaert, "La Doctrine Penitentielle," 135.

vice practical for his fellow friars. In this he followed the practice of many others. Thomas of Chobham who influenced by the new moral theology, also sought to provide popular preaching material for preachers. He was among those who not only wrote on penance, but also wrote a preaching guide, the *Summa de arte predicandi*, for those charged with preaching to the faithful. In it, he wrote that human nature is subject to three misfortunes, sickness, ignorance, and vice. To fight these misfortunes, man is offered the same number of remedies. He fights sickness with medicine, ignorance with science, and vice with the virtues.<sup>95</sup> Following his master Peter the Chanter, Thomas gave the threefold task of theology as *lectio, disputatio, and praedicatio*. Practically speaking, the theologian was to judge, inflict penances, and to preach and, as Servasanto thought, he was to preach the virtues and vices.<sup>96</sup>

The main task of preaching to Thomas was the spiritual benefit and edification of those to whom he preached. In this respect, as Morezoni remarks, preaching to the clergy was not very different from preaching to the laity.<sup>97</sup> To this end Thomas urged the preacher to raise a healthy fear in their listeners to cause them to renounce evil.<sup>98</sup> The preacher should urge on his listeners the great remedy of penance,<sup>99</sup> as well as preaching the theological and cardinal virtues. One should also preach the beatitudes as well as

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<sup>95</sup> Thomae Chobham and Franco Morenzoni ed., *Thomae de Chobham, Summa de Arte Predicandi*, CCCM LXXXII, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988); xxxix, “La condition de la nature humaine, écrit Thomas, est d’être sujette à cause même de sa nature géminée à trois infortunes: la maladie, l’ignorance, et le vice. Pour lutter contre ces trois maux qui affligent tant le corps que l’âme, l’homme dispose de trois remèdes majeurs: la médecine, la science et les vertus.”

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., xxxix.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., xlvii. “Fidèle à l’idée que la tâche première de la prédication est celle de rendre les hommes meilleurs, les contenus qu’il développe, plus qu’à transmettre un ensemble de normes morales rigides, ont principalement pour objectif de promouvoir l’édification spirituelle des auditeurs. Dans cette perspective, il est sans doute possible d’affirmer que la *Summa de arte praedicandi* considère que la prédication aux laïcs ne doit pas être radicalement différente de celle destinée aux clercs...”

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., xliii- xlv, This could include preaching on the danger of hell, purgatory, and the Last Judgment.

<sup>99</sup> Franco Morenzoni ed., *Thomae de Chobham, Summa de Arte Predicandi*, xlv.

seven reasons to flee sin.<sup>100</sup> Among several interesting features of this material is that it is often of scholarly origin as both Peter the Lombard and Peter the Chanter are frequently cited.<sup>101</sup> This provides evidence of the transmission of ideas from the university schoolmen to lay audiences through popular preaching.

In addition to Chobham, one might also mention Ranulphe of Houblonière, the thirteenth-century schoolman and canon of the Paris cathedral church, who preached especially on the need to repent of sin, on motives to repent, and on the need for conversion. Broadly speaking, Phyllis Roberts, has remarked that Ranulphe's preaching fit well with "the papal program... of attacking heresy, confirming and strengthening the Catholic faith, extirpating vice, and promoting virtue."<sup>102</sup> He was a schoolman concerned with public preaching on the virtues and vices and in this, Ranulphe stands well as a representative of the development of sermon material by the middle to later part of the thirteenth century, as a cleric concerned to preach penance and moral reform in a persuasive way to society at large.

It is in this context of thirteenth century friars and schoolmen preparing penitential and preaching material to train their less educated brother and the ordinary parish priest for the task of preaching and hearing confessions that Servasanto da Faenza falls into. In addition to his *De exemplis* treatise, Servasanto wrote a penance book, a book on the virtues and vices, and model sermons, all meant to train and prepare preachers for their ministry. Like Chobham he tended to be more interested in moral theology than questions of canon law, and his works are eminently practical in his moral

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., xlv. Thomas is more concerned to preach moral betterment than to preach doctrine.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Roberts, "Sermons and Preaching," 89.



theology. He was even called the most “original moralist of the thirteenth century.”<sup>103</sup> In his work then, he was continuing the task of others before him, like Thomas Chobham, and Ranulphe of Houblonnière,<sup>104</sup> and others in a similar style of work, preparing preaching and confessional material. If Servasanto did not study at Paris himself, his training at Bologna would likely have reflected advances in the schools. His interests are so like Ranulphe and others we know studied in the schools that he comfortably fits into this context in transmitting new penitential emphases and interests in the schools to the laity by his preaching.

The development of moral theology in the schools along with the twelfth-century religious movement influenced not only greater preaching of the virtues and vices, as evident in Servasanto’s own *De exemplis*, but also influenced greater preaching on penance. This greater concern with penance explains why, though the section of his *De exemplis* dealing with the virtues and vices is by far the longest, Servasanto also spent more time on the sacrament of penance than any other sacrament. For him, the two went together, a fact not surprising given the context of the previous century.<sup>105</sup> In spite of this space spent on penance, however, the overwhelming bulk of the *De exemplis* was spent on exempla related to the virtues and vices. This may explain why Servasanto would return to the subject of penance in his next treatise, saying more on it than he ever had before and dedicating a full treatise to the preaching of penance.

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<sup>103</sup> Oliger, “Servasanto da Faenza OFM,” 186.

<sup>104</sup> One might also mention Ranulphe of Houblonnière, on whom see: Nicole Bériou, *La prédication de Ranulphe de la Houblonnière: sermons aux clercs et aux simples gens à Paris au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Etudes augustinienes, 1987) and Roberts, “Sermons and Preaching,” 89.

<sup>105</sup> As will be even more evident in my next chapter.

*Summa de Penitentia*

Of Servasanto's major treatises, the next in chronological order was his *Summa de penitentia* (henceforth, *Penitentia*). It follows the *De exemplis* both in order and in purpose. He opens it by saying, "since in the little book, *De exemplis naturalibus*, written by myself, I have written rather little on penance, though the subject has wide application for preaching and is extremely useful for the conversion of sinners, as daily examples prove, I thought it right... to add to those things which have been written."<sup>106</sup> Servasanto evidently wrote his book to fill in some of what he believed to have been lacking in his *De exemplis*. In his *De exemplis*, though he wrote a part of the work on the sacraments and indeed, spent most of that time on the sacrament of penance, the overwhelming part of his work was dedicated to providing exempla on the virtues and vices. Having said comparatively little about penance, then, and believing it an appropriate subject for preaching, Servasanto seems to have believed it necessary to supplement his *De exemplis* with another treatise on preaching penance. One writer suggested that Servasanto intended his *Penitentia* as a supplement to his *De exemplis* treatise.<sup>107</sup> This is clearly true, as Servasanto's prologue indicates. The *Penitentia* not only includes exempla and similitudes appropriate for preaching penance, but is a more complete manual of preaching that includes possible divisions and subdivisions, reasons, authorities, and exempla. Servasanto's own comments confirm this. What the *De exemplis* lacked, and the *Penitentia* provided, was a further set of exempla and

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<sup>106</sup> *Penitentia*, f.1r, "Quoniam in libello de exemplis naturalibus a me scripto, dictavi de penitentia quaedam pauca cum sit eius materia valde lata praedicationi aptissima et conversioni peccatorum utilissima sicut cotidiana probant exempla. Ideo dignum dixi Christi deum iuvante me gratia sive potius omnia faciente illis quae sunt scriptata super addere ista presenti tractatulo anotanda.

<sup>107</sup> Schmidt, *DSpir* XIV, 617, cited here from "Servasanto da Faenza," Roest, <http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/franauts.htm#ServasantodaFaenza> (accessed July 26, 2012).

similitudes specifically regarding penance, and a more complete guide to the composition of sermons on penance, including possible divisions and subdivisions, reasons, and authorities.

The *Penitentia* is divided into 17 distinctions or subheadings, to each of which are devoted multiple chapters. This organization allowed Servasanto to make his book an effective and simple guide for the preparation of a sermon. Servasanto's chapters in his *Penitentia* sometimes divide according to the sequence of elements in a *sermo modernus*: theme, distinctions, and reasons (or authorities or exempla) in support of each distinction. For instance, in his discussion of the future Resurrection of the Body, he has separate chapters including, "that there will be a future resurrection of the Dead is shown by reason and authority," "that there will be a future resurrection is demonstrated by apostolic authority," "proof by reasons that there will be a future resurrection," and "proof by examples that there will be a future resurrection."<sup>108</sup> In this way, the preacher looking for reasons, exempla, or authorities for support in preaching on the Resurrection of the Dead—considered an important theme that motivated listeners toward penance—could quickly and easily turn to a chapter on that subject and fill in his choice of material.

A second way in which Servasanto designed the chapters of the *Penitentia* to be easily used to guide sermon writing was in writing them so that the chapters themselves might be used as the basis for the subdivisions of a sermon. At the same time, the use of subdivisions and subchapters within a distinction marks another difference between Servasanto's *De exemplis* and *Penitentia*. In the *De exemplis*, his section "On the utility

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<sup>108</sup> *Penitentia*, f.104r-106v. "Quare resurrectio sit futura corpora mortuorum auctoritate et ratione ostenditur," "quare resurrectio sit futura monstratur auctoritate apostoli," "Probatio rationibus quod resurrectio sit futura," "probatio exemplis quod resurrectio sit futura."

of penance,” simply offered a list of exempla under that heading.<sup>109</sup> In the *Penitentia*, however, Servasanto discusses the value of penance under several sub-chapters and divisions. His discussion, for example, includes the following chapters:

That penance is imitative of all good  
 That penance, though harsh outside, is delightful inwardly to the soul  
 That penance is purgative of sin  
 That penance is healthful toward the soul.<sup>110</sup>

Servasanto has these four chapters headings rhyme as subdivisions of a *sermon modernus* usually did; thus, these chapters themselves seem intended for direct adaptation as the structure of a sermon.

This would leave a fellow preacher with different options of how to use Servasanto’s treatise in writing his own sermon. The friar could choose several chapter headings from the *Penitentia* to use as the subdivisions of a sermon of his own. He could then flesh them out, selecting material from the individual chapters, whether he wanted reasons, authorities, or exempla. In fact, the process could be less one of “fleshing out” his chosen subdivisions, than of narrowing down some of Servasanto’s chapters. Some of the chapters are of an appropriate length for a sermon, but some of Servasanto’s chapters seem too long for an average sermon. For instance, the four chapter titles and potential subdivisions above, run from 120r-128v in the Florence *Penitentia* manuscript. His sermons, however, in Vat. Lat. 5933 more commonly occupy 1.5 to 2 folios, like one, “*Ambulate in dilectione*” from ff.42r-43r or another, “*Sequebatur eum multitudo magna*,”

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<sup>109</sup> *De exemplis*, f.20v-22v.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, f.120r-130r, Quare penitentia est omnium bonorum imitativa  
 Quod penitentia licet sit aspera exterius et tamen intus anime delectativa  
 Quod penitentia peccatorum est purgativa  
 Quod penitentia anima est sanativa.

from ff.45r-45v.<sup>111</sup>

By composing a well-organized penance book with reasons, exempla, similitudes, and authorities on various aspects of penance, Servasanto sought to provide a practical preaching guide that would easily allow his fellow friars to preach on penance. He thereby expanded on his discussion in the *De exemplis* and indicated how central he considered penance to be for good preaching.

As was suggested above, Servasanto's *Penitentia* bears comparison to the *Summa confessorum* of Thomas Chobham and the preaching manuals of other contemporaries like the thirteenth-century canonist, Raymond of Penyafort. They make it apparent that Servasanto was part of a general trend emphasizing the importance of penance in Church and lay religious life. This new stress on the importance of penance manifested itself, in part, in the production of penance books to train priests and preachers as confessors. Developments in moral theology in the twelfth century, an increased demand for preaching, more frequent penance,<sup>112</sup> and the need to train preachers and confessors in

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<sup>111</sup> "Ambulate in dilectione," Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.42r-43r.

"Sequebatur eum multitudo magna," Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.44r-45r.

<sup>112</sup> Penance in the earlier Middle Ages was probably relatively rare. This claim is somewhat controversial and has been questioned by some early medievalists including Sarah Hamilton and Robert Meens. Penance was rarely mentioned, a fact that led Alexander Murray in "Confession Before 1215," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6 (1993) 51-81, to suggest that penance in the Early Middle Ages was rare. Meens, however, suggests that the fact that confession was rarely mentioned could easily show that it was common, Robert Meens, "The Frequency and Nature of Early Medieval Penance," in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, eds. Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1998), 35-61; 54. The suggestion is interesting, but not entirely persuasive since penance in the later Middle Ages is generally accepted as regular and it is mentioned with relative frequency. So, if penance were common in the Early Middle Ages, we should expect that it would be more frequently mentioned, as indeed, it was in the Later Middle Ages. Second, even if successful, Meen's argument would not show that penance was common, only that the scarcity of references to penance do not count as evidence that penance was uncommon. It would still be left to produce a positive argument for the thesis that penance was common in the Early Middle Ages.

More persuasively, Sarah Hamilton has argued that penance was indeed an important concern at the time of the Gregorian Reformation. See Sarah Hamilton, "Penance in the Age of Gregorian Reform," *Studies in Church History*, 40 (2005), 47-73. This would help explain the concern for repentance and moral reform of

the new moral theology for these tasks meant that a trickle of preaching and penance aids<sup>113</sup> became ever more plentiful over the course of the thirteenth century. One of the earliest and most important thirteenth-century examples of this type of literature is the penance book of Thomas Chobham,<sup>114</sup> which he compiled around 1216 making use of Bible commentaries, the Church Fathers, church councils, penitential canons, and Gratian.<sup>115</sup>

Thomas Chobham fits with the greater theological interest in penance that began largely in the twelfth century when the development of moral theology led theologians to study a sacrament hitherto left largely to the canonists. Thomas (d. 1233-1236) was a theologian and subdean at Salisbury, who had studied at Paris. His own master, Peter the Chanter, had studied under Peter Lombard and known Peter Abelard.<sup>116</sup> Thomas returned to England in 1190/92, spending most of the rest of his career there, except for a period he spent as a master of theology at Paris between 1222 and 1228.<sup>117</sup> Chobham's manual follows in the Paris university tradition, being more theological in nature than legalistic. As Broomfield remarks, "the confessional manuals written by the canonists are predominately legalistic and casuistic, but that is not the case with Thomas'

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the twelfth century religious movement that grew at least in part out of the Gregorian Reformation.

<sup>113</sup> Among the earliest of the new style of penance books was that written by the late twelfth century Paris theologian Alan of Lille. After a career in the schools, Alan found himself troubled by both "negligence of prelates and the ignorance of priests," as well as the rarity of confession. He lamented that the laity and even the priests rarely confessed even once per year. See Jean Longere, "Theologie et pastorale de la penitence chez Alain de Lille," 30 *Citeaux Commentarii Cistercienses* (1979), 125-188; 150. In order to remedy this and improve the training of priest-confessors, Alan wrote his *Liber Poenitentialis* in four parts. On Alan see, G.R. Evans, *Alan of Lille: On the Frontiers of Theology in the Later Twelfth Century*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>114</sup> Thomas Chobham and F. Broomfield ed., *Thomae de Chobham: Summa Confessorum*, (Louvain; Paris, 1963).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., lxiii.

<sup>116</sup> *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. Verlag J.B. Metzler, Vol. 8, cols 715-716.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

handbook... he was educated at Paris and regarded himself as a theologian and his work as a theological treatise.”<sup>118</sup> Thomas’s *Summa Confessorum* was highly influential and successful with a very wide circulation. It was popular on the England and the continent north of the alps with an especially high number of surviving manuscripts in Germany.<sup>119</sup>

Thomas’s *Summa* contains some similarities in content to that of Peter the Chanter, but varies in style, being more popular rather than scholastic.<sup>120</sup> He uses many exempla as well, enhancing the popular and practical style of the work.<sup>121</sup> His primary goal was to provide a practical manual of pastoral care and to directly aid the priest in hearing confessions. His is not even merely a penance book, but “in effect, a manual of the pastoral care in general.”<sup>122</sup> Hence it differs from Servasanto’s since Servasanto’s *Penitentia* was intended primarily to provide for preaching on penance. Nonetheless, it still shows the same influence of moral theology and desire to improve pastoral care for the laity.

Raymond of Peñafort’s *Summa de penitentia* was more dry and academic in style than Thomas of Chobham’s own *summa* but, like Chobham’s *summa*, was intended to educate priests for hearing confessions.<sup>123</sup> It bear comparison to Servasanto because it

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<sup>118</sup> Broomfield ed., *Thomae de Chobham: Summa Confessorum*, xxi. “In the opening section on episcopal orders, he gives different theories of their nature, and leaves the problem with the remark that this is a matter for the decretalists, thereby disassociating himself from them. In the opening passage of the *summa* he tells us that since canon law had much to say on penance, it would sometimes be necessary to refer to the law. This could only be said by an author who regarded his book as a predominantly theological manual.”

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., lxxv. “It has been suggested that its vogue in Germany was due to the decree of the Council of Basle which ordered that a suitable manual for the instruction of the clergy should be read aloud at provincial synods.”

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., xxiii.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., xxiii-xiv. Broomfield comments that the exempla are told in a racy style that is “rather unedifying.”

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., xxiv.

<sup>123</sup> Broomfield ed., *Thomae de Chobham: Summa Confessorum*, xxv.

shows a more canonical style of writing that highlights even more Servasanto's similarity to Chobham in his pastoral and theological interests. In Raymond, the reader sees some modest differences from Chobham and some tendency to canon law that was limited in Chobham. Nonetheless, one should not overly stress the difference between the two as representing a sharp break between the canonist and the theologian. Raymond himself, like Gratian, used the new moral theology in his own work.<sup>124</sup> He stressed the importance of contrition, following the work of previous theologians who, until Aquinas, held that contrition essentially forgave the sin.<sup>125</sup> In his book, Raymond discussed the virtue and value of penance,<sup>126</sup> spoke of penance as a form of self punishment,<sup>127</sup> the three types of penance, public, solemn, and private, with his greatest stress being placed on private.<sup>128</sup> He gave advice to priests and penitents, urging the penitent to confess to his own priest,<sup>129</sup> and priests to take into account the personal circumstances of the penitent and the sin,<sup>130</sup> giving a method of interrogation for priests to use.<sup>131</sup>

In his work Raymond of Peñafort fit well with the continuing development of penitential theology since the twelfth century as well as fitting with the Fourth Lateran

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<sup>124</sup> Teetaert O Cap., *La Summa de Poenitentia*, 52. Teetaert suggests that the development of penitential doctrine and theology in the twelfth century happened primarily in the circles of the theologians until Gratian, who wrote on penance using both theology and canon law. From this point law and theology became intertwined with some works tending more toward one or the other, but without total separation or conflict between the two.

<sup>125</sup> Teetaert O Cap., *La Doctrine Penitentielle*, 144.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., (*poena tentio*).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 148. Mary Mansfield in *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), comments that public penance remained important in the thirteenth century contrary to many scholars previous assumption that it declined in importance with the twelfth and thirteenth century. Though some elements of public penance may have continued, many of the penance books seem to imply that the norm was private confession, while Servasanto da Faenza seems to assume that private confession is the norm.

<sup>129</sup> Teetaert O Cap., *La Doctrine Penitentielle*, 164.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 176. This included that the priest should consider the age and sex of the penitent, as well as issues like his or her freedom and knowledge concerning the confessed sin.



Council's efforts to ensure more frequent confession. He sought to do so, like Chobham, by preparing a popular penance book with which to prepare priests in need of instruction on how to administer the sacrament of penance.<sup>132</sup>

One might mention also the *Summa Penitentia* of another writer, Clair of Florence. Clair is noteworthy in part because he was a mid-thirteenth century canonist and contemporary of Servasanto, who also spent significant time in Florence. Clair wrote 20-30 years after Raymond of Peñafort. Like Raymond, he was a canon lawyer who studied canon law at Bologna; Clair served as papal penitencier under Pope Alexander IV and perhaps under his predecessor Pope Innocent IV as well.<sup>133</sup> He spent at least some time in Florence as well and Servasanto da Faenza even refers to Clair in his own *Summa de Penitentia*.<sup>134</sup> Around the same time Servasanto was writing his *Penitentia*, Clair was writing a penance book of his own though in a significantly different style. Like Raymond, Clair's book, the *Summa de casibus*, sometimes tends to the drier and more academic. He tends to proceed in a more formal question and answer format as opposed to Thomas's more popular style and seems more interested in casuistry.<sup>135</sup> Certainly, unlike Chobham, his is no complete manual of pastoral care, but does try to give answers

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<sup>132</sup> Raymond's *Summa* was tremendously influential in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Teetaert O. Cap. *La summa de poenitentia*... 71. Teetaert particularly mentions Raymond's influence on canonists writing on penance like Jean de Fribourg and the Dominican Berthold.

<sup>133</sup> "Clair de Florence: Canoniste et Penitencier Pontifical," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 33 (1939), 3-48; 43.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 45-46; also, *Penitentia* f.142r. "...fuit et Florentie quidam faber, qui pro quodam magistro suo in fide Paterinorum iam mortuo sepe Deum exorabat, ut quid de eo esset, sibi ostendere dignaretur. Qui ei quadam nocte per visionem apparuit, niger nimium et deformis et magnum illi timorem affligebat. Accessit ergo ad fratrum Clarum, cui tunc Florentie stabat, quid sibi acciderit, illi narrans. Qui dixit ei, cava ultra pro eo ores; de hoc quod egeris, confitere. Qui mox ut confessus fuit, ne ultra illi apparuit."

<sup>135</sup> "Clair de Florence," 30-31. For example, his work is organized by questions like: "utrum licet incantare infirmitates verbis bonis, preter symbolum et orationem dominicam, cum videamus aliquos pro huiusmodi carmine liberari. Respondeo quot non liceat..." or: "Utrum quis possit denarios heretici licite possidere."

to questions of what is the correct action in certain cases. His treatise is not unlike what one would expect from a canonist, and this combined with the relative scarcity of Chobham's own *Summa confessorum* in Italy may in part help to explain why Servasanto wrote his own penance book more concerned with moral theology.<sup>136</sup>

Like Chobham and unlike Clair, Servasanto wrote as a theologian rather than a canonist. Canon law plays little role in his work and he is generally uninterested in casuistry, thus distinguishing him at least somewhat from Raymond of Peñafort and Clair of Florence. Again like Chobham, his writing style is not scholastic, but popular, accessible, and written for ease of use. Again, the point must be reiterated not to distinguish them too sharply from Raymond, who certainly made use of theology in his work and prized both contrition and moral reform as well.<sup>137</sup> One interesting difference between Servasanto's own penance book and those of Raymond, Clair, and Thomas lies in that their penance books were designed to help the confessor hear confessions. Servasanto's penance book, however, was different in that he intended it not primarily to help a priest hear confessions, but to help them preach on penance. Like many of his contemporaries such as Thomas Chobham and Ranulphe of Houblonnière, Servasanto believed in the value of preaching penance, but he went further than each in preparing a specific extended treatise specifically devoted to the preaching of penance.

Servasanto's *Penitentia* survives in eleven manuscripts. In addition, several early inventories of Dominican houses list copies that are no longer extant. Where dated, the

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<sup>136</sup> It is not of course, the only reason, since Servasanto's penance book has the fascinating feature of being written not primarily for confession, but to allow preaching on penance.

<sup>137</sup> Teetaert, "La doctrine pénitentielle," 33-34.

manuscripts are mostly from the fourteenth century and many of them are Italian.<sup>138</sup> This concentration in Italy may be partly explained by the fact that Thomas Chobham's own penance book was most popular above the Alps,<sup>139</sup> which may have meant more room for an Italian penance book to be needed in Italy. Though most of the manuscripts are from the fourteenth century, Servasanto still seems to have enjoyed some popularity into the fifteenth century as his *Penitentia* was printed in 1475 as the *Antidotarius Anime*.<sup>140</sup> The fifteenth-century printing of earlier preaching material, specifically sermon collections, deserves greater attention, as David D'Avray has observed.<sup>141</sup> The survival of medieval preaching material in early print editions provides one way of assessing the continued influence of a text.<sup>142</sup> That the *Penitentia* was chosen for an early print editions speaks to the continued influence of Servasanto's work.

### *Liber de virtutibus et de vitiis*

The *Liber de virtutibus et de vitiis* (henceforth, *De virtutibus*) is the latest of Servasanto's treatises and possibly the last of his extant writings as he is believed to have finished it shortly before his death.<sup>143</sup> Oliger called it a mature work, written in Servasanto's advanced age. It evidently followed the *De exemplis* and the *Penitentia* in order. In his prologue to the *Penitentia* Servasanto referred to the *De exemplis* and how

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<sup>138</sup> See my Appendix One. This includes manuscripts at Padua, Florence, Naples, the Vatican, Turin, while inventories also list several at Bologna, though none of these are extant.

<sup>139</sup> Broomfield, *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, lxxv.

<sup>140</sup> Servasanto da Faventia, *Antidotarius Animae*, (Louvain: Johann de Paderborn (Westphalia), 1485).

<sup>141</sup> David d'Avray, "Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons," *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History, and Sanctity*, ed. Nicole Bériou and David d'Avray, (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994), 3-19; 14. Though d'Avray made the remark about sermon collections specifically, Servasanto's *Penitentia* is so close to that genre that many of the same considerations apply.

<sup>142</sup> D'Avray, "Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons," 14.

<sup>143</sup> Frison, "Fra Servasanto da Faenza," 311.

he wished the *Penitentia* to expand upon his discussion of penance in that book, but he said nothing about another virtues book.<sup>144</sup> Servasanto similarly occasionally refers to his *Penitentia* in his *De virtutibus*, indicating that the former must have already been written. In a discussion on the value of obedience, he remarks that “concerning latría, dulia, and hyperdulia, it is not fitting to say much here since in our other books, he who wishes can find them. In the book of penance, I recall that I have spoken abundantly of them.”<sup>145</sup>

The *De virtutibus* survives in four manuscripts, three of them Italian, besides having several other copies listed in late medieval or early modern inventories of religious houses. Inventories suggest that a copy existed at Padua, hardly surprising given the survival of several of Servasanto’s treatises and sermons there.<sup>146</sup> Other libraries that owned now lost copies were those of Carmelites at Florence and the Sforza dukes of Milan.<sup>147</sup>

Like the *De exemplis* and *Penitentia*, Servasanto wrote the *De virtutibus* as preaching material. He says so directly in the epilogue when he begs the reader not to impute to pride the many things that he has dared to write “if I should prepare for [my brothers] material for preaching.”<sup>148</sup> Further, in the prologue, Servasanto explains that he wrote the *De virtutibus* not solely on his own initiative, but at the request of his fellow friars. He explained that

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<sup>144</sup> *Penitentia*, f.1r.

<sup>145</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.128v., “Nam de latría, hyperdulia, dulia, non oportet hic dicere, quia in multis aliis nostris libris poterit qui voverit invenire. De in libro nostro de penitentia habudanter recolo me dixisse.”

<sup>146</sup> Such as two copies of his *Penitentia*, (Ms Padua Ant 404; 458) and a copy of his *de sanctis* sermons (Ms. Padua Ant. 490).

<sup>147</sup> See my Appendix One.

<sup>148</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.142v. “Ergo quod tam multa scribere ausus sum, non inputetur, precor, superbie... si eis ad predicandum materiam preparem.”

though I have made a great book concerning these things, or more precisely, I have written with God illuminating me, the poor brothers were unable to have it; [so] having been asked that I should take from it some of the more useful things, I disposed myself, with Christ and his blessed mother aiding me, with divine love compelling me, to assent to the common benefit.<sup>149</sup>

The request by his fellow friars that Servasanto provide them with further preaching material suggests that they had found his previous material useful and that they probably considered him to be an effective preacher himself. It further illustrates the continued demand for preaching material on the virtues and vices and the idea that a central purpose of preaching was moral reform and improving the holiness of a preacher's audience.

The format, style, and content of his *De virtutibus* book suggests that the work was intended as a more complete development of the *De exemplis* book. Unlike the *De exemplis*, which was largely a collection of exempla and similitudes, the *De virtutibus* is more like Servasanto's *Penitentia*, in that it is a more complete preaching book, consisting of reasons, authorities, and subdivisions that a preacher might use. The chapters are divided in various ways, but common ones are to take a certain topic for preaching, such as greed, and then have chapters listing "by what reasons it is apparent that avarice must be detested," "that avarice must be detested [is shown] by scripture and nature."<sup>150</sup> Besides sometimes dividing a topic according to "reasons for x," authorities for x," "exempla for x," Servasanto sometimes divides topics according to their different aspects. In his section on pride, for instance, he writes sections on how pride relates a

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., f. 1r., "Sed quia magnum librum de hiis omnibus feci, imo illuminante me Domino conscripsi, set a pauperibus fratribus non possit haberi; rogatus ut inde quedam utiliora exciperem, disposui me Christo iuvante et beatissima eius matre, utilitati communi annuere, Domini me caritate cogente."

<sup>150</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.99v, "Quibus rationibus avaritia apareat detestanda..." f.100r, "Quare avaritiam detestatur sacra scriptura et natura."

man to the devil and to his neighbor,<sup>151</sup> to God,<sup>152</sup> the foolishness of pride,<sup>153</sup> the different forms of pride,<sup>154</sup> and different forms of pride like that in beauty of appearance<sup>155</sup> among others.

In this way Servasanto was able to write a complete preaching treatise on the virtues and vices. He wrote a short section at the beginning on Christian doctrine just as he did with his *De exemplis*.<sup>156</sup> Here he wrote little about penance, as there was no need given his prior *Penitentia*; rather the bulk of his material was spent on the virtues and vices. He had already expanded on his discussion of penance and this was his chance to expand on the virtues and vices. The *De virtutibus* then, functions both as a development of Servasanto's *De exemplis* and as an important complement to his *Penitentia*, a chance to do for his discussion on the virtues and vices what he had previously done for penance in his treatise on the subject.

Servasanto's *De virtutibus* has certain similarities to the Franciscan John of Wales's *Communiloquium*. John was an Oxford University theologian who knew Bonaventure and devoted much of his time to the production of preaching aids.<sup>157</sup> Details about John's life are limited, though probably a lector at Oxford from 1259-62 and he died in 1285, which would put him in the same generation of friars as Servasanto

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., f.82r, "quomodo superbia se habeat ad dyabolum et ad proximum."

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., f.83r, "quomodo superbum se habeat ad deum."

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., f.84r, "de pluribus stultitiis superborum."

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., f.86r, "de prima specie superbie qua homo bona quae habet credit habere a se"; f.86v, "de secunda specie superbie qua homo credit bona quae habet habere meritis suis"; f.87r, "de tertia specie superbie qua homo credit se habere bona quae non accepit"; f.87v, "De IIII specie superbie qua homo preferre se aliis quam sit stultum."

<sup>155</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.90v, "quomodo de pulchritudine carnis stultum est superbie."

<sup>156</sup> *De virtutibus*. This material is contained in distinction 2, and includes material on the existence of the soul 13v-15r, the Resurrection of the Body 15r-17r, the Incarnation 13r-13v.

<sup>157</sup> Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales: A Study of the Works and Ideas of a Thirteenth-Century Friar*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. John of Wales helps to illustrate the role of the university theologians in the production of preaching treatises.

da Faenza.<sup>158</sup>

One of John's most popular preaching works was his *Communiloquium*, of which 144 manuscript copies survive from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries across Europe.<sup>159</sup> John understood that the burden of knowledge on a preacher was a high one if he was to preach effectively. He wrote that because preachers often have limited time, however, he is here providing collected material for them.<sup>160</sup> This preaching is a primary duty of churchmen who must preach, live a good life in order to improve their preaching, and to be a virtuous example to the laity.<sup>161</sup> The preacher ought to urge the foulness of sin, pointing that if even gentiles hated sin because of its ugliness, how much more ought Christians to despise it? Besides preaching sin as disgusting, John urges the preacher to encourage fighting sin by means of penance and development of the virtues, thus linking the virtues and vices with penance.<sup>162</sup>

John's wrote his *Communiloquium* in a heavily *ad status* style, that is, organized according to the groups of people for whom he offered advice.<sup>163</sup> This style of organization was more unusual in the model sermon collections of the time,<sup>164</sup> but by writing in this way, John was able to arm the preacher, who might often be a travelling friar, with advice for anyone he might meet or preach to, regardless of his station.<sup>165</sup>

Besides the *ad status* style of his work, John was fond of using *exempla* concerning the

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., "Chapter 1. Career of John of Wales."

<sup>159</sup> Swanson, *John of Wales*, 213; see chapter 8 for Swanson's discussion of John's influence and popularity, 201-225.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., Chapters 4-6. In part one John wrote on the state and its members, in parts two and three John wrote on secular society, and in parts four through seven, he wrote advice for scholars and churchmen.

<sup>164</sup> In Schneyer's *Repertorium*, sermons collections for Sundays or feast days far outnumber *ad status* collections.

<sup>165</sup> Swanson, *John of Wales*, 138.

ancients. He liked to use them as moral examples and was fond of remarking that if the ancients, who were gentiles and hence lacked the benefit of Christian revelation, could behave so well, how much better ought Christians to be able to act.<sup>166</sup> Like John, Servasanto liked to use classical exempla, mixing them regularly with patristic and contemporary ones.<sup>167</sup>

The broadest similarity, of course, between Servasanto's *De virtutibus* and John's *Communiloquium* is the shared concern to prepare a book on preaching the virtues and vices to the laity in order to bring about their moral reform. Their vast handbooks were meant to help the busy preacher by providing him with preaching material that, as Swanson says, would allow a traveling friar to have "positive and telling advice for any man, whatever his problem."<sup>168</sup>

Unlike John, however, Servasanto organized his treatise according to the virtues and vices and then subdivided according to different aspects of them, such as "how humility is commended," "to what things humility is similar," and "on the causes of humility."<sup>169</sup> John was somewhat more unusual for preaching material in a more *ad status* fashion, where he wrote advice largely according to different groups of people as when in a distinction on relationships in a family, he gives advice for parents, children, siblings, before, in what could be advice for any of those groups, suggesting that as men

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<sup>166</sup> Swanson, *John of Wales*, 168, "by the life of the gentiles, the life of those under the law is rebuked." For an example from Servasanto, see *De virtutibus* f.40v., in a discussion on the love of neighbor, Servasanto remarks that both pagans and animals love their neighbor, whence the Lord said: "do not the publicans do the same."

<sup>167</sup> Swanson, *John of Wales*, 39. Though I should not go so with Servasanto far as Swanson did with John when she called him a "classicizing friar."

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>169</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.77v, "quibus rebus humilitas commendatur," f.79v, "de commendatione humilitatis per aliam viam;" f.80r, "de causis humilitatis ex diversis acceptis et primo a terra."



love their natural family, so they should love their spiritual family of Christians.<sup>170</sup>

All of Servasanto's treatises and the vast majority of his sermons remain unedited. Since a thorough comparison of all extant manuscripts of each work is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I have based my analysis on manuscript copies of each work that recommend themselves for their early date, legibility, and accessibility in major European libraries.<sup>171</sup>

Following chapters study Servasanto as a friar from the mid-thirteenth century preaching penance and moral reform to society at large and preparing his fellow brothers to do likewise. As an influential local figure, who carried out a ministry of preaching and hearing confessions and who wrote treatises and sermons to prepare others to do so, Servasanto is an example of influential preaching on penance and moral reform from the mid-thirteenth century. The similar emphasis on penance to be found in other important thirteenth-century preachers, such as Thomas Chobham and John of Wales, further suggests that he was rather typical for his time. He fits well with the development of penitential thought and preaching from the twelfth century and thus seems in essentials to be a valuable representative of that penitential thought as it was held by preachers who were learned even if not themselves among the university intellectual elite. His material thereby helps to contribute to what D'Avray called the history of attitudes, that is, the history of the ideas of the articulate that lie "between the histories of creative thinkers and

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<sup>170</sup> Swanson, *John of Wales*, 111- 113.

<sup>171</sup> *De exemplis*, Ms Firenze Naz. conv. soppr. G.I.695 (probably 14th century, since similar hand as *De virtutibus*). *De virtutibus*, Ms Firenze Naz. conv. soppr. E.VI.1046 (early 14th century). *Penitentia*, Ms Firenze Naz. conv. soppr. G.VI.773 (14th century). *Sermones dominicales*, Vat. Lat. 5933 (13th century). *Sermones de sanctis*, Vat. Lat. 9884 (14th century). *Sermones de communi sanctorum* Vat. Lat. 1261 (13th/14th century).

of popular beliefs.”<sup>172</sup> The rest of this study will examine Servasanto’s attitudes on and presentation of penitential thought and moral theology with an eye as well to how he presents the material, what impression of it he would have conveyed, and how his preaching might have been received by his audiences, both lay and clerical.

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<sup>172</sup> D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 259.

## Chapter 2: Servasanto da Faenza's Interest in Preaching Penance

The introduction to Servasanto's life and works in the previous chapter, along with the history of the friars minor, suggests that Servasanto himself was interested in preaching penance and moral reform to society and preparing his fellow preachers to do so. He wrote a full treatise dedicated solely to the preaching of penance and another primarily to preaching on the virtues and vices. The friars' own roles in society as preachers and confessors is well known,<sup>1</sup> along with Francis's own preaching of repentance. That a third-generation Franciscan like Servasanto should show an interest in preaching repentance is not very surprising, though it seems to have often been overlooked by historians pursuing other legitimate fields of inquiry such as Franciscan debates over poverty.<sup>2</sup> Given the friars' widespread ministry to society, their interests and emphases are of great importance for indicating what their ministry looked like and what message the laity was getting as David d'Avray has illustrated with regard to marriage.<sup>3</sup> The next several chapters will be concerned with the mendicant message about penance as seen in the works of Servasanto da Faenza. It will be the burden of this chapter, therefore, to show that penance was central to Servasanto's thought, to his preaching, and to his conception of the friars' ministry. This is evident in how penance appears in his sermons and treatises, the prized place it held in his theology of Christianity, and how he wrote penitential sermons even for Sundays where the reading

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Robson, "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors: the Pastoral Impact of the Friars," *A History of Pastoral Care*, (London; New York, Cassell, 2000), 126-147.

<sup>2</sup> As I observe in my introduction. See, for example, Malcolm Lambert's *Franciscan Poverty* (S.C.K., 1961).

<sup>3</sup> David d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

might not obviously suggest a penitential theme.

## PENANCE IN SERVASANTO'S WRITINGS

### *Liber de exemplis naturalibus*

In the previous chapter, I briefly introduced the *De exemplis* as a whole. It was evidently Servasanto's earliest treatise, being primarily a collection of exempla written in three parts of increasing length, on Christian doctrine, the sacraments, and the virtues and vices.<sup>4</sup> In this second section of the work, on the sacraments of the Church, Servasanto's interest in penance is evident from the amount of space he devoted to it in comparison to the other sacraments. In the chapter list of part two on the sacraments,<sup>5</sup> he has only one heading on baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist, respectively,<sup>6</sup> but eleven sections on penance:

- On penance and first concerning the fear in which it is conceived 4.
- On penance and its utility 5.
- On false penance 6.
- On the three parts of penance and first concerning contrition 7.
- On confession 8.
- On satisfaction of works 9.
- On the three already spoken of parts of penance together 10.
- On the ways of satisfaction and first concerning prayer 11.
- On alms, the spiritual as much as the corporal and first concerning the spiritual 12.
- On corporal alms 13.
- On fasting, the spiritual as much as the corporal 14.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Grabmann, "Der Liber de exemplis naturalibus des Franziskanertheologen Servas Sanctus," *Franziskanische Studien*, 7 (1920), 85-117.

<sup>5</sup> On which see *De exemplis*, f.101r, as well as a published list in Grabmann, "Der Liber de exemplis naturalibus," 98-101.

<sup>6</sup> De baptismo 1, De sacramento confirmationis 2, De sacramento eucharistie 3.

<sup>7</sup> De penitentia et primo de timore in quo concipitur 4.  
De penitentia et utilitatibus eius 5.

Where Servasanto considered one chapter apiece sufficient ink to spill to discuss baptism, confirmation, and even the Eucharist, as well as orders, extreme unction, and marriage, he spent eleven times that amount on the sacrament of penance, which suggests that he considered preaching that sacrament of particular importance compared to the others. By way of comparison, Peter Lombard, the twelfth-century scholastic theologian, in Book Four of his *Sententiae*, spent 50 chapters on questions surrounding penance, more than almost any other of the seven sacraments. Lombard, however, also spent 42 chapters on baptism, and 25 each on the Eucharist and orders, and 80 on marriage and related questions.<sup>8</sup> The space that Lombard dedicated to penance is indeed substantial, but it does not dwarf the space devoted to other sacraments. That Servasanto, in his own discussion of the sacraments, devoted the vast majority of his space to penance suggests an overwhelming concern with the sacrament of penance even in this, his earliest work.

A second indication that penance was central to Servasanto's thinking is that the ideas and exempla found in *De exemplis* are often repeated in his later treatises and sermons. One aspect of penance to which he devoted considerable attention was its utility. This section of the treatise is made up of a series of exempla and similitudes designed to show the need for and value of penance. For instance, he mentions that even

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De falsa penitentia 6.

De tribus partibus penitentiae et primo de contritione 7.

De confessione 8.

De satisfactione operis 9.

De tribus iam dictis partibus penitentiae simul 10.

De tribus modis satisfaciendi et primo de oratione 11.

De eleemosyna tam spirituali quam corporali et primo de spirituali 12.

De eleemosyna corporali 13.

De ieiunio tam spirituali quam corporali 14.

<sup>8</sup> Magistri Petri Lombardi, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, (Grottaferrata: Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971); This comes from the chapter list provided in vol. 1 part 2, 40-51. Lombard's discussion of the sacraments is found in the fourth book of his *Sententiae*.

the ancient pagans knew God to be offended by sin and that penance must be done,

All the ancient philosophers, both infidel and pagan supposed that penance had to be done, for just as they knew the existence of God, so too they supposed that one to be offended by their sins and so that penance must be done for divine offence. They taught therefore, that it must be noted that penance is formative of all good and also life-giving, that it expels death, causes divine delights, destroys all stain... and causes the devil to flee.<sup>9</sup>

In short, even the ancient pagans, lacking both Jesus Christ and divine revelation, knew that God was offended by sin and that penance was of value for removing it.<sup>10</sup>

Servasanto at this point does not tell the reader to which ancient pagans he is referring, but this is hardly surprising in a collection of exempla intended for preaching. He makes similar points as well in his sermons, to which I will return more in the next chapter and in some cases, he does indeed name the specific example or author to which he is referring.<sup>11</sup>

Other exempla deal with the idea of penance as a medicine that, though it seem bitter at first, cures men and saves them from death. “Likewise,” Servasanto writes, “penance expels death and dryness, and introduces life. Indeed, often beasts and especially men are cured from danger of death and returned to life through a bitter medicine.” Likewise, Servasanto suggests, penance is that bitter medicine that restores a

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<sup>9</sup> *De exemplis*, f.20v, “penitentiam esse posuerunt omnes antiqui philosophi et infideles et pagani, nam sicut deum esse cognoscuerunt sic peccatis ipsum offendi posuerunt et ideo pro divina offensa penitendum esse posuerunt docuerunt est ergo notandum quod penitentia est bonorum omnium planativa et vivificativa sive mortis expulsiva et intime dulce divinis causativa et omnis macule pugnativa... et diaboli fugativa...

<sup>10</sup> Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales: a Study of the Works and Ideas of the Thirteenth Century Friar*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), also finds John of Wales doing the same thing, suggesting that if even pagans can behave so virtuously, how much better ought Christians be able to act.

<sup>11</sup> As in a St. Andrew Sermon, “Proposito Sibi,” in Vat. Lat. 9884, f.40v-43r., when he refers to an exemplum showing Alexander the Great’s own patience in suffering as a boy.

man to health.<sup>12</sup> This accounts for only a small sample of the sort of exempla Servasanto offers for his brothers to use in their preaching on penance, but they help to show his interest in preaching penance. The different ways in which he preached penance and the overall picture of penance conveyed by Servasanto's preaching will await later chapters, but for now, these sorts of exempla and similitudes, frequently used, suggest significant interest in preaching penance. That Servasanto made such heavy use of them in his *De exemplis* and devoted so much space, relative to the other sacraments, to exempla and similitudes on penance indicate a work where the material was clearly intended to allow preacher to reach the laity on penance. That Servasanto considered penance to be such an important theme in preaching supports the claim that penance was central to his own thought. Finally, the number and kind of exempla in this his earliest treatise suggest an important point of similarity between Servasanto's treatise and his sermons, a point to which I will return shortly.

### *Summa de Penitentia*

Servasanto's second treatise, his *Summa de Penitentia*, best shows the centrality of penance to his thought and his sense of its importance in being linked with the friars' preaching mission. Though, as noted in Chapter One, Servasanto spent the vast majority of the *De exemplis* section on the sacraments discussing the sacrament of penance, he clearly considered what he had written to be insufficient and so wrote another treatise, the *Penitentia*, to serve as a more complete preaching treatise on the subject. Indeed,

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<sup>12</sup> *De exemplis*, f.21r. "Item penitentia est mortis et ariditatis expulsiva et vite introductiva. Sepe enim animalia et maxime homo curatur a periculo mortis dum per medicinam amaram ad vitam redit."

Servasanto explicitly calls this a treatise intended for the preaching of penance.<sup>13</sup> It is divided into seventeen distinctions, which include, for example:

The fifth distinction gives many motives to penance.

The sixth distinction teaches how useful penance is.

The seventh distinction teaches that repentance must be done in three ways.

The fourteenth distinction [teaches] how temptations must be resisted.<sup>14</sup>

The distinctions suggest a work intended to be a comprehensive treatise on preaching penance that includes material on sin and motives to penance, the value of penance, its parts, and even the virtue of patience and value of temptation, designed to help prepare the reader to avoid future sin.

The *Penitentia* shows signs of being a complement to the *De exemplis* as Servasanto sometimes repeats, in the *Penitentia*, exempla and similitudes already found in the *De exemplis*. One such repeated dictum is that even animals will repent when they offend their lords. Servasanto writes that “if apes offend their king, then they expect his

<sup>13</sup> *Penitentia*, f.1r, “Quoniam in libello de exemplis naturalibus a me scripto, dictavi de penitentia quaedam pauca cum sit eius materia valde lata praedicationi aptissima et conversioni peccatorum utilissima sicut cotidiana probant exempla. Ideo dignum dixi Christi deum iuvante me gratia sive potius omnia faciente illis quae sunt scriptata super addere ista presenti tractatulo anotanda.

<sup>14</sup> The full list taken from just after the prologue in *Penitentia*, f.5v, is as follows:

1. distinctio prima docet esse deum in essentia unum sed in personis trium.
2. docet deum fecisse hominem rectum sed obliquasse se per peccatum.
3. ponit occasiones ad lapsum quibus homo inducitur ad peccandum.
4. docet quam totius esse a peccato surgendum.
5. ponit multiplex motivum ad penitendum.
6. docet quam sit penitere utilissimum.
7. docet quod tribus modiis est penitendum.
8. docet quo sit primo de peccato dolendum.
9. docet quod peccatum est confitendum.
10. docet quod sit deo satisfaciendum.
11. docet quo sit orandum.
12. docet quomodo sit eleemosynas insistendum.
13. docet quod sit penitentibus ieiunandum.
14. quomodo sit temptationibus resistendum.
15. quomodo sit temptari utilimum.
16. quomodo scutum pacientia sit portandum.
17. quarum exemplorum est imitandum.



wrath on themselves and with the blow of their own barbs, they kill themselves.”<sup>15</sup>

Likewise, “dogs would feel so ashamed if the hare fled from their throats that they would scarcely dare to lift their faces to their masters.”<sup>16</sup> Exempla were considered useful for preaching and Servasanto is not hesitant to use them showing, as in his *De exemplis*, a fondness for animal exempla and exempla of other sorts as well.

In contrast to the *De exemplis*, however, Servasanto does not only use exempla in the *Penitentia*, but includes subchapters with reasons, authorities, and the examples of saints to support his preaching material on the value of penance. In the section in the *De exemplis* on the utility of penance discussed above, for instance, Servasanto simply provides a list of various sorts of exempla for his fellow preachers to use. In the *Penitentia*, his writing on the value of penance in distinction six, occupies far more space and is more comprehensive. In the *De exemplis*, ideas designed to convince people that while penance might appear hard and difficult, it was still beneficial, generally took the form of similitudes and exempla. In many, for instance, he compared it to a bitter medicine or related plant exemplum. In the *Penitentia*, he includes many of these exempla, but also some explanation and reference to authority. For instance, he begins with a reference to the desert fathers who lived harsh lives in deserted places, yet benefited spiritually. Servasanto explains that this is because, “as the apostle says, the flesh and spirit are in conflict against each other,<sup>17</sup> wherefore while the body is afflicted, the soul is consoled through the contrary, and while the body grows lean in poverty, the

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<sup>15</sup> *Penitentia*, f.120r., “Apes si regem offenderent de se ipsis ultionem expetunt et ictu proprii aculei se occidunt [sic se occidunt se occidunt].”

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., “Canes sic verecundantur si de faucibus eorum lepus effugiat ut faciam ad dominum elevare vix audeant.”

<sup>17</sup> Presumably, Servasanto is referring to Galatians 5:17, “caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritum spiritus autem adversus carnem haec enim invicem adversantur ut non quaecumque vultis illa faciatis.”

spirit grows sleek on the inside.”<sup>18</sup> Later, he argues similarly that penitential grace heals the soul, saving it from death and similarly includes a mix of exempla and argument.<sup>19</sup> He is still very heavy on exempla, reflecting the purpose of this treatise as a preaching treatise, but supplements them with explanation and argument. He explains that “one contrary or one opposing thing is not expelled unless by the coming of another,” attributing this to the authority of philosophers and to experience.<sup>20</sup> He applies this to sin and grace, arguing that since one or the other must always be in the soul, the introduction of spiritual grace opposes sin: “penance therefore, returns the soul to health through grace.”<sup>21</sup> The arguments are simple and easy enough to follow. Together they help form a more complete treatise for the preaching of penance and show Servasanto’s concern to do so.

Despite its title, penance is not the only topic treated in *De penitentia*. Servasanto also includes sections on the Eucharist and questions surrounding it, and reflections on prayer, especially the seven petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.<sup>22</sup> Inclusion of these other elements helps to make the *Penitentia* a more complete treatise of pastoral care. When discussing the fourth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, Servasanto turns largely to the Eucharist<sup>23</sup> and presence of Jesus therein, writing the chapters, “here follows the fourth

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<sup>18</sup> *Penitentia*, f.124r-124v. “Sed caro et spiritus iuxta quod dicit apostolus sibi invicem adversantur. Quare dum corpus affligitur anima per contrarium consolatur et dum macie corpus atteritur spiritus interior inpinguatur.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., “...penitentia est anime sanativa, quia dum penitentialis gratia anime advenit a morbis omnibus sanam reddit.”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., f.128r. “Non enim expellitur unum contrarium sive unum opponitorum nisi per alterius adventum...”

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., “...Et simul sunt forte introductio gratie et expulsio culpe. Penitentia ergo dum animam per gratiam sanam reddit.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., ff.152r-163r.

<sup>23</sup> On the Eucharist in the Middle Ages see, Miri, Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

petition of the Lord's Prayer,"<sup>24</sup> "reason and authority shows the body of Christ to truly be in the altar,"<sup>25</sup> "reason shows that the body of Christ is in the altar,"<sup>26</sup> "that the body of Christ is shown in the altar is shown by sure experience of those who have seen the body."<sup>27</sup> Responding to heretics who say that the Eucharist is only a sign,<sup>28</sup> Servasanto responds with a series of reasons, authorities, and exempla, designed to show the real presence on the altar. He argues, for instance, that since the bread actually effects a life of grace and protects one from fault (*culpa*), it cannot be merely a sign.<sup>29</sup> Later, he provides miraculous exempla in support of this claim.<sup>30</sup>

This material on the Eucharist is evidently intended to enable the friar to offer some basic doctrinal instruction to laymen who had the potential to be skeptical.<sup>31</sup> His attention to the subject is not surprising in a Franciscan preacher. St. Francis had been strongly devoted to the Eucharist, urging proper reverence for it by priest, friar, and laity alike.<sup>32</sup> At around the same time, the Fourth Lateran Council linked the two, commanding the laity to confess and receive the Eucharist annually, the former a condition of the latter. Hence, that Servasanto should have spilled some ink on the Eucharist in a book devoted to penance is not very surprising, for he would have seen the

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<sup>24</sup> *Penitentia*, 157r., "Sequitur quarta petitio dominice orationis."

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 157v., "Ratio et auctoritas quod corpus Christi vere est in altari."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 158v., "Ratio ostenditur quod corpus Christi vere est in altari."

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 159r., "Quod corpus Christi vere sit in altari probat experientia certo corpus qui viderit."

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 157v., "Sed hereticus respondebit hoc dictum esse significationem..."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 158r., "...sed ille verus panis efficit in hominibus vitam gratie, quia est panis vite et conservat a morte culpa quia qui manducat ex eo non moritur..."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, f.159v, here SS includes the exempla of a devil forced to genuflect when it encountered the Eucharist.

<sup>31</sup> And possibly to his fellow priests as well. St. Francis was reportedly scandalized at how casually some priests treated the Eucharist. Augustine Thompson has referred to "Francis's anger at slipshod priestly service." Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 62.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-63.

two as naturally linked, a fact evident by his reference to the power of the Eucharist to confer grace and protect from sin. Thus, this material on the Eucharist, which one might think a separate topic, is linked to penance and shows the importance of penance to Servasanto;<sup>33</sup> second, it shows the importance of penance more broadly, if penance was to be a condition of receiving the Eucharist.

Like the Eucharist, Servasanto's sections on Mary, the saints, and angels could appear initially surprising in a book on penance. Part of the greatness of the saints lay in how they were examples to follow; Mary Magdalen, for instance, was a popular model of penance.<sup>34</sup> The Virgin Mary, however, had no need of penance and angels either lacked the need or the ability.<sup>35</sup> Why then, in a penance book, should Servasanto write on "The excellence of the Mother of God above all creatures"?<sup>36</sup> Why so much on angels?<sup>37</sup> The answer may lie in the role of saints and angels as helpers in the divine economy of salvation. Servasanto writes that Mary's prayers free one from both visible and invisible enemies and placate the anger of the divine judge, which indeed, nothing else could do.<sup>38</sup> Her intercession gives man secure entry to God: just as the son stands before the Father, so the mother before the Son.<sup>39</sup> In this way the prayers of Mary could help a man repent

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<sup>33</sup> Eucharistic piety of the time often seems to have been inseparable from penitential piety as many penitential organizations, for instance, required their members to confess and receive the Eucharist monthly, far more than the minimum required by the Church. See, as one example, John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 113. Henderson comments, for instance, how Franciscan preaching on Christ's suffering increased "to persuade the friars' congregations to take communion more frequently and to undertake penitential exercises."

<sup>34</sup> As in Katherine Jansenn's, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also my Chapter 4.

<sup>35</sup> *ST I.Q.64.art.2* "...It is said (Psalm 73:23): 'The pride of them that hate Thee, ascendeth continually;' and this is understood of the demons. Therefore they remain ever obstinate in their malice."

<sup>36</sup> *Penitentia*, f.67r.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, f.73v., and f.75v.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, f.67r., "... precibus ab hostibus visibilibus et invisibilibus liberamur... quis placare posset iudicis summi iram nisi hac existeret advocata..."

<sup>39</sup> *Penitentia*, f.67r. "...securum habes accessum o homo ad deum ubi habes matrem ante filium et filium

by praying for him to her son and by helping to placate the judge angered by sin. With so powerful an intercessor to aid him, a person should have little hesitation to repent.

Likewise, angels could aid men in doing penance and gaining salvation. They could inspire one to goodness,<sup>40</sup> like the Virgin Mary could. They could also intercede for man with God by carrying man's prayers to him. These prayers are to be prayers of sorrow for sin. Servasanto makes this evident by referring to the angel Raphael who spoke to Tobias, *when you prayed with tears, I bore your prayers before God* (Tobias 12:12).<sup>41</sup> For Servasanto the phrase "praying with tears" can only be understood as reference to a contrite prayer, where one showed sorrow for his sin. Hence, he is able to present the angels as man's helpers by carrying their contrite prayers to God, thus explaining the importance of angels at least partly in terms of aiding human penance.

The fourteenth century saw the development of the cult of guardian angels as well as the continued importance of the cult of the saints. Guardian angels provided a personal intercessor between God and man,<sup>42</sup> and were central helpers in the fight against personal sin.<sup>43</sup> The saints too aided in the economy of salvation at the time, through the treasury of merits (formally adumbrated in 1343),<sup>44</sup> whereby the superabundance of merit built up by the saints could be distributed by the Church to aid the faithful in making satisfaction for their sins.<sup>45</sup> Indulgences, made possible by the merits of the saints, helped the faithful to complete their penance in the present life. Hence, the importance of

ante patrem. Mater ostendit filio pectus et ubera, filius patri latus et vulnera nullaque potest esse repulsa ubi tot concurrunt in signa caritatis quando inquit misereri non posset mater omnipotentie..."

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., f.73v

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., f.75v. "...quando orabas cum lacrimis ego obtuli oratione tuam coram domino."

<sup>42</sup> R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe c.1215-1515*, (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>43</sup> Swanson, *Religion and Devotion*, 194.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>45</sup> R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion*, 37.

these two aspects of later medieval religious life, saints and angels, is explained at least in part by their link to penance. Certainly, this seems to be the case for Servasanto. These later medieval developments can be seen at an earlier stage in Servasanto's *Penitentia* where he includes material on both saints (especially the Virgin Mary) and the angels, not just as exemplars to follow, but also as intercessors for a sinful mankind.

Servasanto's *Summa de Penitentia*, a treatise dedicated to the preaching of penance and one full of reason, authority, and exempla, therefore, serves as strong evidence of the centrality of penance to Servasanto's own thought and his sense of his and his fellow friars' mission. It provided Servasanto's fellow friars with material for preaching on sin, on the need for and value of penance, on the parts of penance, forms of satisfaction like prayer, alms, and fasting, and on other basic doctrinal issues. In aiming at comprehensiveness, Servasanto's treatise ultimately indicates how central penance was to his thinking about Christian doctrine and practice more broadly.

#### *Summa de virtutibus et de vitiis*

In Servasanto's last treatise, the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto does not repeat much of the material in the *Penitentia*, but instead occasionally refers the reader there for further information.<sup>46</sup> He does write about confession and penance, however, in several important respects, mostly under his discussion on the sin of sloth. After writing several chapters on the danger of delaying one's conversion to God,<sup>47</sup> Servasanto wrote two chapters more specifically of the danger of delaying confession of one's sins. Hence in

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<sup>46</sup> For example, *De virtutibus*, f.128v, "Nam de latria, hyperdulia, dulia, non oportet hic dicere, quia in multis aliis nostris libris poterit qui volverit invenire. De in libro nostro de penitentia habudanter recolo me dixisse."

<sup>47</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.117v-- 119r.

these sections, he is concerned with the aspect of *penitentia* that deals with confession to a priest, that is, the exterior aspect of penance.<sup>48</sup> In “concerning delayed confession,”<sup>49</sup> and “concerning those who do not wish to confess except in death,”<sup>50</sup> Servasanto urges against what he writes is the foolishness of delaying confession. In the section entitled, “concerning delayed confession,” he lists several reasons in support of his claim. God knows one’s sins anyway, so to try to hide them is foolish;”<sup>51</sup> good comes from confession and one ought to desire this good and hence confess.<sup>52</sup> In a similar vein, he argues that man should desire confession since it cleanses him from filth. “What indeed,” Servasanto asks, “is confession unless a certain cleansing from sordid things?” Indeed, “nothing is cured while they wait for many years to confess. A horse falls in mud and is pulled out, a man falls and again and again he is soiled...” Even elephants wash themselves from stains.”<sup>53</sup> Though this treatise is specifically about the virtues and vices rather than about penance, Servasanto is still sufficiently interested in penance to take some time, in his discussion on the vice of sloth, to provide preaching material that could be used to urge on the laity the necessity of confession.

In fact, for Servasanto, sloth primarily seems to manifest itself in delay in

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<sup>48</sup> As I noted in the Introduction, this is not to say that the interior aspects of *penitentia*, often translated in English as “penitence” were not important to him, since for him, a complete penance entailed all three aspects.

<sup>49</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.119v.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, f.120r.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, f.119v., “Primo quia tales deo scienti omnia peccatum suum abscondere volunt et nonne hoc stultum est velle illi aliud occultare cuius ocul(is) omnia nuda sunt si enim sibi occultari aliud posset utique summum bonum non esset quia sibi hoc addi posset...” (If God did not know one’s sins then He would not be the highest good and so not be God- Servasanto seems to have essentially adopted some form of Anselm’s Greatest Conceivable Being theology).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, f.119v., “...quia ex confessione bona proveniunt cuncta perdunt et nonne est valde bonum a se fugare diabolus sed confessione fugatur dum character eius a corde repellitur...”

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, f.119v., “...quid est confessio nisi a sordidibus quaedam purgatio... de se autem sordidis nihil curant dum multis annis confiteri expectant. Cadit equus in lutum et extrahitur, cadit homo et iterum atque iterum sordidatur et in ipso luto sepe revolvitur... nonne lavant se a sordidibus elephantess...”

converting to God and in delay in confessing one's sins. He has one chapter on sloth in general, then three on the foolishness of delayed conversion to God, followed by two more on the foolishness of delayed confession.<sup>54</sup> In the second of these, "those who do not wish to confess except in death," Servasanto remarks that "with the foolishness of those who do not wish to confess having been seen, the foolishness of others must now be seen who defer their confession until the point of death."<sup>55</sup> He argues that just as if one were physically wounded, one would be foolish should he "call a doctor to himself when he is not able to keep his command, so also one spiritually sick is foolish when he calls a spiritual doctor and shows him his wound when he is not able to keep his advice."<sup>56</sup> Later he warns against delay saying, "he who does not confess when he can, may find himself unable to confess when he wishes."<sup>57</sup> In the same way, he provides other exempla and arguments to urge people to confession. That Servasanto interpreted sloth primarily as slowness in conversion and confession suggests the importance of penance to his thought even in a work that was not explicitly or primarily about penance.<sup>58</sup>

In fact, the *De virtutibus* is implicitly linked to the *Penitentia* and to the sacrament of penance not only in this section on sloth, but throughout the treatise. The

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<sup>54</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.117v; "De hiis quae faciunt conversionem dilatam difficiliorem," Ibid. f.118r; "Quod dilatio conversionis est fatua," Ibid. f.119r; "De dilatione confessionis," Ibid. 119v; "De hiis qui nolunt confiteri nisi in morte," f.120r.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., f.120r.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., f.120r. "...sunt enim tales fatui quia omnis talis medicinam congruu(m) tempus non requirit non enim fatuus ille esset qui tunc ad se medicum advocaret quando eius mandata servare non posset, sic et ille spiritualiter egrotus [non] est fatuus qui medico spirituali tunc suum vulnus ostendit cum iam eius (consilium) adimplere non possit..."

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., f.120r. f.120r, "secundo talium fatuitas patet quia (alius) talis sepe officium lingue perdit. Est enim iustum ut qui nolunt confiteri dum possunt non possunt confiteri cum volunt..."

<sup>58</sup> Conversion and confession were evidently linked for Servasanto since in a St. Matthew sermon "Conversus sum ut viderem," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.128v., Servasanto equates sin with conversion from God and penance as conversion to God. This is interesting since in the earlier Middle Ages "conversion" typically mean conversion to the monastic life. For Servasanto "conversion" seems to have typically meant conversion from sin to penance.



*De virtutibus* follows Servasanto's *Penitentia* both chronologically and logically. For Servasanto, penance and the development of virtue went together, just as they had for his order's founder who had been given permission to preach both penance and moral reform. That penance was central to Servasanto's thought is clearly supported by its place in his conception of Christianity. His doctrine of penance shows what was for him the close link between penance and virtue, a fact that helps tie together his *Penitentia* and *De virtutibus* and explain his interest in both. In short, the *De virtutibus* treatise was not just a separate work on an unrelated subject that interested Servasanto, but was closely linked with his *Penitentia* and his doctrine of penance and the place of penance in his thought.

#### Doctrine and the Link between the *Penitentia* and *De Virtutibus*

In the *Penitentia*, Servasanto opens his treatise, as he did the *De exemplis*, with a section defending and explaining briefly certain issues of Christian doctrine. This section includes material on the Trinity, the Incarnation, and God's existence and reasons to believe that God exists. He argues in a section on God's necessity that even the pagans who erred in many things still believed in God,<sup>59</sup> as well as defending versions of the Cosmological arguments, including the Kalam cosmological argument.<sup>60</sup> In one argument, Servasanto refers to Boethius's remark that all by nature desire happiness and

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<sup>59</sup> *Penitentia*, f.5v, "Quis umquam a sub celo populus fuit qui non esse deum in generali crediderit, quamvis in spirituali erraverit... nonne romani omnium gentium deos habebant omnibus templa contruxant..."

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 8r-8v. In his section on the Kalam argument, he includes the arguments that the infinite cannot be traversed and that it cannot be added to. The argument was defended by Bonaventure, though Thomas Aquinas was skeptical of its value. On the Cosmological argument in history, see William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*, (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001).

the highest good and this is entirely in vain if the highest good does not exist.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, he refers to Socrates' argument that nature does nothing in vain, but that if all men desire the highest good by nature, yet nature does nothing in vain, then the highest good must exist.<sup>62</sup>

Arguments such as this might seem oddly abstract in a practical preaching manual and one might be tempted to dismiss them as simply some brief arguments Servasanto felt obligated to include for the sake of completeness before moving to the material that really interested him. This would be an error for at least two reasons. First, it seems evident that Servasanto really did want to prepare his fellow preachers with at least a basic apologetic knowledge of the Christian faith and that he saw this as just as practical as preaching penance.<sup>63</sup> For this reason put some of this material in more popular easy to understand terms as with his comment about even pagans having believed in God. More importantly, some of this material, including the two arguments for the existence of a highest good, have direct relevance for Servasanto's teaching on penance.

This is so because if the highest good, God, does exist, and man needs God to be happy, then the pressing question becomes: how does one get there? This explains the opening of Servasanto's *De virtutibus* as well as some remarks in the *De exemplis*<sup>64</sup> and a couple sermons.<sup>65</sup> In the opening to the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto refers to Aristotle's *Ethics*: "For it is said in the beginning of *Ethics* that all desire the good, nor is it doubtful

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<sup>61</sup> *Penitentia*, f.6v., "... ut Boethius ait quod omnis cura mortalium quamvis diverso calle procedat ad unum tamen beatitudinis finem nititur pervenire id autem est summum bonum... quod frustra autem appetitus hoc esset si summum bonum non esset..."

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, "...Nam et Socrates ipse cernens hominem per naturam appetere esse beatum credensque hoc non frustra in natura esse plantatum..."

<sup>63</sup> S. Flanagan, *Doubt in an Age of Faith: Uncertainty in the Long Twelfth Century*, (Brepols, 2009).

<sup>64</sup> *De exemplis*, f.29v.

<sup>65</sup> Including "*Cecus quidem sedebat*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.38v.

that they desire the highest good, which completes all human desire.”<sup>66</sup> This principle is familiar from the *Penitentia* and the theme runs through Servasanto’s works. Servasanto then explains the difficulty: this highest good cannot be seen except by a purged mind and “a mind is not purged except by good habits,” including the virtues.<sup>67</sup> The development of virtue is, therefore, necessary in order to open a man’s eyes so that he can “see” the highest good, God. This suggests a key role for virtue in helping a man reach heaven, but it leaves open the question of the role of penance. According to Servasanto, penance too is necessary for helping a man to see the highest good and reach God. In the sermon, “*Cecus quidem sedebat*,” Servasanto explains that a blind man cannot see God. Man is blinded by heresy, but especially by sin, and this “blindness” can be cured by penance.<sup>68</sup> Like the virtues then, penance was instrumental and necessary in helping one reach God.

At this point it may be useful to look at Remigio dei Girolami (d. 1319), a famous Dominican preacher who died approximately a generation after Servasanto. As Jodi Hodge has observed, historians have often studied him for his views on Florentine politics, but his sermons are also valuable as examples of moral theology in preaching.<sup>69</sup> Noteworthy here is that Remigio considered penance to be not an end in itself, but a means to the end of developing virtue.<sup>70</sup> Hodge says that for Remigio penance was “the vehicle for virtue” and in a sermon on Mary Magdalen he reflects on how Magdalen’s

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<sup>66</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.1r, “Nam et dicitur in principio Ethicorum: omnia bonum exoptant. Nec dubium quin appetant summum bonum quod omne desiderium complet humanum...”

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, “Mentes autem purari non possunt nisi optimis moribus... nisi sacris virtutibus...”

<sup>68</sup> “*Cecus quidem sedebat*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39v, “dico quod cecitas humane anime curatur felle id est amaritudine penitentiae...”

<sup>69</sup> Jodi Hodge, “The Virtue of Vice: Preaching the Cardinal Virtues in the Sermons of Remigio dei Girolami,” *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 52 (2008) 6-18.

<sup>70</sup> Hodge, “The Virtue of Vice,” 8.

penitence led to her growth in virtue.<sup>71</sup> In short, penance was important as part of a larger spiritual process. Servasanto seems to express much the same logic. Penance is a central first step that is completed in the development of virtue, which is necessary to see the highest good, God. This seems to be supported by Servasanto's sermon for the feast of St. Andrew, "*Proposito sibi*," where he calls penance the "base virtue of all good things."<sup>72</sup>

This ultimately clarifies the relationship between Servasanto's *Penitentia* and *De virtutibus* treatises as well as the place of penance in his conception of Christian doctrine. For him, penance is not simply be a matter of crime and punishment, but something that provides the basis for men, blinded by sin, to grow in the virtue necessary to "see" God. Consequently, it is reasonable to think of the *De virtutibus* as a sequel the *De exemplis*, with the *De exemplis* as a brief first version of a virtues and vices treatise. It would be still more appropriate, however, to think of the *De virtutibus* as a sequel to the *Penitentia*. It is similar in style and format, providing a range of material for preaching the virtues and vices, as the *Penitentia* had done for penance. Likewise, this fits with his apparent theology of penance whereby penance provides the basis for the necessary growth in virtue.

#### *Sermones dominicales, de sanctis, and De communi sanctorum*

Like his treatises, Servasanto's sermons attest to his central interest in penance. Certainly, he focused on penance on liturgical occasions where it recommended itself,

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>72</sup> "*Proposito Sibi*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.41r-41v., "dicamus ergo quod primum brachium et infimum crucis est penitentia respectu peccatorum quae est virtus bonorum omnium fundamentum."

such as the penitential season of Lent. But he returned to this theme as well on occasions with less obvious connection to penance.

Hence, one obvious time in which Servasanto's sermons were often concerned with themes of sin, repentance, and confession was Lent. Michael Robson has observed that while the friars' preaching was in demand throughout the year, "they seem to have been particularly in demand during Lent and Advent when people were preparing for the celebration of the major festivals."<sup>73</sup> At this time in particular, the friars exercised their ministry as preachers and confessors.<sup>74</sup>

Servasanto too, to judge from his *Dominicales* sermon collection, considered Lent an appropriate time to preach on penance and related themes. In the nine Lenten sermons contained in Ms Vat. Lat. 5933, all touch on penance to different degrees. It is a central theme in three sermons, and a strong theme in three others.<sup>75</sup> In "*In tempore accepto*," a sermon for the first Sunday in Lent, Servasanto urges the necessity of penance on his listeners, arguing that "acceptable time" may refer to Lent, which is indeed an acceptable time for penance. "How" Servasanto asks, "could divine clemency be sweeter or more merciful than to concede for us this time of penance?"<sup>76</sup> In the first part of the sermon, Servasanto divides his exhortations based on the short time allotted for penance:

1. I say that the time given us for penance is brief and short and for that reason,

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<sup>73</sup> Robson, "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors," 132. Robson cites Humbert of Romans's *Instructiones de officiis* in *Opera II*, 254-61, where Humbert notes how the friaries emptied during the busy preaching seasons of Lent and Advent.

<sup>74</sup> For instance, Robson "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors," 132, refers to the synodal constitutions of Winchester in 1295 that decreed that friars in lent and other times should not be hindered in their work in hearing confessions since "their preaching and words bore much fruit."

<sup>75</sup> Penance also appears to be a central theme in two more of Servasanto's Lenten sermons, "*Revertere, revertere Sunamitis*," and "*Vade et amplius noli peccare*." These were not contained in the manuscript I used, but are listed by Schneyer in his *Repertorium*.

<sup>76</sup> "*In tempore accepto*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39v, "...quid enim nobis dulcius quid misericordius potuit exhibere divina clemencia quam nobis concedere tempus ad penitentiam..."

must not be abandoned

2. Second, the time [for penance] is unsteady (instabile) and so must be attended to carefully.

3. Third, the time [for penance] is irrevocable and so must not be lost.<sup>77</sup>

The next series of three divisions contains sections on contrition, confession, and satisfaction, where Servasanto suggests that Lent is an appropriate time for all three.<sup>78</sup>

He ends by affirming that God hears those who are penitent, who honor their parents, and who suffer for love of God.<sup>79</sup>

Similarly penance is a central theme in the Lenten sermon “*Hec est autem voluntas*,”<sup>80</sup> In it, Servasanto begins by describing the divine will. It is both pious and compassionate since it might justly condemn man, but waits patiently for man to repent and to invite others to penance.<sup>81</sup> Though it is patient, man should fear the power of divine will, for it will also judge.<sup>82</sup> The mercy and power of the divine will are themes he regularly uses as incentives to penance.<sup>83</sup> Servasanto then turns to the three parts of penance: saying man ought to be “timorosa,” (fearful in contrition), “dolorosa,”

<sup>77</sup> “*In tempore accepto*,” Ms. Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39v-40r. “Dico quod tempus nobis ad penitentiam datum est breve et modicum et... ideo non est utiliter exponendum.... secundo tempus est instabile et ideo est sollicitè attendendum.... tercio tempus irrevocabile et ideo non perdendum...”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., f.40r. “Dico quod nunc est pro peccato dolendi salubriter ut sit dolor contritionis in corde.... Secundo nunc est tempus verecundandi... in confessione.... Tertio est tempus operandi viriliter in satisfactione.”

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., f.40r. “Dico ergo quod primi qui exaudiuntur a deo sunt pro peccatis propriis penitentes... secundo exaudivit deus honorem parentibus existentes multum deus acceptat si homo parentes amat si eis serviat... tercio deus illos exaudiet qui pro ipsius amore vel honore sunt patientes, dignum est enim ut qui pro domino patitur ab eo exaudiatur.”

<sup>80</sup> “*Hec est autem voluntas*,” Ms Vat. Lat. 5933 f.41r-41ar (two folios consecutively are labeled no.41, so to distinguish them, I refer to the second of them as 41b.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., f.41r-41ar “...vel alia pena quacumque punire ultra potius ex pietate expectare parata omnia indulgere si velit homo solum modo penitere unde non cessat cotidie per se et per alios ad penitentiam invitare...”

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., f. 41v, “...igitur tanta sit divina voluntas quis est qui eam non timeat, quis eius iram non expavescat, quis se a malis non te trahat...”

<sup>83</sup> In the St. Matthew sermon, “*Conversus sum ut viderem*,” for instance, Servasanto argues that if man repents now, God will be merciful, but if not, the consequences after death will be severe.

(sorrowful in confession), and have right intention in his works.<sup>84</sup> Other sermons that focus on penance as a major theme in Lent include “*Ambulate in dilectione*,”<sup>85</sup> the first half of which urges that penance be *dolorosa* in heart, *pudorosa* “not only in heart, but in form and in mouth, *laboriosa* “as the sweetness of sin is purged by the harshness of penance,<sup>86</sup> and *amorosa*, which helps one bear the harshness of penance.<sup>87</sup> The second half of the sermon describes love of God and how it should be. Another Lenten sermon, “*Locutus est mutus*,” focuses especially on the sins of the tongue, suggesting that one sins more often in speech than silence.<sup>88</sup> At the same time Servasanto suggests the proper use of the tongue, namely penance, where a “just man speaks words of anxiety in his heart, words of truth with his mouth, and words of justice in his actions.”<sup>89</sup> For him, these three aspects of “speaking” obviously refer to the three stages of penance as he follows with, “for speaking and confessing well, he ought to have the anxiety of contrition, the truth of confession, and the justice of satisfaction.”<sup>90</sup> Another sermon from the Sunday before

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<sup>84</sup> “*Hec est autem voluntas*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.41v, “dico quod debet esse timorosa... nam omnis boni radicale primum et ad bonum preparativum est timor corde propter quod in ecclesiasticus dicitur quod principium sapientie est timor domini, expellit peccatum.... secundo debet esse dolorosa per gemebundam confessionem.... sanctitas debet esse diuturna per finalem continuacionem.”

That Servasanto meant these sections to refer to contrition, confession, and satisfaction is evident through his reference at the end of the sermon, “Si ergo frater sanctitatem inchoasti per timorem et humiliationi si eam mediasti per contricionem et confessionem restat ut finias per boni continuacionem...”

Proverb 9:10, Psalms 111:10, both of these begin with “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” Eccles. 12:13 tells the reader, “fear the God and keep his commandments.”

<sup>85</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Ms Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r.-43r.

<sup>86</sup> In this case by “penance” Servasanto means “satisfaction, the third part of sacramental penance.” This seems to typically be the case when he refers to works of penance.

<sup>87</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Ms Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r-43r., “Dico quod nostra penitentia debet esse dolorosa.... secundo nostra penitentia debet esse pudorosa non solum in corde, but in facie et in ore... tertio, nostra penitentia debet esse laboriosa ut dulcedo culpe purgetur asperitate penitentia quia contraria contrariis curantur... quarto, penitentia debet esse amorosa. Non enim asperitas portari posset nec etiam mentioria esset nisi amor ad esset...”

<sup>88</sup> “*Locutus est mutus*,” Ms Vat. Lat. 5933 f.43r., “sepius tamen ut gregorius ait loquendo peccamus unde sapiens quidam dicit raro nocet tacuisse, sed sepe nocet esse locutum propter...”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 43v. “...nota ergo quod iustus loquitur verba anxietatis in corde, verba veritatis in ore, et verba equitatis in opere.”

<sup>90</sup> “*Locutus est mutus*,” Ms Vat. Lat. 5933 f.43v., “Nam loquens et bene confitens debet habere anxietatem

Ash Wednesday, “*Cecus quidam sedebat*,” also deals heavily with the theme of vice and need for penance.<sup>91</sup> Other Lenten sermons less explicitly on penance, such as “*Sequebatur eum multitudo magna*,” speak of various vices (greed, pride, and lust) and of the need and way of following Christ, both themes that fit well with the penitential message of the season.<sup>92</sup>

A full Lenten season of preaching on penance, year after year, must have resulted in the medieval laity hearing an enormous amount of penitential preaching. It would have amounted to a significant consistent message and one difficult to ignore. One thinks of D’Avray’s remark about marriage: “Some of the people could have ignored it all of the time and all of the people surely ignored it much of the time, but all of the people could not have ignored it all of the time.”<sup>93</sup>

Penance, however, was not a message limited to Lent. A survey of Servasanto’s sermons, both *dominicales* and *de sanctis*, suggests it was a message he wanted preached throughout the year. After Lent, one might expect the message of penance to at least to pause throughout the Easter season and perhaps, to some extent, it did. Nonetheless, a look at Schneyer’s *Repertorium*<sup>94</sup> suggests the message of penance was not entirely

contritionis veritatem confessionis et equitatem satisfactionis.”

<sup>91</sup> “*Cecus quidam sedebat*,” Ms Vat. Lat. 5933 f.38v.

<sup>92</sup> Other Lenten sermons too, not contained in the manuscript I have used, also seem likely to have been about penance as with “*Revertere, revertere Sunamitis*” which has as incipit, “*Quoniam isto tempore praecipue intendit ecclesia peccatores a Deo aversos*,” and the sermon “*Vade et amplius noli peccare*.” Cited here from Johann Baptist Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150-1350*, 11 vols., Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 43/1-11 (Münster i.W. 1969-90), 5: 378-379.

<sup>93</sup> David, d’Avray, *Medieval Marriage*... 20.

<sup>94</sup> Since I have not been able to read all of Servasanto’s ca.400 sermons, I have used Schneyer’s *Repertorium* to try to identify sermons likely to have been significantly about penance. This is not entirely safe since the *Repertorium* provides only the verse for the theme and the incipit. This might easily cause one to miss a sermon on penance since a sermon could easily speak significantly about penance even if the incipit does not obviously imply that it will. For example the Lenten sermon, *Ambulate in dilectione*, did not obviously strike me as likely to contain a sermon about penance until after I read it. Going solely by



abandoned even during the season celebrating the Resurrection. For instance, Servasanto's sermons for the second and fourth Sundays after Easter respectively have the themes, "*you were like sheep going astray*," and "*he will convince the world of sin*,"<sup>95</sup> and most likely regard sin and penance. The theme of the second sermon from John 16:8 refers to the Holy Spirit coming to convince the world of sin, justice, and judgment. The theme of the first is from 1 Peter 2:25 and refers to people going astray, but now being converted to the "shepherd and bishop of your souls."<sup>96</sup>

The end of the Easter season would have taken the faithful into Ordinary Time, On June 24, they would come to the Feast of St John the Baptist. His penitential character was well established in Luke: the voice crying in the desert, "prepare the way of the Lord," and "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>97</sup> He was also the patron saint of Servasanto's Florence. Servasanto clearly saw his saint day as another opportunity for penitential preaching. In his sermon, "*Dedi te in lucem gentium*," Servasanto commented that people in his own time were corrupt in heart, word, and work

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the *Repertorium*, I would have been likely to miss it. However, I have found that, among the sermons I have read, when a theme or incipit is likely to invite a sermon on penance, it is rare for that sermon not to actually contain significant material on sin and penance. Hence a St. Matthew sermon with the theme, *postquam converstisti me, egi penitentiam*, is about penance. For this reason, by using the *Repertorium* to identify possible penitential sermons, I am more likely to underestimate, rather than overestimate the number of penitential sermons. For example, it would be very surprising if the sermon: "*Vade et amplius noli peccare*" was not significantly about sin and penance. Hence, while I have read many of Servasanto's sermons, it has not been practical to read all the over 400 he wrote; nonetheless, since it is desirable to attempt some approximation of how often he preached penance throughout the year, I have used the themes and incipits to attempt this. As I suggested, by such methods, I am rather more likely to underestimate rather than overestimate the frequency with which penance appears in Servasanto's preaching.

<sup>95</sup> *Repertorium* 5, 380.

<sup>96</sup> 1 Peter 2:25, *Eratis enim sicut oves errantes, sed conversi estis nunc ad pastorem, et episcopum animarum vestrarum.*

<sup>97</sup> Luke 3:3-4, *Et venit in omnem regionem Jordanis, praedicans baptismum poenitentiae in remissionem peccatorum, sicut scriptum est in libro sermonum Isaiae prophetae: Vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini; rectas facite semitas ejus.*

and that they should follow John's call to penance.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, in his sermon for the feast of John "*Johannes est nomen suum*," he referred to John as an example of someone who practiced penance, living in an ascetic fashion and who was, consequently, a model to follow.

July brought the feast day of another saint strongly associated with penance, Mary Magdalen. Indeed, she was one of the primary saintly examples of penance in the Middle Ages. Katherine Jansen has called Mary Magdalen the "exemplar of perfect penance," suggesting she ranked above all other penitential saints as an example of penance to follow.<sup>99</sup> As a major feast day, the Magdalen's would represent another significant opportunity for the laity to hear penitential sermons. Unsurprisingly, then, Servasanto made penance a central theme in his sermons on Mary Magdalen here, notably, "*Quem ad Modum*" and "*Remittuntur ei peccata*." The former especially focuses on the need to love and desire God, Magdalen as an example of this, and that many people today love and desire the wrong things instead.<sup>100</sup> In the latter, Servasanto points to Magdalen a sinner who did penance because of her great love for Jesus. He then contrasts her with those today who "lose Christ in sinning and rest, eat, and sleep and do not seek him. Oh, how many are those who sleep in sins and do not care to find the lost Christ by penance."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> "*Dedi te in lucem gentium*," ...ergo fuit lux confortitiva dum ad penitentiam populos verbis exemplis et operibus animavit. Nam et prédicationem suam a penitentia inchoavit..."

<sup>99</sup> Jansenn, *The Making of the Magdalen*... "Chapter 7: The Exemplar of Perfect Penance," 199.

<sup>100</sup> "*Quem ad modum*," Vat. Lat. 9884, "Quam ardenti desiderio quemque ardenti incendio se magdalena ad Christum habueret quis ullis exprimat dignis verbis. Nam primo ex magno desiderio odioque peccati ad fontem misericordie sitibunda velut cervus advenit fontes lacrimarum effundit quibus dominicos pedes lavit suis capillis extersit et oscula illis magni amoris impressit propter quod audire promeruit, remittuntur ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum lege historiam luc. Vii."

<sup>101</sup> "*Remittuntur ei peccata*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105v, "...sed perdit homo peccando Christum et quiescit dormit comedit et not quaerit. O quot sunt qui diu dormiunt in peccatis nec curant per penitentiam

After the Feast of Mary Magdalen, several of his sermons for the summer, both *dominicale* and *de sanctis* brought further opportunities around the calendar year for him to preach penance and for the laity to hear the message. At the end of July,<sup>102</sup> the seventh Sunday after Pentecost, the sermon, “*Stipendia peccati mors*,” would almost certainly contain significant preaching on sin and penance and the sermon, “*Omnis arbor quae non facit*,” might as well,<sup>103</sup> though that is less certain. Soon after on August 1, was the feast of St. Peter in Chains. Peter, who had denied his master had repented though his bitter tears; the gospels hold that after denying Jesus, “going forth, he wept bitterly.”<sup>104</sup> Servasanto thus uses the opportunity for another penitential sermon, “*Surge velociter*.” The theme is taken from the passage in Acts,<sup>105</sup> when the angel frees Peter from Herod’s prison finding him in chains and commanding Peter to “rise quickly.” In this sermon, the chains in question become the chains of sin from which man must rise in repentance.<sup>106</sup>

August would find several more sermons in Servasanto’s collections that were plausible, and perhaps likely, candidates for penitential sermons. The ninth Sunday after Pentecost offered sermons such as, “*Non simus concupiscentes malorum*,” and “*Videns Jesus civitatem flevit*.”<sup>107</sup> Any reference to tears could easily be about penance with the incipit referring to Jesus weeping and “our sin.” For the next Sunday, Servasanto had a

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Christum perditum invenire.”

<sup>102</sup> In the year 1253, the seventh Sunday after Pentecost would have been July 27.

<sup>103</sup> The worthy fruits to be produced could easily be the fruits of penance and the bad fruits would almost certainly have invited preaching on sin.

<sup>104</sup> Matthew 26:75.

<sup>105</sup> Acts 12:7

<sup>106</sup> “*Surge velociter*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.111v-114r.

<sup>107</sup> “*Non simus concupiscentes malorum*,” incipit: Quia omnie malum ex concupiscentia habet ortum... and “*Videns Jesus civitatem flevit*” incipit: Legimus Christum flevisse in sua passione nostram culpam. From Schneyer, *Repertorium*, 5: 382.

sermon, “*Publicans a longe stans.*” The theme is taken from Luke’s gospel (8:13),<sup>108</sup> and refers to a publican who beat his breast in penance praying, “O God be merciful to me, a sinner,” a particularly obvious opportunity for a penitential sermon.

The period from September to Advent also offered many possible options for penitential preaching, both in the Sunday sermons Servasanto wrote and on the feast days of several saints. The thirteenth and fifteenth Sundays after Pentecost (September 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> in the year 1253, for example) invite possible penitential themes with the sermons, “*Fides tua te salvum fecit,*” (Luke 18:42) and “*Dum tempus habemus*” (Gal. 6:10).<sup>109</sup> The former has an incipit referring to leprosy, for Servasanto a common symbol of sin,<sup>110</sup> while the latter deals with the brevity of time, also for him, a favorite reason for which one should go to confession. Especially interestingly, on September 21, the Church would celebrate the feast of St. Matthew the Apostle. For his feast, Servasanto wrote two sermons, “*Conversus sum ut viderem,*” and “*Postquam convertisti me.*” Though St. Matthew might not initially seem an obvious candidate for a penitential sermon, it was of him that Jesus said, “I did not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to penance (*penitentia*).”<sup>111</sup> In “*Conversus sum,*” Servasanto organizes his sermon around four motives to penance, reflects on God’s love and mercy, and urges conversion with contrition of the heart.<sup>112</sup> In, “*Postquam convertisti me,*” he again gives several motives to penance, mentions its three parts, and gives the examples of Peter and Mary Magdalen

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<sup>108</sup> Schneyer, *Repertorium*, 5: 382.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Hence, for instance, his sermon, “*Ecce Leprosus,*” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.33v-34r., which does precisely this, comparing sin to leprosy and insisting on the need for penance.

<sup>111</sup> Luke 5:27-32. The word *penitentia* is used in the vulgate.

<sup>112</sup> “*Conversus sum,*” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.129r., “...nam nos inducere ad conversionem debent: primo, culpa qua dominum redemptorem offendimus, secundo, gratia quam peccando perdidimus, tertio, pena quam pro culpam meruimus, quarto, vero gloria a qua nos exclusimus...”

who wept for their own sins.<sup>113</sup>

October and November offered further opportunities where Servasanto's sermons are likely to be about penance. Two for the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, "*Gratis ago Deo meo*," and "*Confide, file, remittuntur tibi peccata tua*,"<sup>114</sup> are the likely to contain material about penance, the latter for obvious reasons, and the former because it contains an incipit referring to elephant behavior when they become sick.<sup>115</sup> Elsewhere, he uses the same example of a sick elephant pointing out that just as elephants seek a cure when sick, so too should man, sick with sin, seek a cure by penance.<sup>116</sup> Finally, the sermon, "*Proposito sibi gaudio*," includes preaching on penance as a significant theme, if not necessarily the primarily one. It is primarily a sermon on suffering, but one of the four subdivisions concerns the importance of penance (the others are mercy, patience, and temperance). He calls penance the foundation of all good virtue, necessary to attain heaven, and a way to imitate the crucified Christ.<sup>117</sup> Hence, from the end of Lent until Advent, the laity, at least going by Servasanto's sermons, would have had many opportunities to hear sermons with sin and penance as important themes.

Servasanto's Advent sermons also included some focus on penance. Like Lent, Advent was regarded as a penitential season, though perhaps a lesser one than Lent as the

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<sup>113</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f. 131v., "... est igitur hic notandum quod ad penitentiam ad presens quattuor sunt motiva scilicet, mundialis ignomina in qua sumus, iudicialis sententia quam timemus, infernalis miseria quam pati meruimus, supernalis gloria a qua nos exclusimus... [f.133r]... ergo fratri mei, nunc tempus est flendi, nunc tempus confitendi, nunc tempus satisfaciendi..."

<sup>114</sup> Schneyer, *Repertorium*, 5: 383.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., "Legitur quod elephas quando infirmitatem incurrit..."

<sup>116</sup> See, for example, the sermon, *Ecce leprosus*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.33v., "Sed animalia bruta so fuerint infirmata querunt sibi medicinalia sicut ursus contra febrem formicas comedit... elephas si infirmitatem incurrat herbam sibi medicinale procurant quam antequam comedit eam prius versus celum levat q(uae) eam deo offerat cuius suo modo auxilium postulat et sic quasi a deo benedictam herbam manducat et sanitatem recuperat." I discuss this further in chapter 3.

<sup>117</sup> "*Proposito sibi*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.40v-43r.

Church prepared for Christmas and the Incarnation.<sup>118</sup> Probably the Advent season slowly came to take on a more penitential character as the doctrine of the Redemption—how Christ’s coming saved mankind—changed from the earlier Middle Ages.<sup>119</sup> In the twelfth century, the Incarnation took on a logic that placed greater emphasis on sin and its cure. According to Anselm of Canterbury, man, in sinning against God, had acquired a debt he could not repay, so God became man in order to satisfy the debt that man otherwise could not have paid. This view placed Christ’s coming in terms of doing satisfaction for man’s sin, that is, in penitential terms.<sup>120</sup> As Christ’s coming became explained in terms of doing penance for man’s sin, it invited consideration of Advent as a penitential season.

This seems to have been the attitude of Servasanto, whose sermon “*Veniet desideratus*,” for the first Sunday of Advent, adopts Anselm’s Greatest Conceivable Being Theology. He explains that Jesus came to redeem man from sin since man alone could not satisfy God (since in sinning against an infinite God, man acquired an infinite debt) but that Christ, since he was God and man, could make satisfaction for man’s sin.<sup>121</sup> This provides a basis for Servasanto’s other Advent sermons, especially the sermon,

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<sup>118</sup> Witness, for instance, Robson’s remark in “A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors...” 132, where he comments on how the friars’ ministerial skills were in particular demand in both Lent and Advent.

<sup>119</sup> See R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1953), 234-236. In the early Middle Ages, Christ’s coming was generally explained in terms of the Ransom Theory of the Atonement; as Southern observes, this explained Christ’s coming more in the context of a war between God and the devil, rather than in more penitential terms.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 235-236. See also Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo*, in *Anselm of Canterbury: the Major Works*, eds. G.R. Evans and Brian Davies, (Oxford University Press, 2008), 260-356.

<sup>121</sup> “*Veniet desideratus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.2r, “Dico ergo quod dominus Ihesus venit ut genus humanum redimerit. Nam miser homo peccaverat deum offenderat totum genus humanum sibi abstulerat et se diaboli servum effecerat et quia divina offensa quodammodo infinita erat per ea satisfacere deo non poterat quia finitum erat nec eciam pro dampno aliquid dignum reddere poterat natura quia totum genus humanum deo abstulerat... vide ergo clemenciam dei nostri qui homo factus est ut similis esset qui satisfacere posset et qui deberet, nam Christus quia deus et homo erat, in quantum deus satisfacere poterat et in quantum homo debebat...”

“*Hora est iam nos*,” which is especially meant to exhort the reader to penance. He writes that by penance, here meaning the full sacramental process, we must now arise from the sleep of sin in order to enjoy the delight of heavenly sleep.<sup>122</sup> This is the Advent sermon that deals most explicitly and directly with penance, though others are related. “*Veni domine Jesu*” refers to penance being conceived in fear of the Lord,<sup>123</sup> the last judgment, how sin cannot be hidden from God.<sup>124</sup> “*Suscipite invicem sicut Christus*,” discusses the Incarnation briefly and refers the reader back to “*Veniet desideratus*,” and speaks of how Jesus came to call back the sinful soul and the need to follow Jesus’ example.<sup>125</sup>

After Christmas and before the next Lent, the penitential message could continue with both Sunday and feast day sermons that contained significant material on penance. Especially noteworthy for this is the sermon, “*Dolentes querebamus*,” written for the Sunday after Epiphany. In it, Servasanto argues that man should weep since he should know that he is separated from God by sin, “for man sorrows much when he sees that he has lost some great good though his own negligence.”<sup>126</sup> Man thus ought to have compassion for the suffering Christ and contrition for his sins, and he ought to seek God in harsh penance with appropriate sadness.<sup>127</sup> Another sermon for the third Sunday after

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<sup>122</sup> “*Hora est iam nos*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.4v, “...primo conditioni nostri status insinat, secundo adsurgendum invitat, tertio iam ultimam esse horam declarat nam qui ad culmen perfectionis desiderat. Prius est ut culpe vulnus agnoscat, secundo nam adit per penitentiam expiandum exurgat, tertio vero ut ad omnia ad bonum promovencia intendat...”

<sup>123</sup> “*Veni domine Jesu*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.3v, “... et quia penitentia timore concipitur...”

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., “...sed in nullo istorum [in inferno, in terra, in pellago] locorum poterunt occultari, latere ergo est impossibile cuilibet peccatori...”

<sup>125</sup> “*Suscipite invicem sicut Christus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.6v.

The Christmas sermon, “*Videbit omnis caro*,” Ms. Vat. Lat. 5933 f.12r., even has some relevance at it refers to the different images one God, one which should inspire people to penance. It asks the reader to reflect on the kindness of the redeemer bound for the cross, how the memory of the cross should crucify sin, and on the future promised glory of heaven.

<sup>126</sup> “*Dolentes querebamus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.30v., “...nam plurimum homo dolet quando aliquod magnum bonum per suam negligenciam perdidisse se videt quamvis...”

<sup>127</sup> “*Dolentes querebamus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.30v., f.31ar (there are two folios labeled 31, I have simply

Epiphany, “*Ecce Leprosus*,” includes themes related to penance: it points to the sins of luxury, avarice, and envy and argues for the need to turn (convertat) to God by penance.<sup>128</sup> Finally, the feast of St. Agnes on January 21 was, for Servasanto, an appropriate occasion for further penitential preaching: he holds her up as an example of someone who controlled the flesh by exterior penance (by which he means works of satisfaction). He uses this as a chance to observe that just as saints sin and do penance, so should we.

In brief, penance was a theme the laity would likely have met, not only in the penitential season of Lent, but throughout the year in Servasanto’s preaching. Penance was clearly a frequent theme in his preaching and one that he included in sermons for a range of feast days and Sunday preaching that together would have meant a tremendous amount of penitential preaching throughout the liturgical year.

Besides his *dominicale* and *de sanctis* sermons, penance also appears as a significant theme in many of his *de communi sanctorum* sermons. Where the *de sanctis* sermons were sermons written for specific saints, the *de communi sanctorum* was a collection of sermons, written more broadly for certain types of saint. For example, “*Beatus vir qui suffert temptationem*,”<sup>129</sup> is written for a confessor saint, while “*Michi absit gloriari*,” is written “for St. Francis or a martyr.”<sup>130</sup> Among these, “*Beati mundo*

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called them 31a and 31b), “tertio est dolor contritionis assumptus pro peccatis... non invenitur deus inquiete mundana sed in aspera penitentia...”

<sup>128</sup> “*Ecce Leprosus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.34r., “... dico ergo quod primo veniendum est de aversione ad conversionem ut a deo aversus est per peccatum et penitentiam se convertat ad deum. Nichil enim aliud est peccatum quam aversio ab incommutabili bono ad commutabile bonum, econtratio ergo penitentia est aversio a commutabili bono et conversio ad incommutabile bonum...”

<sup>129</sup> “*Beatus vir qui suffert temptationem*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.102r-106v.

<sup>130</sup> “*Michi absit gloriari*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.92r.



*corde*,”<sup>131</sup> “*Iusti autem in perpetuum vivent*,”<sup>132</sup> and “*Quanto magnus es, humilia te*,”<sup>133</sup> stand out for dealing significantly on themes of sin and penance, while it is not wholly absent from others like “*Beatus vir qui suffert*.” In “*Beati mundi corde*,” for instance, Servasanto reflects on the dignity of penance, how sin in the present life only leads to unhappiness, and on the goods of eternal happiness.<sup>134</sup> Though perhaps to a lesser degree than his Lent sermons, penance does seem to have been important enough to Servasanto that he made a point to include it even in his more general *de communi sanctorum* sermons.

This survey of penance in Servasanto’s works suggests that penance was indeed a serious concern to him and one that he took care to preach regularly, preparing preaching material on penance in both his sermons and in his treatises that he intended as preaching material. The similarities and differences between the sermons and treatises should be more evident by now. While they differ in organization, quantity of material, and somewhat in purpose, the type of material, tone, and style of writing are remarkably similar. Treatises could be more complete and include more material than any individual sermon could, but the material itself could be very similar with exempla, arguments, authorities, and divisions and subdivisions being drawn from the treatises to form sermons. This is well illustrated, for instance, by a section in the *Penitentia* on motives to penance compared to the St. Matthew sermon, “*Conversus sum*.” In the *Penitentia*,

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<sup>131</sup> “*Beati mundo corde*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.69v-73r.

<sup>132</sup> “*Iusti autem in perpetuum*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.99r-102v.

<sup>133</sup> “*Quanto magnus est humilia te*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.109r.-111r.

<sup>134</sup> “*Beati mundo corde*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.70r “...dico primo quod est quaedam beatitudo in (vi)a quae est hominum peccatorum se summe delectancium in mundanis et querecium finem boni in eis...”

Servasanto's section (distinction) on the motives to penance includes eight motives to penance, 28 chapters, and 63 folios in the Florence manuscript. "*Conversus sum*," is organized primarily around four motives to penance, one of which is the eternal joy lost by sin. Servasanto refers in this sermon to two biblical parables, the lost sheep and woman and her lost coin. He mentions the saints, whose glorious society man loses by sin, as well as another biblical reference before concluding that as such man ought to desire to repent so as not to lose the great benefit of saintly society.<sup>135</sup> Sections in the *Penitentia* include the same material as well as exempla of various sorts;<sup>136</sup> the treatise simply includes a wider selection of it that a preacher could draw from when constructing his own sermons. Both sermons and treatises, however, do make it clear that penance was a central concern to Servasanto who sought to provide his fellow friars with both model sermons and more comprehensive treatises in order to preach on it.

## FLEXIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE: HOW ANY READING COULD BE ABOUT PENANCE

A last point worth considering in assessing how central penance was to Servasanto's thought and to his sense of the friars' mission is his ability and willingness to turn any scriptural reading into a sermon on penance, even if the reading might not seem to obviously invite a penitential sermon or deal with penitential themes. That

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<sup>135</sup> "*Conversus sum*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.130v-131r., "...exemplum ad hoc ponit dominus de illo qui ovem perdidit et de muliere quae dragmam amisit.... si peccando gloriam illam beatam amisimus si nos a societate sanctorum exclusimus.... et propter ea dicitur in eternale convertimini et agite penitentiam ab omnis inquinamentis..."

<sup>136</sup> Divided among various chapters like, "De gloriae eterna quae octavum est motivum ad penitendum," *Penitentia*, f.90v., and "de dotibus anime et primo de dei visione," f.100r.

Servasanto did this suggests a special desire to talk about penance since he would try to talk about it even when the reading might not obviously suggest it. This supports the idea that penance was indeed central to his thought and that he was indeed interested in having it widely preached.

Medieval scriptural hermeneutics were very flexible. There were commonly thought to be four senses of scripture, which Thomas Aquinas, the famous thirteenth-century philosopher and theologian, listed as the literal as well as three spiritual senses. The literal was synonymous with the historical. He gave the allegorical sense as when things in the Old Testament signified things in the New. The moral, or tropological, sense is when “things that signify Christ are things that we ought to do.” Finally, the anagogical sense of scripture is so far as the things in scripture “signify what relates to eternal glory.”<sup>137</sup> There would have been the assumption that scripture could have a multiplicity of meanings and that one need not be bound only by the literal sense of a scriptural passage. In this sense, medieval scriptural hermeneutics were at least somewhat flexible, a useful tool for a preacher who might wish to preach on a variety of subjects. In particular, the moral sense, signifying what man ought to do, might be expected to be a useful tool for preaching on penance since Servasanto wished to tell people that they ought to repent.

He does this both in Lenten and other sermons. The Lenten sermon, “*In tempore accepto*,” does seem to clearly invite a sermon on penance. The Bible passage is from Isaiah 49 and concerns the extension of salvation beyond Israel to the gentile peoples. Given the link Servasanto saw between salvation and penance, it may not be surprising

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<sup>137</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Part I, Question I, Article 10.

that he saw such as passage as inviting a penitential sermon. It does not deal explicitly with penance, but dealing with themes of the eventual salvation of Israel, it makes sense that a passage on salvation would inspire a penitential sermon. More surprising is another of Servasanto's Lenten sermons, "*Ambulate in dilectione*," from chapter five of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which compares the relationship between a husband and wife to that between Christ and the Church. One might expect this passage to invite a sermon on marriage, but the result is a sermon on penance as Servasanto reflects on the relationship between penance and love, the need to love God, and how love can drive away sin, as it did for Mary Magdalen.<sup>138</sup> The ability to interpret this chapter of Ephesians in the moral sense of scripture by suggesting that it can indicate that a man ought to do penance, allows Servasanto to turn this passage on marriage into a sermon on the need for and value of penance.

The case is similar in Servasanto's sermon for the Sunday after Epiphany, "*Dolentes querebamus te*." The passage is from chapter two of Luke and deals with the finding of the child Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph go searching for the child and Mary admonishes Jesus, "Son why have you done this to us, your father and I sorrowing, were seeking you."<sup>139</sup> We should hardly expect this passage to be about penance. Those seeking Jesus here are Joseph and Mary, the latter of whom would scarcely have been regarded as in need of repentance! Even Joseph, if inevitably less saintly than his wife, hardly invites a penitential sermon in the same way that someone

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<sup>138</sup> "*Ambulate in dilectione*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f. 42r. Servasanto divides the theme, *Ambulate in dilectione* into two parts, the first *ambulate*, he subdivides into four parts on penance writing, "Ergo *ambulate*. Nota ergo quod via nostra (sive) penitentia debet esse dolorosa, debet esse pudorosa, debet esse laboriosa et debet esse amorosa ut sit dolor in corde pudor in facie labor in opere et amor in affectione."

<sup>139</sup> Luke 2:41-52.

like Mary Magdalen might. Yet such is Servasanto's desire to provide a sermon on penance and the need for it, that he takes the words, *Dolentes querebamus te*, to refer not to Joseph and Mary, but more broadly to his audience. He reflects that man should sorrow because he has lost God through sin and "who indeed does not weep harshly if he knows that he has offended a most pious and kind father."<sup>140</sup> As a result, Servasanto urges that God must be sought "cum dolore" and in harsh penance.<sup>141</sup>

A final example of this tendency to take readings that might not seem to invite a penitential sermon and use them to preach on penance is the *de communi sanctorum* sermon, "*Quanto magnus es, humilia te.*"<sup>142</sup> The passage from Ecclesiasticus concerns the treatment of parents, avoidance of fruitless curiosity, and exhortations to humility. It could certainly be read to invite a sermon of humility, as Servasanto's selection of the theme suggests.<sup>143</sup> Servasanto does indeed do exactly this, but explains humility in a way that makes it evident that he is really referring to penance. He writes that humility must be in heart, mouth, and work, in the second pointing to the need for confession to a priest and in the last, pointing to the need to do satisfaction.<sup>144</sup> In short, the sermon that one would expect to be about pride and humility turns out to be primarily about penance and its three parts. That Servasanto chose to preach on penitential themes even on days when the scriptural readings might not seem to invite a sermon on penance suggests that penance was indeed a central concern to him, that he wished it to be widely preached, and

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<sup>140</sup> "*Dolentes querebamus te,*" Vat. Lat. 5933 f.31ar. "quis enim dure non doleat si patrem tam pium tam beneficium se offendisse cognoscat."

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. f.31av. "... non invenitur in quiete mundana sed in aspera penitentia."

<sup>142</sup> "*Quanto magnus es, humilia te,*" Vat. Lat. 1261 f.109r.

<sup>143</sup> The passage is Ecclesiasticus 3:20.

<sup>144</sup> "*Quanto magnus es, humilia te,*" Vat. Lat. 1261 f.110r., "...humilitas est oris quae in vera peccatorum confessione consistit... tertio humilitas est operis satisfactione consistit..."

that it was central to his sense of the friars' mission. He was aided in this by what one might call the flexibility of medieval scriptural hermeneutics, that by looking to the different senses of scripture, he could easily turn perhaps almost any scriptural reading to one about penance.

### Servasanto and His Contemporaries

Servasanto does not seem to have been alone in his belief that penance was an important message for preaching. Rather, his concern with penance is comparable to that of some of his contemporaries, including secular clergy. A rigorous numerical comparison with his contemporary and later friars and others regarding their own emphasis on penance is difficult, for there is a paucity of edited collections of thirteenth-century sermons and equally scant scholarship on the theme of penance in them. Nonetheless, a preliminary sounding suggests that his contemporaries shared his interest in preaching penance in Lent. For instance, the Lenten sermons of the thirteenth-century schoolman and secular cleric, Ranulphe of Houblounnierre, "*Hec est voluntas dei*," and *Erat Ihesus eiciens*,<sup>145</sup> deal with heavily penitential themes. The first includes the major subdivision that it is God's will that man repent from sin, reflects on the vices of men who do not follow God, and discusses the goods from following God including, avoiding the penalty of sin, obtaining grace, and eternal glory.<sup>146</sup> Such is not unlike some of Servasanto's own arguments urging people to repent on the basis of penalty for sin and

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<sup>145</sup> *La prédication de Ranulphe de la Houblonnière: Sermons aux clercs et aux simples gens à Paris au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2 vols. Ed. Nicole Bériou, (Paris, 1987), For the sermons, see vol. II, 85-98 (*Erat Ihesus eiciens*), and 74-84 (*Hec est voluntas*).

<sup>146</sup> Bériou, *Ranulphe de la Houblonnière*, 79.

future eternal glory.<sup>147</sup> The second of these two sermons, Ranulphe comments how God is always ready to receive the man who repents though contrition, confession, and satisfaction.<sup>148</sup> He reflects on the devil's desire to prevent penance, God's willingness to accept penitents, and includes other material urging people to confession.<sup>149</sup> As a Paris schoolman, Ranulphe is a particularly well-trained preacher, making it unsurprising he would be similar to a friar like Servasanto both in focus and ability. This suggests a limited difference between the preaching of the schools and a friar like Servasanto. Another contemporary of Servasanto's was the thirteenth-century Dominican Robert Kilwardby, who also stressed the need for penance in a Passiontide sermon.<sup>150</sup> Penitential preaching remained crucial in the later Middle Ages as well, including the concentration of mendicant preaching in penitential seasons like Lent. At end of the Middle Ages, for instance, one finds St. John of Capistrano, in a Wroclaw Lenten preaching tour, preaching from 4 March and 23 March on questions related to confession.<sup>151</sup> Also later in the Middle Ages was the Oxford theologian Thomas Cyncetour who shared a concern for preaching penance, especially during Lent, pointing to the need for continuing contrition for sin and how sympathy for Christ's suffering should lead one

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<sup>147</sup> As in his "*Conversus sum*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.130v.

<sup>148</sup> "*Erat Ihesus eiciens*," in Berioù, *Ranulphe de la Houblonnière*, 90-91, "...secundo principaliter, videamus de benignitate Domini, quia est ita mitis quod, qualitercumque homo ceciderit et in quocumque peccata, semper paratus est recipere si velit redire.... Hoc fit quator modis, scilicet per contritionem, confessionem, satisfactionem, et per sanctam prédicationem."

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 93-94, Here, for example, Ranulphe urges those who do not wish to confess for fear that a priest might not keep the confession secret that there is not a priest in the world who would not rather have his own tongue ripped out than break the seal of confession.

<sup>150</sup> Osmund Lewry OP, "A Passiontide Sermon of Robert Kilwardby OP," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 52 (1982), 89-113.

<sup>151</sup> Ottó Gecser, "Itinerant Preaching in Late-Medieval Central Europe: St. John Capistran in Wroclaw," *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 47 (2003) 5-20; 7.

to penance.<sup>152</sup> Thomas is also interesting since, like Servasanto, he regularly took advantage of the flexibility of scripture to preach penitential sermons even when the scriptural readings might not seem to invite such a sermon. For instance, he makes the word *abscondere* flexible when he says that “we should hide ourselves in the field of penance... which is dug by contrition, ploughed by confession, and sown by satisfaction.”<sup>153</sup>

In sum, Servasanto’s interest in preaching penance does not seem to have been unique in his time or even probably through the rest of the Middle Ages. He and his contemporaries preached penance especially in Lent and the feast days of certain saints like Mary Magdalen, but could preach a penitential sermon at any time throughout the year. David d’Avray has recently argued persuasively that the friars’ preaching message about the goodness of marriage, based on symbolism of it as a union between Christ and the Church, must have had a substantial impact on society and suggested a generally unified, positive message about marriage.<sup>154</sup> He did this, however, focusing primarily on sermons for one Sunday of the year, the second Sunday after Epiphany when one would most expect a marriage sermon to be preached. It is at least as likely that penance, preached over a full Lenten season and other days throughout the year was a major interest and message of the friars and must have been at least somewhat influential on the laity to whom it was preached. Certainly if there can be said to be an avalanche of preaching on marriage, there was likely to have been far more in the case of penance.

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<sup>152</sup> R.M. Ball, “Thomas Cyrcetur: a Fifteenth Century Theologian and Preacher,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986) 205-239.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 227-228.

<sup>154</sup> David d’Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*, (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005) and *Medieval Marriage Sermons*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)



It is evident, therefore, that penance was central to Servasanto's own thought and to his sense of his and his fellow friars' mission. Penance clearly bore a central place in his sermons and treatises as he provided ample material for the preaching of penance, even providing penitential sermons on days when one might not necessarily expect one. At the same time, his sense of the place of penance in his doctrine of Christianity, whereby penance wipes away sin and allows for the growth of virtue that is necessary to "see" God, indicates the importance of penance to his thought and explains why he provided so much preaching material on it. The next chapters will turn less to questions of what he preached and more to considering how he preached penance. This, in turn, will contribute both to the history of penance and preaching in the Later Middle Ages.

### Chapter 3: A Portrait of Penance

The previous chapter considered several reasons for thinking that penance was central to Servasanto da Faenza's own thought and to his sense of his and his fellow friars' mission. That penance appeared so frequently in his preaching material, his treatises and sermons, and was so central to his theology makes clear the importance of penance to him. What then, was that preaching like? This chapter and the next will move toward answering that question and well as others raised by previous chapters through considering how Servasanto preached on sin and penance. It will show how some of the penitential material in the schools reached the laity, and in what form.

Joseph Goering has argued that the establishment of schools and universities where students were introduced to a rich theological tradition was the real turning point in the history of penance in the thirteenth century. This, however, raises the question of how the work in the schools made its way to the laity. If the laity encountered ideas about penance only in their annual exercise of the sacrament of penance, then it is not easy to see how such ideas would have had very much effect on their lives or spirituality. In fact, if this was the case, then the activity of the schools risks losing much of its significance. If such ideas appeared often in preaching, however, then this may suggest a way the work of the schools was communicated to the laity. What is more, the specific way those ideas about penance were presented becomes of paramount importance since it would determine what message the laity were getting about penance and would influence

how they would have seen it. How Servasanto presented his ideas on contrition, confession, and satisfaction, thus becomes of substantial importance. How penance was presented to the laity in Servasanto's preaching thus may help move toward some greater understanding of the lay experience of penance and explaining the popularity of the friars as preachers and confessors.

It is sometimes thought that penance was presented to the laity in a punitive way, where sin is a crime that needs punishment. Steven Ozment, for instance, has opined that "one departed [confession] with a *sentence to be served*,<sup>1</sup> a remedy to be applied, a task still to be fulfilled. One did not 'go in peace.'"<sup>2</sup> Servasanto too occasionally spoke of penance as a matter of crime and punishment. As he said one occasion, by works of satisfaction man punishes himself so God will not.<sup>3</sup> Yet, on the whole, this picture of penance as punitive does not apply well to Servasanto. On the contrary, in his preaching material, he seems to have presented penance in generally positive ways, where it should be understood less in terms of crime and punishment than of healing a person from sin and aiding him in developing virtue. This may have been part of a conscious effort to make penance appear attractive to the laity to whom he preached. At the same time, however, this generally positive portrayal of penance flowed naturally from his own beliefs about and doctrine of penance.<sup>4</sup> This can briefly be restated from the last chapter as: man needs the highest good, God, to be happy, but since he is blinded by sin, he needs

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<sup>1</sup> Emphasis mine.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Ozment, *The Reformation in Cities: the Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), 26.

<sup>3</sup> "*Locutus est mutus*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.43v., "tertio debet homo loqui verbum satisfactionis et debet satisfactio esse iusta sive equa quia si homo se ipsum iuste punit deus eum ultra non punit..." See more later in this chapter when I discuss how Servasanto presents satisfaction, the third part of penance.

<sup>4</sup> I discuss Servasanto's doctrine and beliefs about penance in Chapter 2, the section "Servasanto's Doctrine of Penance."

penance to wipe away sin and help him grow in the virtue that will purge his mind and allow him to “see” the highest good.<sup>5</sup> Because of this, penance was not just a matter of crime and punishment, but also and more often, a matter of a doctor helping a patient. For Servasanto, penance should be motivated not only by fear of hell, but by fear of offending a loving Father; confession to a priest should be more like going to a skilled doctor of souls than going to a judge, while satisfaction is less a matter of punishment than a restorative medicine meant to help one avoid future sin.

## SERVASANTO ON SIN

### *Some Sins Servasanto Saw in Lay Society*

In his sermon “*Dedi te in lucem gentium*,” written for the feast of St. John the Baptist, Servasanto referred to those of his day who did not want to listen to preachers.<sup>6</sup> John, Servasanto writes, called people to penance; he was a “comforting light when he inspired the people to penance with words, examples, and works for he began his preaching by penance.”<sup>7</sup> While some heard John’s preaching, tax collectors and soldiers, and others asked his advice, there were some who hated both the message and the messenger. Servasanto explains that this was because the purpose of light, which John was, is to manifest hidden things,<sup>8</sup> especially sin and sinners. Yet, like thieves and adulterers, sinners prefer the darkness. Citing John 3:19: *The light came into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*

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<sup>5</sup> As is stated fairly directly in the prologue to Servasanto’s *De Virtutibus*.

<sup>6</sup> “*Dedi te in lucem gentium*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.90r-93r.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., f.91v, “Johannes ergo fuit lux confortiva dum ad penitentiam populos verbis exemplis et operibus animavit nam et prædicationem suam a penitentia inchoavit.”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., f.92r, “Quarto lux est natura arguitiva propter rerum occultarum manifestationem.”

Servasanto offers Herod as an example of one who did not want to hear John's call to repentance. Just so, the Herods of today also do not want to hear preachers. "O how many Herods there are today," he writes, "having the wives of others, defiling virgins, sleeping with men. These hate the light, flee those convicting them, and do not want to hear preaching."<sup>9</sup> Since the goal of Servasanto and his order was to inspire the laity to penance by their preaching, he first had to make sure people were willing to hear that preaching. Hence, he suggests that those unwilling to hear his message were sinners, equivalent to the man who had beheaded Florence's patron saint because he had hated John's message of repentance. This, of course, carried the obvious implication that those who did listen to his preaching willingly were not Herods, an encouragement that may have helped influence his audience to be more receptive to his message. In brief, sin could seem attractive and easy, penance unpleasant and difficult. The challenge for Servasanto and his contemporaries, was to present the need for penance in a positive and attractive way since they saw it as necessary to wipe out a person's sins. The potential sins in a town like Florence were many and the potential for Herods who did not wish to hear their sin denounced, was equally great. It was that society that Servasanto tried to prepare to hear his message, though he might have risked being no less a voice crying out in the wilderness of Italian society than John had been in the desert.

In the thirteenth century, Florence underwent some significant changes, one of which was the change from a feudal commune to a merchant republic with the new

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<sup>9</sup> *Dedi te in lucem gentium*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.92r, "...O quot sunt hodie inter nos fornicatores aliorum habentes uxores virginum constupratores et masculorum concubitores qui lucem odiunt arguentes fugiunt prédicationes audire nolunt sed Johannem si possunt occidunt."

## Chapter 3

merchant class beginning to exert itself in politics.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Florence saw an increasing immigration from the contado into the city, an immigration on which Florence's building, trade, and banking economy was long dependent.<sup>11</sup> Though Florence was among the leaders of these changes, similar changes were also occurring in Europe more broadly as both commerce and the amount of money in circulation increased.<sup>12</sup> In an important article, "Pride Goes before Avarice," Lester Little has suggested that moral uncertainty caused by common parts of the profit economy, such as increased use of money and usury, led avarice to displace pride as the most dangerous of the seven deadly sins.<sup>13</sup>

The claim that avarice became the worst of the seven deadly sins may be an exaggeration—Servasanto still preached substantially on pride and in at least one place called it the queen of all the vices<sup>14</sup>—but he certainly remained concerned with greed as a serious sin that needed to be repented and was manifest in lay life in many ways. Greed was a sin of which merchants, government officials and princes,<sup>15</sup> and even the clergy could be in danger. In his sermon, "*Dedi te in lucem gentium*," after Servasanto refers to John calling publicans and soldiers to penance, Servasanto declares that such advice also

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel R. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: the Social World of Franciscan and Dominican Spirituality*, (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 3.

<sup>11</sup> John Najemy, *A History of Florence: 1200- 1575*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 96.

<sup>12</sup> Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Lester Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *American Historical Review*, 76 (1971), 16-59.

<sup>14</sup> "Quomodo se habeat sup(erbi)a ad bona et quomodo ad alia mala," *Exemplis* f.82r., "Est ergo de superbia hic notandum quod ipsa est regina vitiorum et ideo sicut maximum omnium peccatorum coronam portat in capite."

<sup>15</sup> While discussing the evils of accepting gifts, Servasanto refers to the example of one prince who intended to punish another for a wrong-doing yet, on the latter's giving him a large gift of money, the prince relented. *Virtutibus* f.105v., "unde narratur de principe quodam qui vocans unum de principibus suis volens eum ab omni dignitate deponere ille obtulit sib uncias mille auri at ille exilaratus pro copia fulvi metalli benidixit per omnia illi dicens retracto cuncta quae contra te protuli..."

applies to merchants. He writes, “O happy the crowds of merchants if they observe this doctrine, if he who had two tunics or countless coins would give to the one without. Who is there today who does business justly and without fraud...”<sup>16</sup> Public life, that of merchants and commune officials, offered ample opportunity for vice. Servasanto expands on his lament for merchant dishonesty in other sermons and treatises. In the beginning of his Lenten sermon, “*Sequebatur eum multitudo magna*,” he refers to the greedy who follow gold rather than Christ,<sup>17</sup> and later make the same lament about those who “prefer to follow the world than Christ,” referring in particular to “usurious merchants.”<sup>18</sup> He reinforces this complaint in his *Virtues* treatise referring to the “foolishness of usury” when writing on the forms that greed takes.<sup>19</sup> Among other crimes of greed in a merchant culture, Servasanto writes against “business frauds.” He explains that these take several forms. Such include merchants who “sell a good as dearly as they can,” and beyond this involve themselves in many duplicities and lies. He laments merchants who lie and who use false measures to sell goods.<sup>20</sup> He does not deny the value of business, calling it “good in itself and necessary to men,” but does think it provides ample opportunity for the sin of greed if badly practiced.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “*Dedi te in lucem gentium*,” Vat. Lat. 9884, f.91v, “O quam felices turbes mercatores si doctrinam hanc observant si quis est qui de duabus tunicis immo innumeris denariis unam det non habenti. Quis est qui iuste et sine fraude mercationes faciat...”

<sup>17</sup> “*Sequebatur eum multitudo magna*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.44r, “naturale est ut homo quod appetit tota mente sequatur unde videmus avarum ubique terrarum insequi aurum...”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., “multi qui malunt sequi mundum quam Christum ut sunt omnes usurarii mercatores mali et breviter omnes avarii.”

<sup>19</sup> *De Virtutibus*, f.101v., “De stultitiis usurariorum. Viso quibus modis sit avaritia detestanda videre restat de eius specie aliquae et maxime de usura.”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., f.105r., “Quibus primo res vendunt quanto carius eas possunt et quanto possunt vilius emunt. Multis mendaciis et duplicitatibus se involvunt. Furtis se occultis inficiunt. Nunc mensuris diversis utendo... sed hanc perdit et minuit qui utitur falsis mensuris...”

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., “verum enim quod negotio est in se bona et hominibus necessaria. Volunt enim Deus ut inter homines caritas servaretur et unitas ut nulla patria sic sibi sufficeret ut non aliis indigeret ut dum una patria indigens esset et alia subveniret utraque ad alteram amorem servaret...”

Besides business frauds and usury, greed might also be manifest in the changing money economy and merchant culture through the acceptance of gifts. The danger of accepting financial gifts is not only present among the laity, Servasanto warns, but even among clerics,<sup>22</sup> since it can corrupt one from duty and compel one to serve the one giving the gift.<sup>23</sup> Finally, greed might manifest itself in a failure to give alms, itself a necessary pious practice designed to show love of neighbor. For instance, in “*Iusti autem*,” Servasanto preached on the need for alms, referring to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus and how the rich man, failing to give alms, suffered eternal penalty, and how greed prevents a man from giving alms as he ought.<sup>24</sup> In his *De virtutibus*, he again argues that the sin of greed is manifest in one’s failure to give alms, writing that “greed causes a bent hand, a hand that is open to receiving, but closed to giving.”<sup>25</sup> Such, in brief, were some of the challenges of greed present in Florence and Europe in the thirteenth century and some ways that Servasanto himself saw the sin of greed manifest in lay activity. Greed, though, was not the only serious sin that appeared in lay society; as Servasanto himself indicated, pride was no less serious a sin and was just as significant a problem.

At the same time, Florence saw the rise of the merchant classes and became a merchant republic, the emergence of the artisanal classes and more modest merchants, the

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<sup>22</sup> *De Virtutibus*, f.106r. “...Item munus a manu et hoc consistit in collatione pecunie hoc enim munere corrumpitur... totus mundus non solum in laycis sed quod est peius in clericis...”

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, f.105v, “munerum officium est hominem ex toto corrumpere... munera cogunt hominem danti servire unde cobeatur milites servire principibus...”

<sup>24</sup> “*Iusti autem in perpetuum vivent*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.99v-100r., “da pauperi...et homo manum stringat per avaritiam cum teneatur ex debito facere misericordiam non sunt nostra fratres superflua.... veniet dies illa quando plus valebunt opera iusti quam marsupia... quid servit diviti pecunia sua, quid vestimenta purpurea, quid splendida fercula...”

<sup>25</sup> *De Virtutibus*, 101r., “Tertio, avaritia efficit manus uncas ad accipiendum manus habent apertas, sed ad dandum clausas, cum enim manus se habeat ad urtumque officium.”



popolo, brought them squarely into conflict with the *grandi* or elites, “powerful, wealthy families of international bankers, traders, and landowners organized as agnatic lineages.” From the early thirteenth century, the competition between these two groups for control of Florence was central to Florentine history.<sup>26</sup> The conflict had broader significance in Italy as the emerging popolo tended to belong to the Guelph faction, loyal to the pope, while the elites tended to support the Ghibellines, loyal to the emperor.<sup>27</sup> The popolo often criticized elite ambition<sup>28</sup> and pride, which they saw as responsible for much of the elite’s resulting violence.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, violence could also be an issue for the newly emerging merchant classes as they sought political authority, while the ownership of goods itself could be seen as connected to violence. St. Francis, for instance, once explained his poverty by saying that “if we had goods, we should need weapons to defend them.”<sup>30</sup> For Servasanto pride, like greed, was a serious sin that could lead to and be manifest in violence.

In his preaching, Servasanto indicated various ways in which he saw pride manifested in lay society, most especially in the division and conflict it caused. In the sermon, *Johannes est nomen suus*, for the feast of John the Baptist, patron saint of Florence, Servasanto points to John’s great humility, contrasting it with the pride of the secular ruler Herod. “Who today,” Servasanto laments, “is humble with John... what is

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<sup>26</sup> Najemy, *A History of Florence*. See also, Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence*, 3-4.

On the conflict between the elite and popolo see Najemy, *A History of Florence*, Chapter 3 “Early Conflicts of Elite and Popolo,” 63-95.

<sup>28</sup> Najemy, *A History of Florence*, 57, “Despite his denunciation of the popolo for excessive political ambition... Dante expressed many of the same criticisms of the elite that we find in other writers, who all excoriated the elite for its factionalism and overweening ambition.”

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>30</sup> Sean Kinsella, “The Lord Give You Peace: the Preaching of Peace in the Writings and Early Lives of St. Francis of Assisi,” *Mediaevistik*, 16 (2003) 51-99; at 66.

the world today unless proud? From which come discord, war... thievery, adultery...”<sup>31</sup>

Similarly in the Lenten sermon, “*Levantes oculos*,” Servasanto also makes pride a cause of the discord that one sees in the world, writing how pride leads to division and conflict and that in a proud world that had only two men, they would be divided against each other.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, in his *De virtutibus*, Servasanto stresses how pride leads to conflict with one’s neighbor.<sup>33</sup> Pride then, for Servasanto, was the “Queen of the vices,” and manifested in lay activity in the conflict and violence that seemed to permeate society at the time.

Servasanto saw pride manifest in the conflict that rose from other sins common in lay society as well, including those of detraction, gossip, and muttering against another,<sup>34</sup> all sins that might lead to violence. Jacob Burckhardt recognized the connection between these vices and violence in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, when he wrote of the “personal need for vengeance felt by the cultivated and highly placed Italian, resting on the solid basis of an analogous popular custom... that receives the unqualified approval of public opinion...”<sup>35</sup> This, he says, is especially true, “in the case of those injuries and insults for which Italian justice offers no redress.”<sup>36</sup> Burckhardt may have been writing of Quattrocento Italy, but it seems that Servasanto saw a similar world in the thirteenth century and recognized that the violence in society could be a result of these sins. In his

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<sup>31</sup> “*Johaness est nomen suus*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.95r., “Sed quis hodie humilis cum Johannes... [Illegible] cum Herode. Quis hodie mundus ubi superbia unde discordie unde geurre... unde furta unde adulteria, unde mundatia ubi ex superbia...”

<sup>32</sup> “*Levantes oculos*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f. 41b v. “Ergo mundi superbi qui sunt duo soli homine sunt divisi.”

<sup>33</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.82r.

<sup>34</sup> Detraction meant the telling of unkind truths about another, gossip typically included untruths, while murmuring to Servasanto seems to have mainly meant complaining about one’s own situation, typically in comparison to the good fortune of one’s neighbors.

<sup>35</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, (Swan Sonnenschein & Company: 1904), 438-439.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 439.

*De virtutibus*, he wrote about the problem of murmuring, which seems to have mainly meant expressing resentment for various reasons including, one's own poverty, illness, the prosperity of wicked men or the suffering of the good ones.<sup>37</sup> More serious still, since it happens from evil intention, is the sin of detraction, which consists largely in speaking evil of another,<sup>38</sup> and the related sin of sowing discord.<sup>39</sup> Such sins, often the result of pride, could lead to the wars and conflicts that often seemed to plague Italian society. Servasanto discusses how such sins might lead to war in his *Virtutibus*<sup>40</sup> and in the *dominicale* sermon "*Ecce Leprosus*." In the sermon, he compares the sins of the tongue to leprosy. They (the sins of the tongue) are contagious in that it they harm others,<sup>41</sup> and in that even just one detractor can place a whole congregation in danger. "He often leads the city to danger of destruction since he places hatred in the hearts of those hearing him and induces them to homicide."<sup>42</sup> Similarly in the *Virtutibus*, Servasanto writes that the sins of the tongue can lead to war whereby "kingdoms and provinces are dissipated and often the Church itself is set on fire."<sup>43</sup> War, conflict, and violence in society were for Servasanto often manifestations of the sins of the tongue, of pride, and perhaps of greed.

To these sins and some ways that Servasanto saw them manifest in lay activity one might also add anger, related to pride and violence, and lust, but this is sufficient to

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<sup>37</sup> *De virtutibus* f.138v-139r, "Dico quod quidam murmurant de infirmitate... secundo fatuum est murmurare de paupertate... tertio non est murmurandum de temporis incongruitate... quarto non est murmurandum de malorum prosperitate nec de bonorum adversitate."

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., f.139v-140r, "viso de peccato murmuris viddendum est de peccato detractionis. Est enim detractio alterius fame denigratio. Est enim hoc vitium gravius murmurare... detractio vero cum ex mala intentione procedat."

<sup>39</sup> *De virtutibus* f.141v.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., f.136v-137v., "Sepe mortalia generantur guerre per verba audita moventur..."

<sup>41</sup> "*Ecce leprosus*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.33v, "...fuisse ostenditur morbus contagiosus."

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., "sepe unus detractor totam congregacioni in odio ponit sepe unam civitatem ad periculum destructionis adducit quia dum odium in cordibus audiencium ponit ad homicidia eos inducit..."

<sup>43</sup> *De virtutibus* f.137r, "sepe mortalia generantur guerre per verba audita moventur regna et provincie dissipantur et sepe ecclesiae succenduntur."

show that this is world that Servasanto saw in the thirteenth century. For him, as for Pope Innocent III and Francis, it was a world in need of penance. In the later Middle Ages, revival preachers like Bernardino of Siena saw a similar world of violence, vendetta, gossip, and vice.<sup>44</sup> As a solution, they preached penance and did so with great success. It was not only prominent and well-known revival preachers like Bernardino of Siena and those of the Alleluia Movement in the thirteenth century<sup>45</sup> that preached penance to society. Peter Howard has pointed out that historians have paid so much attention to these famous revival preachers that they have not sufficiently considered the impact of the thousands of less famous preachers and their regular preaching.<sup>46</sup> These less famous preachers, however, in their weekly preaching, also engaged with the cultural patterns, hopes, and anxieties of the society in which they lived.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, David d'Avray has suggested that the huge amount and regularity of weekly preaching would have led it to be even more influential than the shorter-term revival movements.<sup>48</sup> It is this type of regular preaching that Servasanto took part in and the message he preached to a sinful world was penance. It was a world that, as he recognized, did not always want to hear the message and so he worked hard in his preaching to present sin, which could often

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<sup>44</sup> Cynthia Polecristi, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and His Audience*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>45</sup> Augustine Thompson, *Revival Preachers and Politics in Thirteenth-Century Italy: the Great Devotion of 1233*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>46</sup> Peter Howard, "The Impact of Preaching in Renaissance Florence: Fra Niccolò da Pisa at San Lorenzo," *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 48 (2004) 29-44. See also "The Aural Space of the Sacred in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, Roger J. Crum and John T. Paoletti eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> Howard, "Impact of Preaching in Renaissance Florence," 43.

<sup>48</sup> David d'Avray, "Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons," *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History, and Sanctity*, (Spoleto, 1994), 3-29; 9. D'Avray points out that revival preaching is probably comparable to the short terms effects of advertising associated with a political campaign today. He suggests that regular, repeated weekly preaching would have been far more influential referring to it as "the dry drip method of inculcating beliefs."

appear attractive, as ultimately unpleasant. On the other hand he worked to present penance as both necessary and ultimately positive. How he did so is the next question.

### *How Servasanto Preached Against Sin*

For Servasanto, sin and the vices prevented one from having the purged mind necessary to “see” the highest good; he also knew, however, that these vices and sins could often appear attractive and desirable, while penance did not. He therefore worked hard to preach on sin and present it as unpleasant and as undesirable. In doing so, he used techniques and methods that may be roughly grouped into two categories: first, he tried to associate sin with undesirable things, as when he refers to it as a disease or leprosy. Lust might appear as an attractive sin, but if it were associated with leprosy, then perhaps it might appear much less pleasing.<sup>49</sup> Second, he preached on the negative consequences of sin, such as unhappiness even in this life. Using primarily these two techniques, Servasanto set the stage for preaching on penance, showing sin as undesirable and hence penance as necessary.

The ultimate purpose of this preaching seems to be to inspire what in medieval terms would have been called contrition, sincere sorrow for sin, rather than attrition, sorrow for sin based on fear of punishment.<sup>50</sup> This contrition was to be based, at least in

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<sup>49</sup> As in the sermon, “*Ecce leprosus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.33v.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Aquinas also calls this the difference between “filial fear,” (contrition) where one acts out of fear to offend a loving parent, and “servile fear,” (attrition) where one acts out of fear of punishment. See especially, Aquinas, *ST Supplementum tertia pars* q.1,a.2-3. In article 2, Aquinas writes, “Wherefore, in spiritual matters, attrition signifies a certain but not a perfect displeasure for sins committed, whereas contrition denotes perfect displeasure.” In article 3, “Now the principle of attrition is servile fear, while filial fear is the cause of contrition. Therefore attrition cannot become contrition. Finally, in q.3, art.1, “According to Augustine (De Civ. Dei xiv, 7, 9), “all sorrow is based on love.” Now the love of charity, on which the sorrow of contrition is based, is the greatest love.” In brief, attrition would describe a person who repented out of fear of punishment, while contrition,

part, on a sense of gratitude to God that might in turn inspire penance. This is most clear in his sermon for the feast of St. Peter in Chains, “*Surge velociter*,” where Servasanto makes a brief reference to sin as adultery,<sup>51</sup> and then reflects on how knowledge of God’s mercy and goodness should lead man to genuine sorrow for offending “such a pious father.” He writes, “It is a great sin to offend such a pious father who made us, who redeems us, and who kindly lifts us up returning to him though we offend him daily.”<sup>52</sup> Though Servasanto never explicitly mentions the distinction between contrition and attrition in his preaching, he evidently feels the difference himself and had the goal of inspiring penance and dislike of sin, based on gratitude for God’s goodness and mercy. For Servasanto, this was probably a way to make sin seem undesirable, yet also to present the need for penance in a positive way by focusing on God’s mercy.

In a similar way to making sin appear unattractive by comparing the sinful soul to an adulterous bride, Servasanto compared sin to disease, such as leprosy and blindness. Such comparisons seem to have been in part practical ways of inspiring in his listeners a disgust of sin and realization of the need for penance. At the same time, however, they flowed very naturally from Servasanto’s own theology of penance whereby one required a mind purged of sin in order to “see” the highest good, God. This meant sin could be easily conceived in terms, not only of a crime that required punishment, but a disease that required a cure. Indeed, if sin prevented one from seeing God, then it was almost by definition blindness, a disease that required a cure. For these two reasons, then, the

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considered far superior, would describe someone who repented out of love of the God whom he offended.

<sup>51</sup> “*Surge velociter*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.113r, this happens in the context of a similitude to a stork, where Servasanto remarks, “... cyconia cognoscit fetorem et sentit quando sua uxor adulterata fuerit...”

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., “Est ergo fratres peccatum grande et in mane tam pium patrem offendere qui nos fecit qui redemit qui tota die eum offendentes benigne suscipit revertentes...”

practical and the theological, it is unsurprising to see Servasanto presenting sin as an illness, blindness, leprosy, and darkness. He especially pushes the comparison in the sermon “*Ecce leprosus*,”<sup>53</sup> for the third Sunday after Epiphany, for the gospel passage:

And behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man: but go, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.<sup>54</sup>

Ill, yet unable to cure himself, the leper came to God asking for aid and only then was he cured from his illness. Servasanto suggests the same is true of sin; one must come to God, specifically to one of his priests, and seek a cure. He opens the sermon by referring to the example of animals who seek a cure when ill, including the elephants, who knowing their own illness turn to heaven for a cure when ill.

But the brute animals if they are sick seem for themselves medicine, like the bear who eats ants against his fever... the elephant if it incurs illness, procures medicinal herbs for itself and before it eats them, it lifts them to heaven and offers them to God thus seeking God’s help in its own way and thus it eats the herbs blessed by God and returns to health.<sup>55</sup>

In essence, even the animals, knowing themselves diseased and sick, seek God for a cure; likewise, man, sick with sin, ought to recognize the foulness of his own disease and seek God for a cure as well as with the leper who received his cure after showing himself to

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<sup>53</sup> “*Ecce leprosus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933, f.33v-34r.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew 8:2-4, “et ecce leprosus veniens adorabat eum dicens Domine si vis potes me mundare et extendens manum tetigit eum Iesus dicens volo mundare et confestim mundata est lepra eius et ait illi Iesus vide nemini dixeris sed vade ostende te sacerdoti et offer munus quod praecepit Moses in testimonium illis.”

<sup>55</sup> “*Ecce leprosus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.33v., “Sed animalia bruta so fuerint infirmata querunt sibi medicinalia sicut ursus contra febrem formicas comedit... elephas si infirmitatem incurrat herbam sibi medicinale procurant quam antequam comedat eam prius versus celum levat q(uae) eam deo offerat cuius suo modo auxilium postulat et sic quasi a deo benedictam herbam manducat et sanitatem recuperat.”

God.<sup>56</sup> Servasanto argues that sin both broadly considered as well as specific sins, is like leprosy and thus one must go to God for a cure. Commenting on how lepers are obliged to show themselves to a priest, he remarks, “what then is meant by leprosy in the skin save lust in the flesh?”<sup>57</sup> Other sins, Servasanto writes, kill the mind, but lust is notable in that it is especially a sin that defiles the body and even elephants seek to wash themselves of its stain. He laments that man does not do likewise through confession.<sup>58</sup>

Greed too is a sin that Servasanto compares to disease and to leprosy. In *De virtutibus* treatise, he calls it “a most serious illness.” Servasanto suggests that physical illnesses can be inflicted by God who, as a loving father, intends them for the good of those who receive them, helping to purge their souls.<sup>59</sup> Sin, however, is a different matter; being a serious disease of the soul, it requires a doctor’s medicine to cure.<sup>60</sup> Avarice is like a disease in many ways: it is both long lasting and continuous—even lust, Servasanto writes, has its interludes, but that is not the case with greed. Greed is a very harsh affliction, causing pain in acquiring, maintaining, and especially in letting go. Finally, it is a common disease, afflicting all regardless of age, state, or sex. “Avarice does not spare any honor, nor any age, nor any sex.”<sup>61</sup> In “*Ecce leprosus*,” he continues

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<sup>56</sup> “*Ecce leprosus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.33v, “...unde in verbo premissio de se ostendit tria leprosis nam primo in eo fuisse ostenditur morbus contagiosus...”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., “quid autem est lepra in cute nisi luxuria in carne. Omne enim peccatum sicut dicit apostolus quodcumque fecerit homo extra corpus est...”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., “...alia autem peccata videntur inficere mentem sed luxuria maxime fedat carnem unde elephas quando cum uxore concumbit plurimum se abscondit ad socios suos reddit nisi prius se in flumine laverit. O humana nequicia lavant bruta corpora sua ne cognoscatur eorum luxuria et non curant se per confessionem lavare rationabilia...”

<sup>59</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.100v, “Infirmos corporis sunt a deo et infliguntur utiliter a patre amantissimo... parte ad sanandam digniorem partem sunt enim ut amare medicine ad purgationem anime a summo medico date.”

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., “Sed peccata sunt infirmitates anime gravissime ad quas curandas summus medicus veniens seipsum medicinam effecit...”

<sup>61</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.100v, “primo quia plurimum diuturna... continua plus enim affligit febris cotidiana quam terciana... cum ergo luxuria habeat interpellationem sed nullam avaritia... est afflictio nimis acerba egritudo enim quanto est acerbior... propter sollicitudinem maximam quam habet in acquirendo in conservando sed



the comparison of sin to illness by commenting on the ways avarice is like this disease. Like leprosy, which “springs from corrupt limbs,” this “signifies the vice of greed, which directly is a vice generated from corrupt things as in James *your riches are corrupted, your garments are moth-eaten, your gold and silver is cankered.*”<sup>62</sup> This helps not only to make greed appear an unattractive sin, but to explain the need for confession since just as a sick man must go to a doctor for a cure, so a sinful man must go for a doctor of souls for a cure. Indeed, Naaman the leper (2 Kings 5), Servasanto observes, was cured after showing himself to a man of God.<sup>63</sup>

Besides the images of sin as comparable to disease in general and leprosy in particular, it is worth mentioning another image in the sermon “*Cecus quidam sedebat,*” written for the Sunday before Ash Wednesday and hence not part of Lent. Here, Servasanto prominently compares sin to another illness, blindness. Servasanto begins the sermon by writing that blindness in this sense may refer to one who cannot see the highest light. Heresy is some concern to him and he writes about how heresy can blind the intellect,<sup>64</sup> but chief among his concerns is sin and the vices. He writes that sin blinds man and especially the sins of greed, pride, hatred, and lust.<sup>65</sup> Servasanto compares sin

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gravissime affligit in ammitendo... est egritudo multum vilis et ampla quia avaritia non parcit ulli honori non ulli etati non ulli sexui...”

<sup>62</sup> James 5:2-3.

“*Ecce leprosus,*” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.33v., “secundo lepra nascitur ex humoribus corruptis et quantum ad haec significat peccatum avaritiae quod directe est vitium ex rebus corruptibilibus generatum unde dicitur in ca. *Ja. divitiae vestrae putrefactae sunt et vestimenta vestra a tineis comesta sunt aurum et argentum vestrum eruginavit...*”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., “... exemplo Nahaman venirent ad virum dei, id est ad sacerdotum qui est loco dei et ad eius imperium sua peccata lavarent...”

<sup>64</sup> “*Cecus quidam sedebat,*” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.38v., “Nam quantum ad intellectus ignorancium describitur primo Cecus quis enim Cecus est ut ille qui summum lumen videre non potest...”

<sup>65</sup> “*Cecus quidam sedebat,*” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39r., “Sed notandum quod licet omne peccatum que maxime hominem cecant nam cecant hominem humor avaritiae cecat livor invidie cecat timor superbie et cecat ardor luxurie.”

to blindness with the same goal of comparing sin to leprosy and disease in general, that is, to make sin appear unattractive and to inspire in his listeners a need for penance. Again, sin is less a crime that needs a punishment, than a disease that needs a cure. In this case too, there is the added clarity of seeing how explicitly the comparison is connected to Servasanto's own theology of penance since his theology held that one was blinded from seeing the highest good, God, by sin. Putting sin then in terms of disease and especially of blindness comes directly from this way of seeing sin as man's separation from God, and the need for and process of penance.

Besides presenting sin as disease, leprosy, blindness, and an adulterous bride, Servasanto presented it as a matter of "turning from the immutable good to the mutable good." In "*Conversus sum*," for instance, Servasanto gives an extended reflection on this point referring to Augustine who taught that "sin is aversion from the immutable good and conversion to the mutable good. Indeed, in all mortal sin these two things are necessary, aversion and conversion... aversion and conversion are not two separate sins, but one." He plainly uses Aristotelian terminology of form and matter saying, "In sin, aversion is like form and conversion is like matter."<sup>66</sup> The material here is somewhat philosophical and theological, but still explained in a way that an intelligent layman could follow or would serve to instruct his fellow friars. Conversion to money is called greed, conversion to one's own excellence is pride, and so all fault is named from its own conversion.<sup>67</sup> Penance, then, as Servasanto says in "*Ecce leprosus*," is a matter of

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<sup>66</sup> "*Conversus sum*," Vat. Lat. 9884, f.128v, "peccatum sicut docet Augustinus est aversio ab incommutabili bono et conversio ad commutabile bonum. In omni enim mortali peccato sunt necessaria ista duo scilicet aversio et conversio sed aversio est in peccato sicut formale et conversio sicut materiale et ideo aversio et conversio non sunt duo peccata sed unum..."

<sup>67</sup> "*Conversus sum*," Vat. Lat. 9884, f.128v, "Ergo a parte conversionis ad commutabile bonum fit distinctio

reversing the turn of sin. Where sin takes place when one moves from the immutable good to the mutable, “penance is aversion from the mutable good and conversion to the immutable good.”<sup>68</sup> Sin is simply a matter of turning to the wrong things and penance a matter of turning to the right ones.

Besides representing another positive and useful way of explaining the problem of sin and the need for penance, this also offers a window into how some of the theology of the schools made its way to those engaged in pastoral ministry to the laity. Goering’s claim that a major turning point in the history of penance was the development of medieval universities raised the crucial question of how much of an impact on the laity the development of those universities would have had and how such material would have reached the laity. A brief window into that question is offered by consideration of Servasanto’s comparison of sin as moving from the immutable to mutable good. The phrase is discussed in Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* where he defines sin similarly.<sup>69</sup> Servasanto does not cite Aquinas, but nonetheless, the similarity of material, one in a sermon, the other in a piece of high theology hints at some connection and the sermon as a possible way that material in the schools filtered to the laity.

### *The Wages of Sin...*

Besides trying to make sin appear unattractive by associating it with images and

peccatorum unde conversio ad pecuniam dicitur avaritia conversio ad propriam excellentiam dicitur superbiam et sic omnis culpa denominatur a conversione propria...”

<sup>68</sup> “*Ecce leprosus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933, f.34r., “a deo aversus est per peccatum per penitentiam se convertat ad deum nichil enim aliud est peccatum quam adversio ab incommutabili bono ad commutabile bonum. Econtrario ergo penitentia est aversio commutabili bono et conversio ad incommutabile bonum...”

<sup>69</sup> *Summa Theologiae* I-II Q.87 art. 4. “Now sin comprises two things. First there is the turning away from the immutable good, which is infinite, wherefore, in this respect, sin is infinite. Secondly, there is the inordinate turning to mutable good...”

ideas that were widely accepted as ugly and undesirable, Servasanto worked to make sin appear unattractive and penance necessary by pointing to the negative consequences of sin. The principle is simple enough to understand, as even today various advertisements try to motivate people to action by warning of the negative consequences if one does not quit smoking or act on global warming. To this end, Servasanto warned against both the temporal and eternal consequences of sin.

First, Servasanto argued that sin could lead to unhappiness even in this world. This strategy was a weapon against common human tendency to prefer immediate gratification (the pleasurable aspects of laziness, lust, excessive accumulation of wealth) and ignore the long-term consequences (damnation). In "*Cecus quidam sedebat*," for instance, he cites Apocalypse 3:17, "Because thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."<sup>70</sup> Servasanto explains that the man is "*unhappy* in life, *miserable* in reputation, poor in good works, *naked* in the virtues, and *blind* in all things."<sup>71</sup> Similarly, in the Advent sermon, "*Hora est iam nos*," Servasanto writes that the greedy are afflicted not only after death, but before it as well.<sup>72</sup> Servasanto made the

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<sup>70</sup> Apocalypse 3:17, "...quia dicis quod dives sum et locupletatus et nullius egeo et nescis quia tu es miser et miserabilis et pauper et Cecus et nudus..."

Cited from "*Cecus quidam sedebat*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.38v-39v.

<sup>71</sup> "*Cecus quidam sedebat*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39r., "unde dicitur in III Apoc. Tu dicit dives sum et nullius egeo et nescis quia tu es miser in vita miserabilis in fama pauper in bonis operis nudus in virtutibus et cecus in omnibus..."

Indeed, Servasanto continues, "is not a man called blind who prefers copper to gold and lead to silver, yet such are all the greedy who prefer temporal goods to eternal goods.-- nonne cecus ibi esse videris dum cuprum auro preponis et plumbum argento premitis tales sunt omnes avari qui temporalia bona preponunt eternis..." So here, Servasanto includes both the idea that greed can make one unhappy in this life, but also that a greedy man is one who prefers temporal goods to eternal ones, thereby imperiling his hopes of attaining the latter.

<sup>72</sup> "*Hora est iam nos*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.5r., "...unde sicut mors sanctorum est pretiosa sic mors impiorum est pessima unde mali et maxime avari et affliguntur ante mortem et magis affliguntur ante mortem et maxime affliguntur post mortem..."

same point in his treatises. In *De virtutibus*, he writes that greed makes men into lunatics since “a greedy man often is said changeable like the moon in his reasoning and reflections and like a lunatic, he often falls into the fire of anger and the water of lust.”<sup>73</sup> Finally, perhaps most interestingly, Servasanto argues that greed is ultimately unfulfilling since the human soul has an immense capacity; indeed, “the human appetite is infinite,” and so cannot be fulfilled by money. This is why, Servasanto argues, no ancient emperor, neither of the Assyrians, Persians, Romans or even Alexander the Great could fill their appetites by conquest.<sup>74</sup>

Lust and gluttony were other sins that could imperil one’s temporal happiness and lead to other temporal ills. Lust, Servasanto writes, causes anxiety in the mind, sadness in the heart, and shame in one’s visage.<sup>75</sup> Too much devotion to pleasure only makes one weak and imperils both the individual and one’s city. For instance, in the sermon for the feast of John the Baptist, “*Dedi te in lucem gentium*,” Servasanto writes of the fall of Athens, blaming it on the city’s excessive devotion to pleasure. Referring presumably to the Epicurean philosophy, which held that “all things must be done according to the pleasure of the body,” Servasanto writes that “Athens gloried in this doctrine.”

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<sup>73</sup> *De virtutibus* f.101r., “avaritia hominem sanum in lunaticum mutat unde de avaro id Mt ponit exponi, Domine miserere filio meo quia lunaticus est nam sepe cadit in ignem et crebro in aquam. Avarus ideo lunaticus dicitur quia in suis cogitationibus quasi luna mutatis et sepe cadit in ignem ire et in aquam luxuriae...”

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., “quare avarus non possit satiari pecunia est multiplex causa. Et est prima anime nostre immensa capacitas nam constat animam rationale summi boni esse capacem... cur omnia sit finita semper remanet vacua quare numquam cessat eius appetentia unde nullus rex assyriorum nullus persarum nullus principum romanorum subiugando quaecumque terrena potuit finire hanc appetentiam... item appetentia humana est infinita pecunia quantumcumque sit magna certis limitibus est artata quare non est possibile eam ulla finire pecunia...”

For similar sentiments, see his Servasanto’s *Penitentia*, *De virtutibus* f.241v, “Avarus non impletur pecunia.”

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., f.72r-72v., “Dico quod luxuriam comitatur anxietas affligens in mente... secundo luxuriam comitatur tristitia... affligens in corde... tertio hoc peccatum erubescencia committatur in facie...”

Unfortunately they were deceived. “For after the city gave itself up to pleasure, it lost the great power that it had formerly held and the city, Rome, which it had formerly occupied, seized its power. In luxury the one could not defend what the other occupied in continence.”<sup>76</sup> Gluttony, Servasanto suggests, leads to similar temporal ills. It also leads to fatness, which weakens one’s blood, lessens one’s life expectancy, and makes one useless for work and procreation. Whence the example of the lamb that is “quickly fattened, weakened, and slain for dinner.”<sup>77</sup>

Finally, sin leads not only to the temporal ills of unhappiness and weakness, but also to the great temporal ill of violence. Driven by conflict between the Guelfs and Ghibellines, and between the elite and popolo, the potential for violence in Servasanto’s time was plain for anyone to see.<sup>78</sup> Explaining this violence as the result of sin provided an immediate example of the negative consequences of sin. Hell might be a greater theoretical threat, but hell for most would have seemed to lay in the distant future and so its value as an actual threat may have been limited. In “*Johannes est nomen suus*,” Servasanto remarks that the sinfulness of the world, in particular pride, leads to war.<sup>79</sup> In another sermon, “*Dolentes querebamus*,” Servasanto argues that man is separated from God by sin and must seek God in penance and with sadness for sin. Yet, he laments, the world today does not seek God, “for this reason the world today is full of wars since it

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<sup>76</sup> “*Dedi te in lucem gentium*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.91r., “...quod philosophus quidam Atheniensis diceret omnia esse facienda propter corporis voluntatem quod dum audisset a deo detestatus est ut pro monstro illam sententiam haberet. Dixit que regi quamvis athenienses de sua doctrina gloriantur valde in hoc sententia sua falluntur quod eventus ipse probavit. Nam urbis postquam voluptati se dedit imperium maximum quod tenebat amisit et urbs illa scilicet roma quae se laboribus occupavit imperium eius optinuit. Illa per luxuriam tueri non potuit quod ista per continentiam occupavit...”

<sup>77</sup> “*Surge velociter*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.114r., “Unde exemplum ponit de agno circa cenes impinguatur cito infirmatur et moritur...”

<sup>78</sup> See my discussion earlier this chapter about the potential for violence in Florentine society.

<sup>79</sup> “*Johannes est nomen suus*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.95r., “sed quis hodie humilis cum Iohannes... [superbum] cum Herode.... unde discordie, unde guerre.... unde furta, unde adulteria...”

does not seek God...”<sup>80</sup> Man is sinful and does not seek God and does not repent and so the world is full of wars.

The notion that sin and the failure to repent led to wars seems to have been widespread in the later Middle Ages. Robert Kelly has commented that in Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur* penance becomes a remedy to war and the failure of repentance leads to war.<sup>81</sup> Bernardino of Siena similarly saw penance as the great solution to the violence that continued to plague late medieval Italian society.<sup>82</sup> For Servasanto and other preachers sin and its corollary, failure to repent, led not only to eternal hell, but to temporal hell.

At the same time, Servasanto did not neglect to preach on the eternal consequences of sin. He observed on several occasions that sin leads to the danger of hell. In the *Penitentia*, he lists of the danger of hell as the seventh of eight main reasons that ought to motivate one to penance.<sup>83</sup> The comment also appears in his St. Matthew sermons, “*Converus sum*,” and “*Postquam convertisti me*,” among others. It does not, however, dominate his preaching and he does not expand on it with vivid descriptions of hell such as are found, for instance, in Dante’s *Inferno*. Typically, it appears paired with the discussion of heaven as part of what one might call a “carrot and stick” approach to motivating people to penance.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> “*Dolentes querebamus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.31av., “ideo mundus guerris est plenus quia non queritur deus sed potius dyabolus...”

<sup>81</sup> Robert Kelly, “Penitence as a Remedy for War in Malory’s ‘Tale of the Death of Arthur,’” *Studies in Philology*, 91 (1994), 111-135.

<sup>82</sup> Cynthia Polecristi, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and His Audience*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Penitentia* f.78v-90v.

<sup>84</sup> The reference to preaching on heaven and hell as a kind of carrot and stick approach is from Clarissa Julier Taylor, who makes much the same point about late medieval preaching in France in her article, “God of Judgement, God of Love Catholic Preaching in France, 1460-1560,” *Historical Reflections*, 26 (2000),

In “*Conversus sum*,” Servasanto suggests that one motivation to penance is the penalty that man earns by sin. Indeed, “when we sin, we cast out divine grace and... are bound to an eternal penalty. Even more, as [we sin], if God did not await [us] mercifully, but proceeded against us from justice, he would immediately cast us into hell.”<sup>85</sup> For Servasanto, given that this fate awaits the repentant sinner, he would be foolish not to fear these pains and repent. “O how great is the foolishness of man! The sheep fears the wolf and flees it, the mouse fears its hunter and hides itself from it, the deer fears the leopard and flees it, [and] all animals fear the lion,” but man, who has an immortal soul that can suffer eternal penalty is often too foolish to feel his own peril.<sup>86</sup> Servasanto writes similarly in the sermon, “*Postquam convertisti me*.” The third of four subdivisions deals with how the danger of hell should lead one to repent, while it also appears in a briefer way in the sermon, “*Surge velociter*.” He offers the same reflections on how other animals fear what may impose penalty on them and adds that “the soldier fears the king and the thief, the authorities.”<sup>87</sup> Without dwelling on the details of hell’s suffering, he does insist that hell is a serious and inevitable consequence of sin that should lead man to repent.

That hell is the proper punishment awaiting the sinner should motivate man to

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247-268.

<sup>85</sup> “*Conversus sum*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.130r., “statim enim ut peccavimus et gratiam divinam abieciimus eterne pene... sumus obligati. Imo statim ut homo peccat si deus non misericorditer expectaret sed iustitiam contra nos procederet statim nos in infernum deiceret...”

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., “O summa stultitia hominis quia timet agnus lupum et sum fugit timet mus murilegime et se ab eo abscondit timet cervus leopardum et ab eo se subtrahit timet animal omne leonem et eius rugitum expavescit... et homo creatura ration cuius est in anima immortalis et pena quae ei dabitur est ex parte eternalis non tanta pericula expavescit...” Actually this is an interesting comment as Servasanto seems to be lamenting the man is foolish in that he does *not* fear hell. Talor in “God of Judgment, God of Love” makes a similar observation.

<sup>87</sup> “*Postquam convertisti me*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.133r-v., “... timet homo hominem miles regem et latro potestatem...”



repent on two grounds. First, on the purely practical ground that he should fear the prospect of hell. Servasanto also suggests that hell might motivate one to repent for another reason, specifically, out of gratitude for God's mercy. After his remark that sin merits one hell, a fate from which one is kept only by God's mercy, Servasanto urges the latter as a motive of penance. "Who would not love and be grateful to the judge," he asks "who could kill him from justice, but does not from mercy?" Nonetheless, the sinner who does not take advantage of this mercy to repent will, in the end, be punished from justice.<sup>88</sup> He discusses the same in "*Postquam convertisti me*," where he asks his audience to consider that men should repent now while they can for, now, such is God's mercy that "now a single tear would placate the anger of the judge, [after death] innumerable tears would not suffice."<sup>89</sup>

Such preaching on hell

has often seemed puzzling to modern audiences, both academic and popular.<sup>90</sup> Servasanto's intent, however, seems plain enough and was probably two-fold. First, if any listeners were skeptical of the existence or danger of hell, he sought to convince them of its reality. Many late medieval preachers complained about audience apathy and even skepticism on such topics.<sup>91</sup> Preaching on the danger of hell could convince people of the danger, thereby combating potential skepticism. Second, such preaching was probably meant to combat listener apathy. It is probably comparable to modern anti-smoking

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<sup>88</sup> "*Conversus sum*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.130r., "Quis iudicem non amaret si ingratus non esset qui eum ex iustitia mox occidere posset sed eum ex misericordia expectaret... sed sciant peccatores cercissime quod quanto ex misericordia diutius expectantur tanto si non convertantur diutius ex iustitia punientur..."

<sup>89</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.133r., "...una lacrima iudicem placat tunc innumere lacrimae non sedabunt..."

<sup>90</sup> Clarissa Taylor, in her article "God of Judgment, God of Love," comments on how many, including Jean Delameau have tended to accept Huizinga's view that the Middle Ages were obsessed with death.

<sup>91</sup> Taylor, "God of Judgment, God of Love," 264-265 comments that in the later Middle Ages, many preachers complained about listeners' apathy and even skepticism about hell and sin.

advertisements that warn of the threat of lung cancer or other negative long term consequences of smoking. The goal is not necessarily to convince the audience of something it does not already know, but to overcome audience apathy by increasing the “epistemic imminence,” that is, the felt awareness, of the threat.<sup>92</sup>

This preaching on the danger of hell should not be very surprising even given Servasanto’s tendency to present penance in generally positive terms. Since for him, sin blinded man, limiting his ability to “see” God, failure to repent and purge the mind by penance and the virtues would result in man never being able to see God. The result could only be hell. The point of such preaching, as Eamon Duffy has commented, was not to terrify, but to stir the appropriate moral response and move a person to the penance that would allow him to see the highest good.<sup>93</sup>

Finally, as mentioned above, discussion of hell was nearly always paired with discussion of heaven. If, in the *Penitentia*, avoidance of hell was the seventh motive that could lead one to penance, then the eighth was the future eternal glory of heaven.<sup>94</sup> If in his “*Conversus sum*,” and “*Postquam convertisti me*,” sermons, the third subdivision concerned hell as a motive to repent, then the fourth was heaven and the hope of eternal glory. The subjects are typically placed together in his works and preaching and were also logically connected. In “*Conversus sum*,” he writes that given the greatness of heaven and eternal glory, man should fear to lose it by sin and hence should practice penance. “Indeed,” Servasanto writes, “man, when he loses either a horse or money,

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<sup>92</sup> For a discussion of the different factors that go into the effectiveness of a threat, see Michael Murray, “Deus Absconditus,” *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*, Daniel Howard Snyder and Paul Moser eds. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 62-82.

<sup>93</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 303.

<sup>94</sup> *Penitentia* f.90v., “De gloriae eterna quae octavum est motivum ad penitendum.

immediately arises and goes seeking it until he should find what he lost. For example, Our Lord gives us the story of the lost sheep<sup>95</sup> and the woman who lost her coin.”<sup>96</sup> He says even more in the other St. Matthew sermon, “*Postquam convertisti me,*” where he begins his preaching on celestial glory along the same lines asking, “if one lost a castle, would not he freely undertake labor in order to recover it?”<sup>97</sup> “So, brothers,” Servasanto continues, “if we lose glory by our sins, let us regain it by penance... for St. Ambrose was arguing with Emperor Valentinus concerning sin and [the emperor] objected that [Ambrose] himself sinned to which Ambrose replied, “if you follow me in sin, follow me also in penance.”<sup>98</sup>

Similar preaching on heaven is common in sermons where Servasanto preaches on explicitly on penance, including his Lenten sermons “*Accepit Iesus panes,*”<sup>99</sup> and “*Sequebatur eum.*”<sup>100</sup> Likewise, in “*Beati mundo corde,*” he asks his listeners to consider the “infinite delights” of eternal happiness, talking about the greatness of those delights, as a motive to avoid sin and to repent.<sup>101</sup> This sermon especially connects to

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<sup>95</sup> Luke 15:3-7.

<sup>96</sup> Luke 15:8-10.

“*Conversus sum,*” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.130v-131r., “Quarto ad conversionem nos movere debet gloria quam peccando amisimus homo enim quando equum vel pecuniam perdit statim surgit et vadit quaerendo donec reinvenit quod amisit. Exemplum ad hoc ponit dominus de illo qui ovem perdidit et de muliere quae dragmam amisit...”

<sup>97</sup> “*Postquam convertisti me,*” Vat. Lat. 9884 f. 133r-133v., “Quarto quod movere nos debet ad penitentiam est celestis gloria a qua nos per culpa exclusimus, nam qui perderet unum castrum libenter laborem assumeret ut illud recuperare posset...”

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., “Ergo fratres mei si per culpa, nostram gloriam illam amisimus eam per penitentiam recuperemus... nam et sanctus Ambrosius dum Valentinianum imperatorem de peccato argueret et ille eidem obiceret quod peccasset ait Ambrosius, si secutus es me peccantem ergo sequere penitentem...”

<sup>99</sup> “*Accepit Iesus panes,*” Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.45r-45v.

<sup>100</sup> “*Sequebatur eum multitudo magna,*” Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.44r-45r.

<sup>101</sup> “*Beati mundo corde,*” 72v., “...Sicut dicit Augustinus ergo sic delectat humane appetitum videre pulcritudinem rosarum et florum videre varietates colorum videre formositates imaginum et omnium picturarum et pulcritudines facierum videre amenitates camporum pariter et praetorum videre comas arborum et venustates astrorum quantum delectabit videre pulcritudinem omnium seculorum si sic delectat pulcritudo creatura, quantum immensa et eterna et propterea dicitur Lu. X *beati oculi quae vos videtis...*

Servasanto's theology of penance: since penance as necessary to help one see the highest good, he then is able to talk about the delights of this "sight." If Servasanto tried to make sin appear unattractive by associating it with negative images and negative consequences, the flip side of this is making penance look attractive by associating it with the positive consequences of penance. If failure to repent meant hell, then the sin could be made to look unattractive by showing what it could cost one and hence penance could be made to look attractive by showing what it could gain one. Taylor called this the carrot and stick approach to sin and compared it to the medieval cathedrals which could often have frightening depictions of the last judgment, but which were designed in large part to show the light of heaven.<sup>102</sup> The point was not to terrify but to make sin, which surely often must have appeared easy and desirable, appear unattractive by associating it with negative images and pointing out its harmful consequences. At the same time, this allowed Servasanto to argue for the necessity of repentance from sin through the means the Church provided for such repentance. This was the sacrament of penance and though it might sometimes appear an unattractive duty, Servasanto insisted that it was necessary.

#### SERVASANTO ON PENANCE

If sin was a problem because it could blind man and prevent him from developing the virtue necessary to see the highest good, God, then the solution to it was penance and the development of the virtues. If sin both in general as well as the specific vices, could often appear attractive, then the opposite was frequently true of penance. In that case, Servasanto was faced with the opposite difficulty, trying to make penance appear

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<sup>102</sup> Taylor, "God of Judgment, God of Love," 267.

attractive and desirable to an audience he knew might often be skeptical. He was well aware that penance could appear as difficult. His frequent references to penance as a kind of medicine that is bitter at first make this clear enough. In his sermon for the feast of St. Agnes, for instance, Servasanto acknowledges this initial bitterness of penance, writing, “O that they would attend to how useful penance is, though it might seem harsh, for we see that a bitter medicine is more profitable than a sweet one. Indeed, the physician says that the bitter amigdalus is better than the sweet for medicine.”<sup>103</sup> Calling penance a bitter medicine but urging people to take it anyway seems a way for Servasanto to acknowledge possible hesitation about the sacrament of penance among some of the laity, but also to insist on its importance. Second, he seems to have acknowledged how penance could appear unpopular and difficult when, in his *De virtutibus* under his discussion of sloth, he warned against people who delay the sacrament of penance, who do not wish to make regular use of it, or even try to delay it until the point of death.<sup>104</sup>

In sum, Servasanto recognized that penance probably often appeared to many as a difficult and undesirable thing. He knew that it was not enough to make sin look bad in order to inspire penance. He also had to try to explain and present penance in positive terms, which in turn could lead his audiences to see penance as a less intimidating and more attractive experience. It was a practical way of encouraging lay (and clerical) repentance. It also flowed naturally from his theology of penance. In that theology, he

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<sup>103</sup> “*Venerunt nuptiae*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.60r., “...O utinam attenderent quam sit utilis penitentia licet modo videatur amara, nam et videmus quod amara medicina magis quam dulcis est proficua. Dicunt enim phi<sup>ci</sup> quod amigdalus amara plus quam dulcis valet ad medicinam...”

<sup>104</sup> *Virtutibus* ff.117v-120r., “De hiis quae faciunt conversionem dilatam difficiliorem,” “Quod dilatio conversionis est fatua,” “De dilatione confessionis,” “De hiis qui nolunt confiteri nisi in morte,”

held that sin blinded one to seeing God, but penance, along with the virtues, opened the eyes and purged the mind so that one can see the highest good, God. This too, would have meant a naturally more attractive vision of penance.

*Contrition: A Positive Pain*

In contrition, the first of the three parts of the process of penance, one was to feel a genuine sorrow for sin that might even result in tears for the sin committed. Tears, however, were normally associated with suffering and so seen as something to be avoided, yet in contrition, they were to be sought as something desirable. Why then was this pain a positive thing? Donald Mowbray, in *Pain and Suffering in Medieval Theology*, considered how this question was addressed by the Paris masters of the thirteenth century.<sup>105</sup> “How,” asked the masters, considering the Christian tradition of beneficial suffering, “could suffering prevent the disorder in the soul and body when pain itself caused disruption and corruption?”<sup>106</sup> In this, the suffering of contrition was important because it was a voluntary suffering.<sup>107</sup> Considering the substance of contrition, the Franciscan theologian Bonaventure argued that just as “sin was performed by the agreement of the rational will, so it is destroyed through the discord of the rational will,” hence contrition was *essentially* pain.<sup>108</sup> Bonaventure explains this pain in two ways, first, as a discord in the will and second, as the “passion that arises as a result of

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<sup>105</sup> Donald Mowbray, *Pain and Suffering in Medieval Theology: Academic Debates at Paris in the Thirteenth Century*, (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2009).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 65.

this discord, which causes a human to burst into tears.”<sup>109</sup> Tears then were an expression of the internal suffering that a person felt when he willed to regret his sin. Aquinas linked this pain in the will that resulted from displeasure of sin committed to the love of charity, since this displeasure for sin against God was directed towards the love of charity.<sup>110</sup> Contrition was a pain in the will arising from sorrow for a sin, related to charity. In this way the voluntary suffering of contrition could be positive.

In his sermons, Servasanto works to present this suffering of contrition as actually beneficial. One of Servasanto’s main ways to present contrition, the sorrow one felt for sin, was by explaining such weeping as a matter of one sorrowing and weeping to offend a loving father. In the sermon, “*Dolentes querebamus*,” he writes that one of the main things that should cause man to sorrow is the “sadness of contrition assumed for “sin.”<sup>111</sup> “Who indeed,” Servasanto asks, “would not weep if he knew himself to have offended so pious and generous a father, whence Jeremiah II says, *Know thou, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not with thee, saith the Lord the God of hosts*.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, in the Lenten sermon, “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Servasanto writes that “our penance should be sorrowful, with much bitterness in the heart.”<sup>113</sup> He explains what he means by this writing that this sorrow and bitterness is the proper response when one offends a friend and father, particularly one who has conveyed such great benefits on man as God has. “Indeed, if man weeps if he

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<sup>109</sup> Mowbray, *Pain and Suffering*, 66. “The discord is the essence of contrition, while this passion is its effect.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>111</sup> “*Dolentes querebamus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.31ar., “Tertio est dolor contritionis assumptas pro peccatis...”

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., “Si patrem tam pium tam beneficium se offendisse cognoscat unde dicitur anime Jeremias *Scito et vide, quia malum et amarum est reliquisse te Dominum Deum tuum, et non esse timorem mei apud te...*”

<sup>113</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r., “Dico quod nostra penitentia que debet esse via nostra ut sicut nunc quam nobis de est culpa nunquam de sit et penitentia debet primo esse dolorosa multa amaritudine corde plena...”

offends his friend, his relative, his earthly lord, how much more should he weep having offended his highest friend” who has given man such benefits and is his highest good, Father, Lord and most generous redeemer.<sup>114</sup> Penance then was not to be motivated only, or even primarily by terror of hell; rather, a proper contrition should be based on a sincere sorrow for having offended a loving father.

The tears of penance also helped open a man’s eyes to see the highest good, God. Sin blinded man to God without whom man could not be happy (since man could only be happy near the highest good). The tears of penance, however, helped to open man’s eyes so that he could see God. In the sermon, “*Cecus quidam sedebat*,” He argued that sin blinded man to God,<sup>115</sup> which carried the implication that hell was less an arbitrary punishment and more the natural consequence of sin. As a solution, Servasanto proposed penance and the tears of contrition. He writes, “I say that the blindness of the human soul is cured by gall, that is, by the bitterness of penance; indeed, there is no fault so grave that it is not wiped out by bitterness of the heart and not washed away in tears.”<sup>116</sup> In a related way, tears work to purge sin even by themselves. The herb is bitter that purges the stomach,<sup>117</sup> and a fault that is committed easily, is not wiped away without much sadness of tears.<sup>118</sup> He explains directly that “contrition is nothing other than a voluntary sadness undertaken from consideration of evil and excited by divine grace, destructive of

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<sup>114</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r, “Si enim dolet homo si suum offendat amicum si consanguinem si terrenum dominum cogita quantum sit tibi dolendum summum amicum summe nobis beneficium a quo nobis est omne bonum summum patrem... summum et dominum ac redemptorem benignissimum...”

<sup>115</sup> “*Cecus quidam sedebat*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39r., “Sed notandum quod licet omne peccatum que maxime hominem cecant nam cecant hominem humor avaritie cecat livor invidie cecat timor superbie et cecat ardor luxurie.”

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., “dico quod cecitas humane anime curatur felle id est amaritudine penitentie nullum enim tam grave delictum est quod non corde amaritudine abstergetur et non fletibus diluatur...”

<sup>117</sup> *Penitentia*, f.134v., “amara est herba quae stomachum purgat...”

<sup>118</sup> *Penitentia*, f.135r., “macula enim quae facile generatur non sine multo oculi dolore astergitur...”



all sin. Even more, it can be such that it wipes away not only fault, but *also the penalty...*<sup>119</sup> Such was its power that contrition could open the eyes and wipe away sin even by itself.

The tears of contrition were not only the first part of penance whereby one willed to feel sorrow for past sin; they could also contribute to making satisfaction for sin. Like satisfaction, it was a kind of voluntary suffering undertaken for sin. In the sermon, “*Iusti autem*,” written for general preaching on martyrs, Servasanto preaches heavily on penitential themes. He writes that all people sin, but that the error of the devil is that he persevered in it; he urges his audience to give alms, to aid the poor, and to persevere in repentance.<sup>120</sup> The sermon, then, deals heavily with penitential themes, but some of his remarks on contrition are particularly noteworthy since he refers to tears as a means of satisfaction for sin. Writing about the different aspects of justice, Servasanto writes that the third aspect of justice is to repent since “it is indeed just that he who sins should also do penance. Let him weep and strike his breast in weeping doing penance in order that he might make satisfaction to God.”<sup>121</sup> This does not mean that Servasanto thought works of satisfaction unnecessary, but serves as another way for him to highlight the importance of sorrow for sin and tears as a sign of that sorrow. At the same time, by pointing to the power of tears to satisfy God, Servasanto suggests that what God really wants is sincere repentance for sin.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., “...unde contritio non est aliud quam dolore voluntarius et subditus ex consideratione malorum et divina gratia excitatus peccatorum destructivus immo potest esse tantus quod non solum culpam sed *delet et penam...*” (emphasis mine).

<sup>120</sup> “*Iusti autem in perpetuum vivent*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 ff.99r-102v., “Dico primo quod est iustitia per quam reddimus ad deum celeriter nemo enim est qui non peccat et humanum est peccare sed dyabolicum perseverare... *ante mortem benefac amico tuo* et servires tuas et disperges et da pauperi... iustitia ut perseveremus in penitentia...”

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., f.100r., “Tertio est iustitia quae est penitere veraciter iustum est enim ut qui peccat penitentiam agat doleat et plangat gemendo se penitiat ut deo satisfaciatur...”

The Christian seeking an example of such penance and contrition did not have to look far. Servasanto assures his readers and listeners that even great saints and apostles sinned and repented, feeling sorrow and shedding tears for their sins. Among the chief was these was Mary Magdalen about whom more will be said later.<sup>122</sup> For now, it is enough to observe that Servasanto uses her as one of his favorite examples of a great saint whose was great precisely because of her tearful penance. In this way, Mary Magdalen was different from the Virgin Mary. The Virgin had been sinless and had no need to repent, a standard to which no one in the Middle Ages could aspire. Mary Magdalen, Jansen suggests, was a more accessible saint because of her great sinfulness, but also her great penance.<sup>123</sup> In “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Servasanto writes about these two aspects of Magdalen, both the “status of carnality in which... she befouled herself, and the status of her sanctity and grace, in which she purged herself with bitter tears.”<sup>124</sup> Servasanto referred to her in the *Penitentia* as well as an example of contrition who merited that Christ should defend her from those detracting her.<sup>125</sup> Other saints too were examples of tears and contrition that Servasanto urged people to follow. The apostle Peter had denied his Lord three times, but wept bitterly for his fault.<sup>126</sup> In a sermon for the feast of St. Matthew, Servasanto urges that his audience follow Peter’s example

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<sup>122</sup> For a recent book studying the saint’s cult of Mary Magdalen through sermons preached for her feast day, see Katherine Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., especially chapter 7, “Exemplar of Perfect Penance,” 199-244.

<sup>124</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104r., “in quo verbo venerabilis Magdalena quantum ad duplicem statum describitur videlicet, quantum ad statum carnalitas et culpe in quo criminosis maculis se fedavit, et quantum ad statum sanctitatis et gratie in quo amarum lacrimis se purgavit.”

<sup>125</sup> *Penitentia*, f.137r., “Nonne sanctissima Magdalena quae ideo ut gregorius dicit septem demonia habuit quia universis viciis plena fuit singularem gratiam apud Christum promeruit quam suam procuratricem effecit quam apostolorum apostolum effecit quam et XXX<sup>ta</sup> continuis annis absque cybo corporali in solitudine subste(n)tavit quam et semper contra omnes murmurantes de ea defendit...”

<sup>126</sup> *Penitentia* f.137r., “Apostolus Petrus quanto turpius ceteris veritatem negavit tanta dum amarissime fle(re) cepit ampliorem gratiam optinere promeruit quare et preceteris mundo famosum effecit...”

saying, “let us follow the apostle Peter who, after his denial, wept bitterly... and let us follow Magdalen, who with such tears, washed the stain of her sins.”<sup>127</sup> Even the apostles and great saints had sinned and wept at having done so. Servasanto holds them up as examples that his audiences should follow in feeling the positive pain of contrition that would allow one’s sin to be wiped away.

To weep for one’s sin, then, was indeed suffering, but a positive sort of suffering. It was a voluntary pain that could be based in one’s sadness at having offended a loving father worthy of gratitude and honor. The ensuing tears had the power to open one’s eyes, blinded by sin, and perhaps even to help make satisfaction for sin. This association between tears and the sorrow for sin that was an essential part of penance could let Servasanto put penance on his listeners’ minds even in sermons when penance might not appear to the modern reader to be a serious theme. In the sermon, “*Orate pro invicem*,” for instance, written as a sermon for several confessor saints, Servasanto preaches on prayer, advising that prayer should be devout, secret, persistent, and continuous.<sup>128</sup> In the division on how prayer should be devout, however, Servasanto indicates that he primarily means prayer should be tearful, just as Peter wept after he had denied Christ and as Magdalen obtained mercy because of her tears.<sup>129</sup> Tearful, then, meant contrition for sin, a fact that is clear enough even if the sermon was not explicitly on penance. This suggests that sorrow for sin was to be a regular part of prayer. This means that contrition was not something to be practiced only once annually before one’s annual confession, but

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<sup>127</sup> “*Postquam convertisti me*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.132r., “*Sequimini igitur apostolum Petrum qui post negationem flevit amare... et nihilominus Magdalenam quae tantis lacrimis lavit maculas peccatorum...*”

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., ff.114r.- 117v.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., f.115r., “*nonne Petrus postquam Christum negavit dum amare hic flevit... nonne Magdalena quae peccatis omnibus plena fuit veniam de peccatis et gratiam habundantem obtinuit postquam lacrimas ad deum fundit.*”

was a part of penance that was to be practiced all year as a regular part of one's prayer life. Ideally, then, penance, at least this aspect of it, was to be a regular part of lay religious experience throughout the year.

Ultimately, Servasanto presented the contrition, the sorrow one felt for sin, in a generally positive way, where it was suffering voluntarily undertaken for sin, following the example of the great saints and apostles. He preached it often and seems to have advised his audiences to make it a regular part of their prayer. This is not to say that Servasanto was a member of some "contrition school" where he prized contrition above the other parts of penance. On the contrary, he preached also on the importance of confession and satisfaction, considering them both necessary parts of the process of penance. It is to his preaching on confession that we now turn.

*Confession: the well do not need a doctor, but the sick do...*

Servasanto clearly understood that sacramental penance could seem unattractive and difficult, but he nonetheless insisted that it was necessary. When he referred to penance as difficult, he probably meant especially the second part of sacramental penance, confession to a priest. He clearly knew that confession to a priest could seem to many difficult and undesirable, as he wrote warning against the dangers of delaying confession and urging the necessity of penance. Indeed, in *De virtutibus*, Servasanto tells an interesting anecdote that indicates that he realized many people saw penance as a challenging and not necessarily always attractive action. In a section on the "sin against nature" in he tells of one occasion where his preaching led a man to follow him intending to confess to him, but the man changed his mind.

I saw that I led a certain desperate man to penance, who was changed by my preaching and, with my preaching completed, followed me, proposing to confess. And when he came to me, I could hardly get him to sit down. Even as he sat, he arose, saying he wished to withdraw and I could not prevail on him to confess. And so scarcely could I get him to open his mouth to confession, this sin making him mute.<sup>130</sup>

Even moved to a desire to repent and confess by Servasanto's preaching, when it came to the point, the man found confessing difficult and withdrew.

Servasanto tried hard to fight this hesitation. When presenting confession to a priest, he insisted on it as a necessary and useful part of penance. He does this in a large part by stressing its medicinal aspect. He presented sin variously as illness, blindness, and leprosy; if sin was an illness and penance the cure, then going to a priest should be like going to a doctor for a cure. Confession, as Servasanto saw it, should therefore be like going to a skilled and sensitive doctor who could apply the appropriate remedy.

The idea of a doctor of souls as necessary to cure sin is not unique to Servasanto or even to the thirteenth century. The image goes back to the Gospels where Jesus' opponents criticized him for eating with the tax collector Matthew; to this criticism, Jesus replied: *They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance.*<sup>131</sup> The physician was the one who called sinners to penance, an image used as well in Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council, *Omnis utriusque sexus*. After telling people to confess to their own priests, the canon urges good behavior on the priest saying:

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<sup>130</sup> *Virtutibus* f.74v. Oliger, "Servasanto da Faenza," 181, also refers to this example.

<sup>131</sup> Luke 5:31-32. *...Et respondens Jesus, dixit ad illos: Non egent qui sani sunt medico, sed qui male habent. Non veni vocare justos, sed peccatores ad poenitentiam.*

The priest shall be discerning and prudent, so that like a skilled doctor, he may pour wine and oil over the wounds of the injured one. Let him carefully inquire about the circumstances of both the sinner and the sin, so that he may prudently discern what sort of advice he ought to give and what remedy to apply using various means to heal the sick person.<sup>132</sup>

Canon 21, then, in decreeing that the laity should confess to their own priests annually, also included guidelines for the priest himself who should see himself as a doctor of souls and, like a skilled doctor, be wise and prudent, carefully inquiring the symptoms of the disease that he might prescribe the appropriate cure. In this way the priest was to be less a firm judge and more a discerning doctor.

This conception of a priest as a spiritual doctor followed well from some of Servasanto's ways of describing sin and also helped to account for the need to confess to a priest even though this may have often seemed unpleasant to many of the laity. In his preaching, he regularly presents the need to confess as similar to the need to go to a doctor of souls. Not surprisingly he briefly uses the image in his sermon, "*Postquam convertisti me*," for the feast of St. Matthew saying that "if a man falls for a second time,<sup>133</sup> he asks the doctor for a new medicine to cast out the illness."<sup>134</sup> He discusses this image of priest as spiritual doctor in far more detail in other places, like the sermon for a confessor saint, "*Quanto magnus es*."<sup>135</sup> In this sermon he talks about three senses

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<sup>132</sup> Norman Tanner SJ ed., *Decress of the Ecumentical Councils*, (Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990) 2 vols., vol 1, p 245. Canon 22 warns doctors of the body that when dealing with a physically sick person, they should also be mindful of the need of such people to call in and have the aid of physicians of the soul as well.

<sup>133</sup> Here Servasanto means after baptism.

<sup>134</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.131r., "ergo nisi post ablutionem baptismatis recidivat in culpam non debet secundam contempnere medicinam cum iam amiserit p(ri)mariam. Egrotus enim si non sit stultus si recidivet postquam a medico est curatus medicum... rogat ut secundum medicinam opponat per quam morbum eiciat."

<sup>135</sup> "*Quanto magnus es*," Vat. Lat. 9884 ff.109r-111r.

of humility: in heart, mouth, and work. In humility of the mouth, about confession, he writes,

“sin is a wound of the soul. A priest, moreover, is a spiritual doctor. But we see in physical things that he who hides a wound of the body, and does not call a doctor and ask for medicine condemns himself to death... but the wise man, when he has a wound, seeks a doctor in order that he might show to the doctor the wound that needs healing so that he can regain health”<sup>136</sup>

For the same reason that one goes to a doctor of the body to be healed of a wound, Servasanto urges his audience that when suffering a spiritual wound, sin, they should go to a spiritual doctor, a priest, for healing and a remedy. “It is therefore necessary,” he writes, “that you should disclose your wound and confess your sins.”<sup>137</sup> If a man would go to a doctor to have his physical wounds healed, for the same reason, he should go to a spiritual doctor when suffering from spiritual wounds.<sup>138</sup> He argues similarly in the *Penitentia*, where he comments that one cannot be healed of a hidden illness, “nor is a harsh wound able to be cured unless made bare to a doctor, but the most serious wound of all is sin... [and] a priest is a doctor of souls,” and so one should go to a priest for counsel and healing.<sup>139</sup>

Servasanto’s reference to sin as leprosy also offers an interesting comparison

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., f.110r., “...peccatum est vulnus anime sacerdos autem specie medicus spiritualis sed videmus in rebus physicalibus quod qui vulnus corporis celat medicum non advocat medicinaque non postulat ideo morti se adiudicat et sui esse homicida sed sapiens eg[it] dum vulnus habet medicum petit ut vulnus ei curandum exponit ut salutem accipere possit...”

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., “si opera medicantis expectas necessarie est ut vulnus tuum detegas confite(re) igitur peccatum tuum nec abscondas...”

<sup>138</sup> Such medical language and imagery makes its way into other sermons as well. In “*Iusti autem*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.100v, talking about sin and penance, Servasanto refers to the need to have one’s disease cured and the role of the doctor in curing sickness.

<sup>139</sup> *Penitentia*, f.139v., “... nullam potest recipere medicinam infirmitas occultata nec potest curari vulnus acerbum nisi medico vulnerum patrfectum sed gravissimum omnium vulnerum est peccatum sanativa gratie corruptivum et anime creature nobilissime p(er)e(m)p(tivu(m), ergo animarum medico ostendendum sed sacerdos est medicus animarum. Ergo ut possit egro conferre remedium ei peccatum est referandum...”

here. In the Gospels' incident of Jesus healing the ten lepers, he commanded them to go show themselves to priests who would declare them healed.<sup>140</sup> This followed the practice in Leviticus. There, if a leper happened find himself healed, he would have to show himself to a priest, who would declare him cleansed.<sup>141</sup> Servasanto himself made significant use of leprosy as an image for sin, especially in his sermon, "*Ecce leprosus*." This allowed him to argue that just as lepers were to show themselves to priests when cured, so to should those suffering of spiritual leprosy, sin, go to a priest and seek a cure. In "*Ecce leprosus*," after writing of some different sorts of spiritual leprosy (pride, lust, gluttony), he writes of the need to return to God by penance.<sup>142</sup> Part of this is confession to a priest. For example, he points to the leper Naahman<sup>143</sup> who, seeking healing, "came to a man of God, that is, a priest, who [stands] in the place of God, and at his command his sins washed away."<sup>144</sup> Likewise, in his *Penitentia*, Servasanto refers to another occasion of Jesus sending a cured leper to the priests,<sup>145</sup> and says that it is clear what Jesus did here and that this indicates the need to confess sin to priests.<sup>146</sup>

Putting the need for confession to a priest in this manner flowed naturally from Servasanto's frequent description of sin as an illness that needed to be cured. It offered him a way to account for the initial unattractiveness of confession and, at the same time, to explain its necessity. One may not wish to call a doctor, but one must if he wishes a

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<sup>140</sup> Luke 17:11-19.

<sup>141</sup> Leviticus 14:2-5.

<sup>142</sup> "*Ecce leprosus*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.34r., "dico ergo quod primo veniendum est de adversione ad conversionem ut a Deo adversus est per peccatum per penitentiam se convertat ad Deum..."

<sup>143</sup> 4 Kings 5.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., f.33v., "...tales exemplo Nahaman veniret ad virum dei, id est, ad sacerdotum qui est loco dei et ad eius imperium sua peccata lavarent..."

<sup>145</sup> Matthew 8:2-4.

<sup>146</sup> *Penitentia*, f.139r., "...si igitur divina sapientia quae nihil facere potest frustra: hoc in veteri illa lege significari voluit unde et leprosus ad sacerdotes dominus missit... igitur peccatum restat esse sacerdotibus confitendum."



cure; likewise, however little one might want to confess to a priest, it was necessary if one hoped to be cured of spiritual illness. At the same time, however, this offered Servasanto a way to present confession to a priest in more positive terms. Confession was not about going to a judge who would impose a penalty, but to a learned, discreet, and sensitive doctor to whom one would tell the symptoms of the illness and from whom one would receive a cure. In this way, Servasanto was able to argue for the necessity of penance, but also to present it in a positive way as he tried to make it look more attractive to the laity.

Presenting the priest as a doctor of souls, however, was not only something that Servasanto did in order to cause the laity to see priests as skilled and sensitive doctors of souls rather than harsh judges; rather, this was also how he urged priests to see themselves and to act. In short, the image of priest as doctor of souls was not only for the laity, but for the priests. This followed Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council, which admonished priests to be “discerning and prudent... like a skilled doctor.”<sup>147</sup> In his *Penitentia*, Servasanto takes a break from providing material specifically for preaching and, when writing about confession, gives confessors specific advice of the qualities they should have and the ways they should behave. This material was related not only to confession, but to satisfaction for sin, the third part of penance. Since works of satisfaction could be presented as a remedy for sin, so Servasanto includes this material under his discussion of satisfaction in the *Penitentia*.<sup>148</sup>

The doctor of souls should make the bitter medicine as palatable as possible “lest

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<sup>147</sup> Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, II:245.

<sup>148</sup> *Penitentia*, f.145v., “nunc de satisfactione restat videre quae est tertia partes penitentia.”

## Chapter 3

the sick man despise it,” and he should always act with great compassion “since he is not a good doctor who is not compassionate and no one ought to impose the weight of penance on another person without much compassion of the heart—the greater the crime, the greater the compassion should be.”<sup>149</sup> Penance might be a bitter medicine, but if the priest were a skilled doctor of souls, he would give that medicine carefully and with compassion for the illness, or sin, of the penitent. In doing so he would follow the example of St. Francis “who was weeping bitterly over the sins of others as if he had brought them forth from his own flesh.”<sup>150</sup> Finally, he should always act “with much mercy and clothed with inmost compassion of his heart, lest the medicine that should be a remedy for the sick person, with mercy omitted, might turn into poison.”<sup>151</sup> In this way, Servasanto urged his brothers to take into account more than simply the sin and the punishment, but to act in a compassionate way, feeling the sins of the penitent and trying to help the penitent accept his cure. Besides being a sensitive and compassionate doctor, the doctor of souls, like the doctor of bodies, should be learned, knowing both the diseases and their remedies.<sup>152</sup> “How,” Servasanto asks, “will one be able to give counsel if he is ignorant of the antidotes?”<sup>153</sup> In having such knowledge, the confessor could be

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., f.146r., “debet amaritudinem medicine quantum potest sub dulcibus palliare immo et de ipsa si expedit medicina gustare ne eam egrotus abhoreat... non est bonus medicus qui non compatitur egro unde umquam debet imponi alicui pondus penitentie sine multa cordis compassione. Ita quod quanto morbus est gravior tanto debet esse compassio maior...”

Servasanto continues that the spiritual doctor should be careful that he heal in a measured way so as act against the illness of a person, but not his nature in the same way that a farmer purges the tares from his field, but does not uproot the wheat.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., f.146v., “Exemplum de beato Francisco qui sic aliorum peccata deflebit quasi eos ex suis visceribus genuisset.”

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., f.147r., “Itaque ad superiora omnia est notandum quid medici spirituali iustitia... (nunquam?) esse debet cum multa misericordia et intima cordis compassione vestita ne medicina quae debet esse egrorum remedium omitta misericordia transeat in venenum...”

<sup>152</sup> *Penitentia*, f.147r., “nunc videre superem quid oporteat cum scire experte egroti, morbi et remedii”.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., “Iterum oportet aliud scire medicum experte remedii quare enim dabit... consilium si morbi ignorat antidotum.”

sure of being able to help penitents of whatever age, status, or sex. He would understand that what could serve to cure one penitent could harm another, just as the poison that is the life of the serpent is the death of man.<sup>154</sup>

In urging his brothers to think of themselves and act of doctors of souls, Servasanto urged his fellow friars, in their work as preachers and confessors, to be knowledgeable, learned, sensitive and compassionate. It was not only that he urged the laity to think of confession as going to a good doctor, but he urged the friars to see themselves in this way and act this way in their interactions with the laity as doctors of souls. This meant a more positive way to present penance where the task of the priest was more the task of a doctor than a judge. At the same time, however, in giving friars such an image and guidelines to follow, Servasanto gave the friars a way to make penance a more positive experience for the laity who may have often found the practice of penance an undesirable activity. There may not be any way of knowing if Servasanto's advice was followed,<sup>155</sup> but if it was, it could help explain the well known popularity of the friars as preachers and confessors.

*Satisfaction: Punishment, Remedy, or Both*

It has sometimes been claimed that satisfaction, the third part of penance after contrition and confession, was not considered very important in the thirteenth century. John Bossy, in his article, "Practices of Satisfaction 1215-1700," held that penance was considered almost irrelevant in the thirteenth century. "I suspect," he wrote, "that, if the

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., "venenum quod est vita serpentis est interemptio hominis."

<sup>155</sup> Though it would be surprising if Servasanto were unique in this; as d'Avray has observed, Sermons tend not to be the best place to look for original ideas. See, d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 258.

Lateran Council had not required it, the thirteenth century masters would have abandoned it altogether.”<sup>156</sup> According to Bossy, the masters’ concern with interiority meant that they were less concerned with externals like satisfaction. Furthermore they feared that overly harsh penances would keep people from confession, and for this reason imposed such easy penances that they must not have been very important.<sup>157</sup>

Even if it is true, however, that penances given were “easy” it does not follow that satisfaction was considered unimportant in the thirteenth century or throughout the later Middle Ages. Servasanto, for instance, had indeed warned the doctor of souls to impose the correct penance carefully, “lest the medicine... pass into poison.”<sup>158</sup> Yet, it would be very hard to claim that Servasanto did not consider satisfaction for sin important. He spent significant time in the *Penitentia* discussing it; indeed, Servasanto spilled several times as much ink discussing satisfaction and works of satisfaction as he did discussing contrition and confession to a priest.<sup>159</sup> Satisfaction and its various works appear regularly in his sermons as well, sometimes discussed with relative brevity and

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<sup>156</sup> John Bossy, “Practices of Satisfaction 1215-1700,” *Studies in Church History*, 40 (2005) 106-118; at 107-108.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 108, “Their doctrine was, as I understand it, that sin, in so far as it concerned the sacrament, was an interior matter to be radically distinguished from the matters of exterior social readjustment to be dealt with by the *forum externum*. They suffered from the nightmare that the infliction of meaningful penances would keep people away from confession... so the practice of satisfaction settled down, so far as we can see, into a modest or token offering of prayers and almsdeeds...”

<sup>158</sup> *Penitentia*, f.147r., “Itaque ad superiora omnia est notandum quid medici spirituali iustitia... (nunquam?) esse debet sum multa misericordia et intima cordis compassione vestita ne medicina quae debet esse egrorum remedium omissa misericordia transeat in venenum...”

<sup>159</sup> In the Florence ms of the *Penitentia* Ms Firenze Naz. Conv. soppr., G.VI.773, Servasanto talked about contrition from f.130r-139r, about confession from 139r.- 149v., and about satisfaction and the works of satisfaction from f.150r-216v. The section on satisfaction is extensive, covering in detail prayer, fasting, and alms. On prayer, he includes motives to prayer, reflections on the seven petitions on the Lord’s Prayer, reflection on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist (give us this day our daily bread), how prayer should look (*devota*, *secreta*, *continua*, and *timorosa*). This amount of detail helps explain why the section on satisfaction is so long.

sometimes in greater detail. “*Orate pro invicem*,” focused in detail on prayer,<sup>160</sup> “*Venerunt nuptiae*,” about the importance of exterior penance, including fasting,<sup>161</sup> while the Advent sermons, “*Hora est iam nos*”<sup>162</sup> and “*Suscipite invicem*,”<sup>163</sup> both include the need for satisfaction and some of its works like giving alms.<sup>164</sup> This hardly suggests that he saw satisfaction as unimportant or something that might easily be dropped were it not for the Fourth Lateran Council commanding it. On the contrary, he clearly considered works of satisfaction to be an important and useful part of the process of penance.

In his article on practices of satisfaction between 1215 and 1700, Bossy distinguishes between three different views of satisfaction. The first was to view penance in a more punitive or retributive way. The second was to follow Aquinas and argue that the purpose of satisfaction was essentially medicinal or reformatory, a view that gained great popularity in Catholic circles even in the modern world.<sup>165</sup> The third view of satisfaction was that of the Protestant Reformation, which simply denied its value altogether.<sup>166</sup> Despite sometimes characterizing satisfaction and penance as punishment, for Servasanto, the overwhelming emphasis was on its medicinal character. In the Lenten sermon, “*Locutus est mutus*,” Servasanto explains the need value of satisfaction by saying that “satisfaction ought to be just and fair since if man punishes himself justly, then God will not.”<sup>167</sup> This is necessary since God would not be just if he left sin unpunished.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> “*Orate pro invicem*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 ff.114r.-117v.

<sup>161</sup> “*Venerunt nuptiae*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 ff. 59r-60v.

<sup>162</sup> “*Hora est iam nos*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.4v-5v.

<sup>163</sup> “*Suscipite invicem*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.6v-7v.

<sup>164</sup> To this we could easily add other sermons where Servasanto discusses satisfaction including “*Locutus est mutus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.43r-44r, which deals largely with the sins of the tongue and includes the need for penance and all its three parts, including satisfaction.

<sup>165</sup> Bossy, “Practices of Satisfaction...” 108-109.

<sup>166</sup> Bossy, “Practices of Satisfaction...” 109.

<sup>167</sup> “*Locutus est mutus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.43v., “*tertio debet homo loqui verbum satisfactionis et debet*

Similarly in “*Iusti autem*,” Servasanto refers to how beasts punish themselves and says, “if beast so punish themselves... what should the rational man do who breaks divine commands?”<sup>169</sup>

Though Servasanto sometimes presented satisfaction as punishment for sin, he seems to have more frequently taken a medicinal view of satisfaction and works of penance where they helped to cure one of past sin, but also could help one to avoid future sin. This fits easily with how he often presents sin as illness and going to a priest in confession and going to a spiritual doctor who could give the proper remedy. Indeed, it is noteworthy that when discussing the qualities that a skilled doctor of souls should have in the *Penitentia*, he places this discussion under the section of the treatise dealing with satisfaction for sin.<sup>170</sup> This set the skilled doctor prescribing medicine as the primary and guiding image of his discussion on the various works of satisfaction suggesting the central place of the medicinal role in his interpretation of satisfaction. In this way satisfaction served several roles in curing the patient: it helped to free one from sin, it helped one to avoid future vice, and it could help one grow in virtue.

In the *Penitentia*, Servasanto often included the idea that satisfaction could help to free one from sin. In his discussion on the satisfactory work of alms, Servasanto suggested the value of alms in removing sin.<sup>171</sup> He cites Aristotle’s *Ethics*, saying that “virtue is corrupted in superfluity”<sup>172</sup> and so he who gives alms to the poor frees himself

satisfactio esse iusta sive equa quia si homo se ipsum iuste punit deus eum ultra non punit...”

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., “sed cum certum sit deum esse iustum sine punitione iusta impossibile est remanere peccatum...”

<sup>169</sup> “*Iusti autem*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.100v., “ergo sic bestia se punit... quid facere debet homo rationalis quia divina mandatas fregit...”

<sup>170</sup> *Penitentia*, f.145v., “nunc de satisfactione restat videre quae est tertia partes penitentie.”

<sup>171</sup> *Penitentia* f.184v.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., “nonne ut docetur in ethicis omnis virtus a superfluitate corrumpitur nonne bonitas et puritas uni

from sin “and restores the soul to health.”<sup>173</sup> At the same time, works of satisfaction could not only help to wipe away past sin, but also help one to avoid future sin since a good doctor of souls would not only cure a person from illness, but prevent its future return. Hence, in his *Penitentia*, Servasanto suggests that fasting, if undertaken out of love of God and not for some temporal purpose, can help protect one from the sins of the flesh, particularly, gluttony and lust, “hence the apostle says, *I castigate my body and drive it back in servitude.*”<sup>174</sup> Later, he suggests in the same work that “with gluttony, or the stomach, curbed, luxury is also restrained. It is clear, then that gluttony is both the means to and cause of luxury.”<sup>175</sup> The good doctor of souls, then, might prescribe fasting, not as punishment, but as a help to avoidance of future sin and vice. Thirdly, works of satisfaction could help one to grow in virtue, a fact that fits with Servasanto’s whole program of penance being to help one to wipe away sin and develop the virtue necessary to see the highest good. This is most apparent in the sermon, “*Venerunt nuptiae.*” The full theme of the sermon is “*venerunt nuptiae agni et uxor eius preparavit se,*”<sup>176</sup> and Servasanto discusses the various ways that St. Agnes prepared herself for those eternal nuptials by a clean heart and devotion, by works of penance that vexed the flesh, and by patiently bearing evils.<sup>177</sup> She worked to cleanse her heart by devout

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anima a qua consumitur...”

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., “Ergo qui largas elemosynas facit et superflua omnia indigentibus tribuit a postrema peccati dissoluit et rumpit et animam egram sanitati restituit. Elemosyna enim ab omni peccato et a morte liberat...”

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., f.207r., “dicamus ergo quod ieiunium ob divinum amorem assumptum nec propter temporale aliquod est primo ventris et veneris restrictivum quia dum stringit et temperat gulam et ventrem stringit et consequenter libidinem. Nam ob hanc causam dicebat apostolus, *castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo...*”

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., “...ergo gula frenata vel ventre luxuria refrenatur constat enim quod gula est ad luxuriam et via et causa...”

<sup>176</sup> “*Venerunt nuptiae*” Vat. Lat 9884 ff.59r-60v.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 59r., “dicamus ergo *uxor agni preparavit se* preparavit inquam se, per cordis munditiam se divinis

prayer,<sup>178</sup> and practiced harsh penance to overcome the flesh. In these ways and works of penance, Agnes prepared herself for the eternal wedding feast.

Servasanto knew that such works of penance could often seem difficult and bitter at first, but as he writes about such works in his sermon, “*Venerunt nuptiae*,” this is simply because of their medicinal purpose in restoring one to health. Just as a doctor might hold out the hope of health in order to convince the patient to accept a difficult treatment or medicine, Servasanto urges his audience to consider the prize of eternal life and consequence of losing it to make penance seem sweeter.<sup>179</sup> Works of satisfaction, like penance as a whole, could seem difficult, but nonetheless, Servasanto works to present them as necessary and beneficial where they are a bitter medicine that a spiritual doctor prescribes to cure one of sin and prepare one for the wedding feast of heaven.

#### Servasanto and His Contemporaries

Servasanto was not alone in his penitential preaching or the style in which he preached. Other friars too and sometimes even secular clergy<sup>180</sup> stressed similar ideas including: the positive nature of penance, the importance of contrition, the priest as doctor of souls, and God’s mercy to repentant sinners. The fifteenth-century theologian, Thomas of Cyncetun, preached regularly on penance. Indeed, the call to penance,

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serviciis devotiendo, per condignam penitentiam carnem operibus macerando, per malorum tollerantiam hostibus resistendo.”

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 59v., “dico quod beata hec virgo paravit se primo per veram cordis munditiam et orationem devotam...”

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., f.60r., “o utinam attenderet quam sit utilis penitentia licet modo videatur amara nam et videmus quod amara medicina magis quam dulcis et proficua... ut sic agens penitentiam quae nunc videtur amara consideret vite eterne premia et ipsa loca penalia ut sic ei dulcescat penitentia...”

<sup>180</sup> I should note that in the cases of secular clergy I consider where there is significant similarity to Servasanto, the preachers tend to be schoolmen or theologians (like Thomas Cyncetun).



especially contrition for sin, was central to his preaching.<sup>181</sup> For Thomas, penance was not an annual event, but ongoing. R.M. Ball comments that Thomas “sees penance much more as a perpetual sorrow for sins, turning aside from sin, and patiently accepting whatever pains we must suffer, rather than the performance of specific acts.”<sup>182</sup> Like Servasanto, Thomas seems to have seen penance as something to be practiced throughout the year.<sup>183</sup> As Ball observes, Thomas’s call to penance is especially a call to contrition.<sup>184</sup> In one place, he even argues in a line similar to one used by Servasanto, that “contrition can be so intense that the whole penalty and guilt are forgiven.”<sup>185</sup> While in some places, he tries to persuade people to avoid sin and repent based on the negative consequences of sin “it is not on the bitterness of affliction and death that Cyrcetur dwells. He offers a positive doctrine in the face of adversity, a doctrine of patience, hope, and even joy.”<sup>186</sup>

Ranulphe of Houblonnière and the mid-thirteenth-century Dominican preacher of Milan, Giovanni d’Opreno, did likewise, often stressing more positive aspects of penance.<sup>187</sup> Like Servasanto, while calling people to penance, they stress God’s mercy. Giovanni, for instance, talked about the danger of sins excluding one from heaven, but

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<sup>181</sup> R.M. Ball, “Thomas Cyrcetur: a Fifteenth Century Theologian and Preacher,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986) 205-239; 227-228.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 128, “Cyrcetur’s message as a preacher is, above all, a call to repentance, especially to contrition...”

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 136. This is not to say he thought the other parts of penance irrelevant; like Servasanto, he thought they should all be done, but it does show his stress on the importance of contrition.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 131. Thomas is not only considering sin and penance here, but also other afflictions of life and that of death, but he includes among this the eternal suffering that is the consequence of sin.

<sup>187</sup> L.J. Bataillon, “Les sermons de Jean D’Opreno, Prieur de Milan,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 68 (1998): 135-163.

also stressed God's mercy.<sup>188</sup> So did Ranulphe who preached that God was merciful, always ready to receive the man who repents.<sup>189</sup> Like Servasanto, Ranulphe acknowledged that some people might hesitate to confess. He urged that these hesitant ones should not be stopped either by shame, despair, or fear of priestly indiscretion.<sup>190</sup> Against their fears, he insists on priestly discretion, suggesting that the priest would rather have his tongue ripped out than divulge what was said to him in confidence in confession.<sup>191</sup>

For Servasanto, this discretion of the priest went hand-in-hand with his sensitivity and learning, which combined with other factors to make him a "doctor of souls." For Servasanto, the priest was firstly not a harsh, condemning judge, but a skilled and well-trained doctor of souls. This image seems also not to have been unusual among his contemporaries. Ranulphe too, in a Lenten sermon on sin and penance, referred to a doctor giving his patient a bitter drug to restore his health.<sup>192</sup> Similarly, the thirteenth-century Dominican and Oxford theology chair, Richard Fishacre, urged in one Lenten sermon that just as one would see a medical doctor were he physically sick, so too he should see a spiritual doctor if sick with sin.<sup>193</sup> He writes, "by which of these are you more weighed down? The flesh is sick, the spirit is sick. Which of the two seems to you more serious? The flesh is sick and you immediately call for a doctor, [but] the spirit is

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<sup>188</sup> Bataillon, "Jean D'Opreno," 149.

<sup>189</sup> Ranulphe de la Houblonniere, Nicole Bériou ed., *La prédication de Ranulphe de la Houblonniere: sermons aux clercs et aux simples gens a Paris au 13. Siecle*, (Paris: Etudes augustinienes, 1987), 90.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 92-94.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>193</sup> Maura O'Carroll, "Two versions of a sermon by Richard Fishacre OP for the fourth Sunday of Lent on the theme: *Non enim heres erit filius ancille cum filio libere* (Gal. IV 30)," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 54 (1984) 113-141; 125. O'Carroll notes that Fishacre's sermon here has some significant stress on hell; she attributes this to this sermon being for university students who, she suggests, may have enjoyed that element in Richard's preaching.

sick and you do not immediately ask for a priest.”<sup>194</sup> He too suggests that while man lost heaven by sin, God offers a return of it, and stresses the glory of heaven as a motive to repent.<sup>195</sup>

These were some of the main ways the Servasanto and notable contemporaries presented sin and penance in their preaching treatises and sermons. Servasanto used a variety of images and ideas to try to make sin, which often must have appeared easy and attractive, as undesirable, and to make penance, which he knew must have often seemed difficult, appear as a positive and necessary experience. This desire to present sin as a positive experience was in part the result of Servasanto’s desire to convince the laity to attend confession regularly. It was also the natural result of his theology where man needed the highest good to be happy but was prevented from this by sin. Penance helped to solve this problem and aided in the development in virtue that would let man “see” God. Hence, in Servasanto’s preaching, sin was less a crime to be punished than an illness to be cured, a priest less a judge than a doctor, and penitential works less a punishment than a restorative medicine. At the same time, the recommendation that priests think of themselves as moderate and sensitive doctors of souls and act as sensitive and learned doctors themselves in their ministering to the laity indicates a Franciscan ideal of confessors’ behavior. Doubtless not all friars lived up to it, but the demonstrated popularity of the mendicants as preachers and confessors suggests that many probably did. Furthermore, such penitential themes in Servasanto’s preaching, and perhaps

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 125. “...quo istorum plus gravaris? Infirmatur caro infirmatur spiritus; quid videtur vobis gravius? Infirmatur caro, statim queris medicum, infirmatur spiritus non statim petis presbiterum...”

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 126 and 132-33.

## Chapter 3

especially, his advice to make contrition for sin a regular part of prayer, point to an important way that the laity encountered penance from the thirteenth century. They were only required to confess annually, but with penance so prominent a theme in preaching, their experience of penance would have been shaped by far more than simply that once annual confession. The next chapter will continue with another major way Servasanto presented penance.

## Chapter 4: A Loving Penitent, Loving Penitence: Penance as an Act of Love in the Preaching of Servasanto da Faenza

In Servasanto's consistent efforts to make penance appear attractive, his greatest weapon was not medicinal metaphors or the prospect of the sight of God—however useful they might have been—but the image of a beautiful, indeed, tempting woman who had become virtually synonymous with penance; Mary Magdalen. For this task of praising penance, Mary Magdalen was useful. She was an example of a beautiful woman and a terrible sinner, yet one who did great penance.<sup>1</sup> She was also a willing penitent neither grudging nor forced, who did penance from a contrition that sprang from a real love of God. Servasanto presents Magdalen as a woman who did penance in a loving way. Through her example, penance became not only a matter of crime and punishment nor even more positively, of going to a skilled and sensitive doctor for a cure to an illness, but as a beautiful experience undertaken for the love of God.

### MARY MAGDALEN: A PENITENTIAL SAINT

Mary Magdalen is not much mentioned explicitly in the gospels. Among a group

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<sup>1</sup> On Magdalen and her cult in the Middle Ages, see especially, Katherine Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

of women followers who were healed of various infirmities, Luke counts *Mary who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth*.<sup>2</sup> He also includes her among those present at Jesus' empty tomb who received the news of his resurrection from an angel and reported it to the disciples.<sup>3</sup> The long ending of the Gospel of Mark includes the same, while John writes of Mary Magdalen's discovery and report to the apostles of the empty tomb before writing of her seeing the risen Jesus and initially mistaking him for the gardener.<sup>4</sup> This is the substance of what is explicitly said about Mary Magdalen in the three synoptic gospels and the gospel of John.

Katherine Jansen, however, in the *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, has observed that from an early date, Mary Magdalen was conflated with two other women in the gospels, which proved crucial for the popular image of her celebrated in medieval devotions.<sup>5</sup> The Magdalen of medieval devotion included first, the woman from Luke 8:2, from whom seven demons were driven<sup>6</sup> and second, Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who learned at the feet of Jesus,<sup>7</sup> anointed his feet with oil and wiped them with her hair.<sup>8</sup> Third, Magdalen's identity came to include Luke's sinner from 7:37-38,

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 8:2.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 24:10, *And it was Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and Mary of James, and the other women that were with them, who told these things to the apostles.*

<sup>4</sup> John 20:1-18.

<sup>5</sup> Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 33. She attributes this to a homily preached by Gregory the Great in 591. He writes, referring to the woman from Luke 7:36-50, "We believe that this woman [Mary Magdalen] whom Luke calls a female sinner whom John calls Mary is the same Mary from who Mark says seven demons were cast out."

<sup>6</sup> Luke 8:2, *Et mulieres aliquae, quae erant curatae a spiritibus malignis et infirmitibus: Maria, quae vocatur Magdalen, de qua septem daemonia exierant.*

<sup>7</sup> Luke 10:38-42.

<sup>8</sup> John 11:1-2, *Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and Martha her sister. And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick.*

And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment; And standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet, with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment... Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And he said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee.<sup>9</sup>

For our purposes, Magdalen's identification with the repentant sinner of Luke 7:37-38 was of special importance because it turned Magdalen into an explicitly sinful woman who had done penance. Having seven demons driven from her might indicate a sketchy past and could certainly be interpreted that way,<sup>10</sup> but identifying Magdalen with Luke's sinner made this part of her background more explicit and clear. As Jansen has observed, "By appropriating the identity of Luke's sinner, Gregory the Great's Magdalen inherited a sinful past."<sup>11</sup> Magdalen could thus become an example of a terrible sinner, but at the same time, an example of what Jansen calls "perfect penance."<sup>12</sup>

Magdalen thus became not simply a model of penance, but *the* exemplar of perfect penance, even more than other penitential saints like Peter, Paul, Matthew, and Mary the Egyptian.<sup>13</sup> Servasanto seemed to have thought as much himself. He certainly prized discussing other saints as examples of penance. St. Matthew himself had turned from the wrong love of money to the right love of God.<sup>14</sup> Peter may have denied his

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 7: 36-47.

<sup>10</sup> Jansen *The Making of the Magdalen*, 33. Jansen points to a tendency to interpret those seven demons as the seven deadly sins, as Pope Gregory the Great did in his sermon referred to above.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, "Chapter 7: Exemplar of Perfect Penance," *The Making of the Magdalen*, 199-244.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>14</sup> "*Conversus sum ut viderem*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.128v., "quia igitur beatus Mattheus tanquam publicanus erat ad mundum [sic mundus] conversat et a deo aversus a Christo vocatus necesse habuit faciem a lucro quo intendebat avertere et se ad Christum vocantem convertere..."

Lord, but afterward he purged himself with bitter tears.<sup>15</sup> Paul persecuted the early Church, yet after his conversion he labored tirelessly for God.<sup>16</sup> Greatest among these, however, was Mary Magdalen who had wept at Jesus' feet, washing them with her tears. She knew, wrote Servasanto, "that the Lord had said, if the impious man would do penance from all his sins, then I would not remember his iniquity further."<sup>17</sup> Great though the other penitential saints were, they were "the supporting players to Mary Magdalen's star turn as the *exemplum perfecte penitentie*, the example of perfect penance."<sup>18</sup>

Magdalen made an attractive model to follow for other reasons as well. Not only was she a great sinner who repented, but she was thought to be, like the Virgin Mary, very beautiful as well. Domenico Cavalca praised Magdalen as "the most beautiful woman that could be found in the world, excepting the Virgin Mary."<sup>19</sup> A certain Cistercian biographer of Magdalen included a long reflection on her beauty, writing how she "shone in loveliness," and was "handsome, well-proportioned, attractive in face, her hair a marvel, sweet in mind, decorous and gracious in speech, her complexion a mixture of roses and the whiteness of lilies... so much so that she was said to be a masterwork of God."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me,*" Vat. Lat. 9884 f.132r., "...apostoli Petrum qui post negationem flevit amare..."

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., "...Paulum qui post persecutionem non desiit laborare..."

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., "...Magdalenam, quae tantis lacrimis lavit maculas peccatorum sciebat quae dominum dixisse Eze. 18 si impius egerit penitentiam ab omnibus peccatis suis omnium iniquitatum eius non recordabor amplius."

Servasanto is referring to Ezekiel 18:21-22, Si autem impius egerit poenitentiam ab omnibus peccatis suis, quae operatus est, et custodierit omnia praecepta mea, et fecerit iudicium et justitiam, vita viet, et non morietur: omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor..."

<sup>18</sup> Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 204.

<sup>19</sup> Cited here from Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 154.

<sup>20</sup> *Patrologia Latina* 112, 1433-34, cited from Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 154.





Figure 1. Late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Panel Painting by Antonio Veneziano<sup>21</sup>

Medieval artwork too, as in a late-fourteenth-century painting by Antonio Veneziano, often portrayed Magdalen as a very beautiful woman with clear skin and long hair. This only helped support the image of Magdalen as a woman one should strive to admire and to imitate. In her, preachers found a celebrity endorsement of the sacrament of penance.

Though beautiful, Magdalen was a great sinner. Indeed, while her beauty was an asset after she repented, it was part of the problem in her sinful pre-repentance life. For many medieval writers, including the Franciscan preacher St. Bernardino of Siena, Magdalen's beauty especially put her at risk not least from the sin of vanity, whence might proceed worse sins.<sup>22</sup> Servasanto himself wrote about the greatness of Mary Magdalen's sins since, in order to be a great penitent, she had to be a great sinner. The Virgin Mary could hardly be an example of great penance but, because of her sinful past, Mary Magdalen could.

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<sup>21</sup> This image in Jansen, *Making of Magdalen*, 98, see Jansen for further images of Magdalen.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 155-167; 164: "More often, however, vanity allied itself with *luxuria*, another capital sin, defined by theologians as an inordinate craving for carnal pleasure..."

Servasanto takes as the theme of one of his Magdalen sermons the passage, *Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much* (Luke 7:47). Here Servasanto talks about the stain of sin and the need for it to be cleansed. He writes of the “state of the carnality and the sin in which [Magdalen] befouled herself with polluting crimes.”<sup>23</sup> First came the greatness of the infamy, then the greatness of the penance. Indeed, it was the former that even made the latter possible, and so preachers wrote about her sin in order that they might praise the greatness of her penance. Besides being an example of vanity, Jansen writes too how medieval preachers spoke of Magdalen’s other great sins, including her luxury. What is more, she was a repeat offender. One Giovanni da San Gimignano, an early fourteenth-century Dominican, for instance, noted the supposed repetition of Magdalen’s sins.<sup>24</sup> The thirteenth-century Dominican preacher Martin of Troppau also noted that Magdalen was called a sinner not because of one sin, but because her sins were much repeated.<sup>25</sup> The greatness of Magdalen’s sins was well known and widely preached.

Though a great sinner, however, Mary Magdalen had an important redeeming feature, her love of Christ. Jansen writes extensively about Magdalen’s great penance: her contrition, confession, and satisfaction.<sup>26</sup> She writes, however, relatively little about the greatness of Mary Magdalen’s love despite containing some reference to Magdalen’s contrition for her sins springing from charity.<sup>27</sup> For Servasanto da Faenza, however, one

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<sup>23</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104r., “In quo verbo venerabilis Magdalen quantum ad duplicem statum describitur videlicet: quantum ad statum carnalitas et culpe in quo criminosis maculis se fedavit, et quantum ad statum sanctitatis et gratie in quo amaris lacrimis se purgavit.”

<sup>24</sup> Cited from Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 170.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 209, “Spiritual hardness or frigidity, however, could be overcome by heat, the divine infusion of

of that things that made Magdalen such a great example to follow was her great love for Christ, both while she was a sinner and in her post-conversion life. In his Magdalen sermon, “*Quem ad modum*,” Servasanto spends the bulk of the sermon discussing Magdalen’s great love for Christ. He writes of her great desire and need to see him, to hear him and to touch him. Hence, he writes, Magdalen was essentially saying, “Lord, I desire to see you.” Just as it is natural to love the highest good, so too is it [natural] to desire to see the highest beauty.’<sup>28</sup> Magdalen’s great love of Christ sent her searching for him to try to see him. More still, her love was such, that she did not rest content with having merely seen Christ, she wanted to hear him as well, since real love is not content with mere sight. ‘Second, the venerable Magdalen... says “I desire to hear you,” for it is natural to the ears to freely hear sweetness.’<sup>29</sup> The queen of Sheba, Servasanto writes, came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and in the same way, Magdalen was found in Luke sitting at the feet of her Lord, listening to his words.<sup>30</sup>

Yet more than desiring to see and hear Christ, Magdalen especially desired contact with him. One in love is scarcely satisfied with either hearing or sight and so Servasanto writes that Magdalen was not satisfied merely to see or hear Jesus. “There is greater delight,” Servasanto explains, “in contact with the thing loved than in hearing or

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*caritas*, ardent love. Through the application of *caritas*, hardness dissolved the liquid...”

<sup>28</sup> “*Quem ad modum*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.102r., “Dico ergo et ante omnia Magdalen et quilibet nostrum cum ea desidero domine te videre sicut enim naturale est diligere summum bonum sic et desiderare conspiciere summum pulcrum.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., f.102v., “secundo dicat venerabilis Magdalen et quilibet nostrum cum ea... desidero te audire naturale est auribus libenter audire suavia...”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., f.103r., “si regina saba invenit tantam sapientiam in figura quantum putas quod Magdalen invenerit in re ipsa dicitur in Luc. Quod sedens secus pedes domini audiebat verbum illius...”

From Luke 10:38-42, this was possible because of the identification of Mary Magdalen with Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

sight... whence one delights more in the taste of wine than in seeing or hearing it.”<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, in the sermon “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” also on Mary Magdalen, Servasanto also wrote extensively on Magdalen’s great love of Christ; for him it remained one of the central facts about her. He refers to how often she thought about Christ, “bearing Christ in her memory, that she might neither love nor think about anything besides him.”<sup>32</sup>

Magdalen’s love of Christ was so great that she did not flee her Lord’s passion even when the other disciples did. Here Servasanto was little different from other mendicant writers and preachers who celebrated Magdalen’s fidelity at the cross,<sup>33</sup> a fidelity that Servasanto attributes to her great love. Hence she loved and sought Christ not only before her conversion, but after it as well, being present at his cross and seeking his tomb. This was one of the key signs of her love in “*Remittuntur ei peccata*.”

With her Lord slain and taken away, she was not sleeping and could not rest, but often rushing to the tomb and looking inward... for we see that when one loses what he loves, it does not suffice to seek it once, but to seek it often in the same place... and with the [disciples] leaving, she continued to stand there so that she might always seek the Lord she could not find.<sup>34</sup>

Such was her love for Christ that when the others left, she continued searching at his tomb and being present at his cross. Where the other disciples fled, she did not, a point that Servasanto also makes in *De virtutibus* treatise when writing about divine love, that

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., f.103v., “maior enim est delectatio in rei amabilis contactu quam sit in auditu vel visu... unde longe plus delectat vinum gustatum quam auditum vel visum.”

<sup>32</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105r., “Magdalen quae semper portabat Christum in memoria ut nihil preter ipsum amaret nihil aliud cogitaret.”

<sup>33</sup> Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 82.

<sup>34</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105r., “...talis revera Magdalen fuit quae domino mortuo sibi que subtracto non dormiebat quiescere non poterat. Sed sepe ad monumentum currens intus aspiciebat et quamvis ipsum ibi non esse cerneret.... unde videmus quod dum perdit aliquis quod multum diligit non enim tamen semel querere sufficit sed etiam in eodem loco sepius illud queret Magdalena... et discipulis nunciavit quibus recedentibus ipsa stabat ut semper exquirebat quem non inveniebat.”

is, the need to love God.<sup>35</sup> Her sins may have been great, but so too was her love for her Savior.

It was this love this drove her to seek Christ and, more specifically, drove her to seek him in penance. Because of her love, despite her great sins, she did great penance. Jansen, in *Making of the Magdalen*, wrote extensively on Magdalen's penance and how preachers found her to be, and sometimes made her into, the exemplar of perfect penance. They wrote about her contrition, her confession, and the satisfaction that she made for her sins.<sup>36</sup> Yet, for Servasanto, her great love was important in leading her to penance. Elsewhere he wrote of how she burned with love for Christ; in "*Remittuntur*," he wrote how this fire of love leads one to penance. "Love in spiritual things," he writes, "is like fire in corporal things for, just like fire has the virtue of heating the body, banishing rust and softening hardness, so also love, the fire of the soul. While it acts in the soul... it repels all cold from it, causing it to grow soft in piety and penance."<sup>37</sup> Magdalen's great love had a purpose, it led her seek Christ, specifically, to seek him in penance. This would make her an attractive model for imitation that Servasanto could present to the laity in order to present penance as a beautiful action driven by love of Christ, just as Mary Magdalen's own penance had been.

Finally, what was important about the greatness of Magdalen's love was how it not only led her to seek Christ, especially to seek him in penance, but how her love in

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<sup>35</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.35v., "Exemplum Magdalen quae dominum stricte amans sum querere non cessabat et recedentibus discipulis ipsa non recedebat quia in ea ignia amoris ardebat..."

<sup>36</sup> Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 207-228.

<sup>37</sup> "*Remittuntur ei peccata*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104r., "dilectio sive amor in rebus spiritualibus est sicut ignis in corporalibus nam sicut ignis habet virtutem corporis calefactiva rubiginis abstersivam duricies remollitivam sic dilectio animorum ignis dum in animam agit ipsam intime calefacit et omne frigus ab ea repellit eam ad pietatem et penitentiam mollem facit."

itself caused God to forgive her sins. This could work to turn penance into a more positive process driven by love and indicate a God who was pleased not only by fear and trembling, but by a love that could forgive sins. In the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto writes about how the destruction of sin is the first fruit of love. “We have an example of this in the noble Magdalen who, full of vices, carried on a great battle against those vices which merited her to hear, *her sins are forgiven her since she has loved much*.”<sup>38</sup> Servasanto refers to the same quotation from the story about the sinner at Jesus’ feet<sup>39</sup> in his Magdalen sermon, “*Quem ad modum*,”<sup>40</sup> while it also forms the theme of another Magdalen sermon, “*Remittuntur ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum*.”<sup>41</sup> The clear message is that because of Magdalen’s great love, she found her sins forgiven.

This actually represents a somewhat flexible reading of the passage of Luke, which may highlight Servasanto’s interest in spreading this message about the connection of love to the forgiveness of sins. While Servasanto interprets that passage of Luke to indicate that Magdalen’s great love led her sins to be forgiven—that is, that her great love was the cause of the forgiveness of her sins—the original meaning is probably the opposite. The original text suggests, on the contrary, that her great love was the consequence and not the cause of her forgiveness. The context of the passage makes this abundantly clear since a following parable refers to two servants who both had a debt forgiven them. The conclusion is that the servant who had the greater debt forgiven him

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<sup>38</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.33v., “Dico quod primus fructus dilectionis in via est iniquitatis destructio... exemplum de nobili Magdalen quae vitiis cunctiis plena tum fortem contra vitia pugnam supersit quod audire meruit *remittuntur ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum*.”

<sup>39</sup> From Luke 7:37-48.

<sup>40</sup> “*Quem ad modum*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.101v-f.103v.

<sup>41</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104r-106v.

would love his master the more.<sup>42</sup> Hence, in the original gospel text, love is the *result* and not the *cause* of forgiveness. The key line in the Latin Vulgate, which Servasanto would have used, reads: *remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum*. The context, (the parable of the two servants in debt) requires a translation of, “her many sins are remitted her; seeing that, she has loved much,” since this would fit better with love being the result of the granted forgiveness. Such is his interest in suggesting that love forgives sins, however, Servasanto interprets the passage “her many sins are forgiven *because* she has loved much.” In the Vulgate, the passage ends with *Cui autem minus dimittitur, minus diligit*,<sup>43</sup> which means that one will love less the fewer sins he has forgiven. In keeping with his theme of Magdalen’s love forgiving her sins, though, Servasanto uses this in his sermon “*Remittuntur*” to indicate that more love is needed to forgive more serious sins and that more sins are forgiven the more one loves. Hence he writes, “a small fire cannot soften hard iron nor clean much rust from it and so where there is much rust, a great fire is needed... and as much charity as would suffice to cleanse venial sins would not suffice for mortal sins unless it heats still more strongly.”<sup>44</sup> Magdalen, however, according to Servasanto, showed the required charity and so merited to hear, “her many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much.” Magdalen was a great sinner, but the greatness of her sins was matched by the greatness of her love which,

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<sup>42</sup> Luke 7:41-43, A certain creditor had two debtors, the one who owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most? Simon answering, said: I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said to him: Thou hast judged rightly.

<sup>43</sup> Luke 7:47, *Propter quod dico tibi: remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum. Cui autem minus dimittitur, minus diligit.*

<sup>44</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104r., “multa in ea abundantia caritatis sive dilectionis multa in ea peccata delevit non potest parvus ignis ferri duriciem mollem facere nec multitudinem rubiginis ab eo abstergere et ideo ubi est multum rubiginis requiritur magnus ignis quia modica vis amoris ad plenam anime expiatione non sufficit quia et si quantumcumque caritas peccata omnia mortalia delet ad venalia tam destruenda non sufficit nisi fortius incalescat ergo *remittuntur ei multa peccata quoniam dilexit multum*.”

for Servasanto, forgave her sins. This fit with Servasanto's program of presenting Magdalen as a model of loving penance and as a model precisely because of her love of Christ, which lead her to repent her sins and seek Christ in penance. It also had the effect of removing the punitive aspect from penance entirely.

The idea of Magdalen's love forgiving her sins might then raise the interesting question of whether or not satisfaction was even necessary. Since she loved and was forgiven, need she make satisfaction? Katherine Jansen considers precisely this point in *Making of the Magdalen*. One thirteenth-century Dominican theologian, Hugh of Ripelin suggested that "although contrition expunges the *culpa*, satisfaction is still necessary to remit the *pena*."<sup>45</sup> This seems like a puzzle since in the gospel, Jesus declares Magdalen forgiven, but no act of satisfaction is mentioned. Servasanto himself, however, suggested that Magdalen did indeed do satisfaction. Servasanto noted that the Lord called Magdalen "to tears, to mourning, to baldness, and to the sackcloth (Isaiah 22:12)." He suggested that the sackcloth signified the works of satisfaction she must have done, even though the gospels did not explicitly portray her doing penance."<sup>46</sup>

Given then, Magdalen's great sins, her great love of Jesus, and how this great love led her sins to be forgiven, Servasanto holds her as the model to be imitated, not just as a model of penance, but as a model of *loving* penance. After dividing the theme of his sermon "*Remittuntur*," into two parts, *Remittuntur ei peccata* and *quoniam dilexit multum*, Servasanto writes how the former represents the greatness of Magdalen's sins and the latter notes, "the status of her penance demanding imitation when it says *since*

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<sup>45</sup> Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*...224.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 224-5.



*she has loved much.*”<sup>47</sup> Other preachers too found Magdalen the perfect model of penance and there is some suggestion that they also may have, at least in part, found that it was her love that made her so.<sup>48</sup> At any rate, Servasanto at least valued her as a model of loving penance. This fit with his desire to make penance seem desirable and attractive by presenting it not as a matter of mere crime and punishment or even more positively, as a sick man going to a doctor for a cure. Rather this let him present penance as something positive and attractive, driven by the love of God with a beautiful Mary Magdalen as his prize example of a loving penance that one should imitate.

## LOVE AND PENANCE

### *Sin as Loving the Wrong Things*

The last chapter made note of Servasanto’s medicinal metaphor for penance. When placing penance in terms of love, however, and love as leading one to penance and forgiving one’s sins, Servasanto often discussed sin in terms of love as well. Sin represented a failure to love properly and it was often a matter of loving the wrong things. This could make sin into something negative and even naturally contemptible rather than just something that could be attractive but that one should avoid anyway for fear of the consequences.

Sin as a matter of failing to love properly, or of loving the wrong things, is an idea

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<sup>47</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104r., “notatur igitur status detestande malicie quando dicitur *remittuntur ei peccata multa*, secundo notatur status imitando penitentia cum dicitur *quoniam dilexit multum*.”

<sup>48</sup> Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 209. Jansen does not focus on Magdalen’s love in her chapter on Magdalen as a model of perfect penance, yet she refers briefly to a couple writers who speak of charity overcoming a heart hardened by sin, which may hint that other preachers too considered her a model of loving penance.

that is sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit in Servasanto's sermons. This idea of sin as a failure to love rightly finds clear expression in Servasanto's multiple comparisons of the sinful person to an adulterous bride. In the sermon, "*Postquam convertisti me*," for the feast of St. Matthew, he writes of the sinful soul "you were the spouse of a most noble king, prostituted in infernal fornications. 'O my soul,' writes Anselm, 'perfidious, adulterous, and perjured, you were betrothed to the king of holy heaven, but now to the king of Tartarus... you, abandoning God, are embraced by the devil.'" Servasanto continues in the same way, calling the sinful soul a "most miserable, impudent fornicator, and shameless whore."<sup>49</sup> For Servasanto, the sinful soul is an adulteress who has willfully abandoned a noble spouse for a foul substitute. The foulness of sin thus lies not only in a rule broken, but in a relationship broken. The sinful soul is like a bride who gave up the right love of her noble husband for a lesser substitute. The comparison does more than simply this however; it also presents the need for penance in positive terms. God is not presented as an angry judge, holding spiders over a fiery pit,<sup>50</sup> but as a wronged husband. The image of sin is less of a crime and the threat of punishment, than of a damaged relationship. Sin in this case is like adultery, a love gone bad. At the same time, comparing the sinful soul to an adulterous bride allows Servasanto to argue that this provides a person with a strong motivation to repent. For instance, in another sermon for

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<sup>49</sup> "*Postquam convertisti me*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.131v., "Et quomodo q(uae) eius nobilissimi regis sponsa es infernalibus fornicariis prostituta Anselmus O anima mea misera anima perfida anima adultera et periura quo inquit tu quae deponsata eras regi celorum sanctorum facta es tartarorum heu proiecta a deo et data dyabolus. Imo tu abiciens deum amplexaris dyabolum. O mat' miserrima anima fornicatrix impudens meretrix obstinata..."

<sup>50</sup> From Jonathon Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," *Christian Classics Ethereal Library* <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/sermons.sinners.html> (accessed Feb. 21, 2013) "...The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours..."

the feast of St. Matthew, “*Conversus sum ut viderem*,” Servasanto uses the comparison of the sinful soul to an adulterous bride in order to urge people to penance. “Would not,” he asks, “the wife of a most noble husband, if she fell into adultery immediately arise... and go to her husband [who is] calling her mercifully... but such is the soul, the bride of Christ prostituted in sins.”<sup>51</sup> Penance should thus become the natural response when one realizes the position in which one has placed himself by sin, that of scorning the right love of a noble husband in order to become an adulteress in lesser loves.

Finally, this comparison of the sinful soul to an adulterous bride has the effect of allowing Servasanto to reflect on God’s mercy and willingness to forgive, contrasting this with typical human unwillingness to forgive in a similar situation. In spite of this damaged relationship with man, God will forgive the sinful soul, something that a man whose wife committed adultery would rarely do. In “*Conversus sum*,” Servasanto continues his comparison by asking his audience to consider the “great and inerrant piety of the Lord our God for [when] the wife of another man commits adultery, [that man] expels her immediately and hardly ever spares her,” yet the sinful soul who errs in innumerable ways, “[God] immediately calls back to himself and forgives the sin.”<sup>52</sup> Speaking of the sinful soul as an adulterous bride thus allows Servasanto a chance to focus on God’s mercy to the soul in question. Unlike men who are not often merciful to

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<sup>51</sup> “*Conversus sum ut viderem*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.129r. “...que enim mulier si nobilissimum virum haberet deprehensa ab eo in adulterio non statim surgeret verecundiam indueret et ad virum indulgentem et clementer vocantem non statim ad accederet et veniam lacrimis postularet sed talis est anima Christi sponsa peccatis prostituta...”

See also the Lenten sermon “*Suscipite invicem*” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.7r., “...nam peccante uxore cum aliquo homine non vult vir eius eam amplius recipere peccat anima sponsa Christi et subicit omni culpe et tum plus eam dominus non desinit revocare.”

<sup>52</sup> “*Conversus sum ut viderem*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.129r-129v, “O summa et inerrabilis pietas domini dei nostri fornicat(ur) uxor alicuius alicuius ominis et statim eam expellit et vix umquam ei parcat... statim eam ad se vocat et omnia peccata condonat...”

adulterous wives, God is merciful to the sinful person. This serves to present the need for penance in positive terms, restoring a damaged relationship, and to focus on God's generosity and mercy.

In other ways also, Servasanto presents sin as a matter of a person loving the wrong things rather than God. In his Magdalen sermons, for instance, he often begins by presenting Magdalen's love for her Lord and then contrasts this with people's failure to show the same love for God that Magdalen did. Magdalen was burning with love of Christ, "desiring to see his face," and rushing after him.<sup>53</sup> Yet where Mary Magdalen loved Christ and burned with desire after him, people today do not follow her example, desiring and loving other things than Christ. Where she loved Christ and sought him, people today seek other things instead. Indeed, Servasanto laments, "who today seeks Christ with this desire? Who today will give water to my head and a font of tears to my eyes that I might not cease from weeping when I see the whole world to desire gold rather than the most loved Lord. Kings, princes, and all people, rush after gold, but scarcely... rush to Christ."<sup>54</sup> Rather than loving the incommutable good that was God, people looked to lesser loves.<sup>55</sup>

In other places, including his *De virtutibus* treatise and the Magdalen sermon, "*Remittuntur ei peccata*," Servasanto also talks of sin in terms of one loving the wrong

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<sup>53</sup> "*Quem ad modum*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.102r-102v., "Et si est sic desiderabilis omnibus qualiter Magdalena ardebat quomodo estuabat quomodo eius faciem videre cupiebant quae preter eum nihil aliud dilegebat unde poterat dicere illus Y's *anima mea desiderat te per noctem*, id est, dum ad huc essem in tenebris peccatorum sive inter tenebras mundanorum..."

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., f.102v., "...sed quis hodie habet hoc desiderio quaerit Christum, quis dabit capiti meo aquam et oculis meis fontem lacrimarum ut non cesset a fletu cum videam omnem mundum magis desiderare aurum quam amantissimum dominum. Currunt reges currunt principes currunt pariter omnes gentes ad aurum sed vix est unde qui currat ad Christum..."

<sup>55</sup> Servasanto often called sin a matter of turning from the incommutable good to the commutable good, as in the St. Matthew sermon, "*Conversus sum ut viderem*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.128v., "peccatum est sicut docet Aug. est aversio an incommutabili bono et conversio ad commutabile bonum."

things. In “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” for instance, he writes extensively about Magdalen’s great love for Christ and again contrasts this with the lesser loves of those today who fail to follow her example. Magdalen’s great love of Christ was evident based on how much she thought of him and sought for him. A man knows what he loves, Servasanto suggests, by what he thinks of. Where Magdalen “always bore Christ in her memory,”<sup>56</sup> Servasanto warns people who think more of other things saying, “if you think more of the world, of profit, of carnal friends or companions than Christ... this is a certain argument that you love those things more than Christ.”<sup>57</sup> Such loves become sinful whence, “the greedy man thinks of worldly goods and the proud man of dominion.”<sup>58</sup> Likewise one loves the wrong things when he seeks after the wrong things. Magdalen rightly loved Jesus and because she loved him, sought after him, even after death.<sup>59</sup> Sinful men today, however, do not seek Christ, but just as they think of other things, they seek other things. “But who seeks Christ today,” Servasanto writes, “the lustful and the gluttonous seek sweet things, the proud seek high places, and the greedy seek money rather than Christ.”<sup>60</sup> All these sins are committed by those who love the wrong things and do not

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<sup>56</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105r., “...non talis Magdalena quae semper portabat Christum in memoriam ut nihil preter ipsum amaret nihil alius cogitaret...”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., f.104v., “...ergo si plus cogitas de mundo plus de lucro plus de carnali amico vel socio quam de Christo non vertas in dubium, sed sit tibi certissimum argumentum quod amas plus ista quam Christi...”

<sup>58</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.35v., “dico quod primum signum dilectionis divine est sepe de deo cogitare ubi enim thaurus est hominis ibi cor eius erit sepe enim recogitantur amata unde avari de lucris superbi de dominiis gulosi de cibis sepiissime cogitant.

<sup>59</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105r., “...talis revera Magdalen fuit quae domino mortuo sibi que subtracto non dormiebat quiescere non poterat. Sed sepe ad monumentum currens intus aspiciebat et quamvis ipsum ibi non esse cerneret... unde videmus quod dum perdit aliquis quod multum diligit non enim tamen semel querere sufficit sed etiam in eodem loco sepius illud queret Magdalena... et discipulis nunciavit quibus recedentibus ipsa stabat ut semper exquerebat quem non inveniebat.”

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., f.105v., “Sed quis hodie Christum querit? Querunt luxuriosi et gulosi suavia querunt superbi sublimia querunt avari pecunia magis quam Christum. Vere diligit homo asinum suum porcum et equum imo denarium unum quam dominum unde hoc probas certe ex inquisitione sollicita nam perdit homo bovem et sollicite eum querit perdit equum et non quiescit perdit ovem et post eam vadit... sed perdit homo peccando Christum et quiescit dormit comedit et non querit. O quot sunt qui diu dormiunt in peccatis...”

love God enough since, for Servasanto, it is the smallness of one's love for God that leads a person to commit these sins. Sin thus becomes a failure to love rightly. This is contrasted with Magdalen who loved God so much she found her own sins forgiven. This gave Servasanto a positive way to present sin and the need for penance and a beautiful example of it in Mary Magdalen who could help make penance not only tolerable, but also attractive and desirable.

### *The Right Love of God*

If Servasanto often presented sin as a matter of loving the wrong things, then he had also to talk about the need of loving the right one, God, as Mary Magdalen did. Yet to love God might not always seem as obvious or easy as it was to Magdalen. The love of money, fame, or some other vice could seem easy and such vices often appear attractive. To love God might seem more difficult than love of material things even if the idea itself of divine love could be an attractive one and find an attractive model in Mary Magdalen. Hence, Servasanto preached often on the need to follow Magdalen in love of God and on the reasons for which one should love God. He argued for the need for a pure love of God, both in his Magdalen sermons and his *De virtutibus* treatise. Such a love should not be "like gold that is impure and mixed with lesser metals... and likewise, a love that is mixed and impure is a virtue less pleasing to God"<sup>61</sup> By contrast, Mary Magdalen did not mix her love for Christ with any lesser metals, rather "she held in contempt the kingdom of the world and all ornament because of the love of the Lord

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<sup>61</sup> "Remittuntur ei peccata," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105v., "tercia dilectionis signum est sinceritas affectionis. Est enim sincere deum diligere nihil nisi ipsum et propter ipsum amare unde Augustinus... in libro confessionis minus te domine amat qui tecum aliquid amat quod non propter te amat sicut enim aurum mixtum et impurum... sic dilectio mixta et non pura minus est deo accepta virtus..."

Jesus Christ.”<sup>62</sup> This pure divine love, writes Servasanto in the *De virtutibus*, since it is more remote than worldly love, is more successful in bringing one closer to God.<sup>63</sup>

Servasanto writes further of the need for one to love God and how that love should be. He argues that love of God should be whole and without division, without error, without forgetting, and should be the highest love before which nothing is put. Such is the preaching contained in his Lenten sermon, “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” where Servasanto preaches so extensively on the need for love and penance. In other preaching, he had described sin as loving the wrong things like the love of gold (avarice) or high places (pride). Now Servasanto urges that love of God should be greater than even other legitimate loves. “Divine love,” he writes, “should be high so that nothing else might be placed before it in love... the Lord said in Matthew [10:37], *he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me*.”<sup>64</sup> Servasanto thus argues that love of God should exceed not only illegitimate loves, but also the legitimate loves such as love of family.<sup>65</sup> In addition such love must be without error or forgetfulness, and be proved in work.<sup>66</sup>

Such at least was what a person needed to do; he had to avoid the wrong loves

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<sup>62</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105v., “sic enim eum Magdalen amabat... regnum mundi et omnem ornamentum seculi [scl’i] contempsi propter amorem domini Iesu Christi...”

<sup>63</sup> *Virtutibus*, f.36r., “... dilectio ipsa divina quanto est remotior a mundana tanta magis est in deum ductam et assimilata.”

<sup>64</sup> “*Ambula te in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42v., “secundo divina dilectio debet omne summa ut nihil ei in dilectione preponatur immo ut alia minus eo amentur... dominus dixit Mt. *qui amat patrem vel matrem plus quam me non me dignus* etc...”

<sup>65</sup> A point also made in *Virtutibus*, f.36r., “caritas debet esse precipua in affectione... *qui amat patrem vel matrem plus quam me non me dignus*...”

<sup>66</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42v., “quid est diligere toto corde nisi ex toto intellectu sine errore quid ex tota mente ex tota memoria sine oblivione quid ex tota anima nisi ex tota voluntate sine omni conditione quid est omnibus viribus nisi in omni nostro opere...”

In addition, love of God should be true without simulation and perpetual in duration. *De virtutibus* f.36r., “tertio dilectio debet esse vera sine simulatione... quantum dilectio debet esse perpetua in duratione...”

that led to sin and repent, turning to the right love of God. This, however, might be easier said than done, as was the case of penance in general. Though Servasanto insisted on the need to love God, he also knew it might seem easy to love the things of the world, even the vices, but more difficult to love God. Yet, since he tried to present the love of God as an important motive to penance and to present penance in terms of the need to return to a right love of God, in order to be effective, he also wanted his preaching to help a person to love God. Admiring Magdalen's love for Christ, which led her to penance and forgave her sins, Servasanto wanted to inspire in his listeners a similar love of Christ that could also lead them to seek Christ in a loving penance. He thus preached several causes that should lead one to love God: such love is natural because God is naturally desirable, love of God could proceed from gratitude for God's gifts, and God's love for each person should lead that person to love God in return.

In the prologue of his *De virtutibus*, Servasanto had argued that it was natural to desire the highest good,<sup>67</sup> while in the "*Quem ad modum*" sermon on Mary Magdalen, he suggests that it is just as natural to love the highest good as Magdalen did. He puts words in the mouth of Mary Magdalen, "I desire to see you Lord," explaining that "for just as it is natural to love the highest good, so too is it natural to desire to see the highest beauty."<sup>68</sup> Later in the same sermon, he pushes the same point, that love of God should simply be natural to a person. He writes how just as the highest good should be naturally desirable, so too is Jesus whom Magdalen had so loved and sought after. Indeed, he

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<sup>67</sup> *De virtutibus* f.1r, "Nam et dicitur in principio Ethicorum: omnia bonum exoptant. Nec dubium quin appetant summum bonum quod omne desiderium complet humanum..."

<sup>68</sup> "*Quem ad modum*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.102r., "Dico quod ergo et ante Magdalen et quilibet nostrum cum ea: desidero domine te videre sicut enim. Sicut enim naturale est diligere summum bonum sic et desiderare conispicere summum pulcrum..."



writes, “the eagle delights when it sees the sweetness of the sun... and if this material sun so delights the eye, how much more... the spiritual sun... this is, therefore, our Lord savior.”<sup>69</sup> For Servasanto part of the reason one should love God thus lies in the fact of God’s nature; if one delights so in corporal things, then how much more ought one to love that which is far above them. This desirability is especially great, he suggests, to sinners who desire and love Christ as Magdalen did. “If only unhappy sinners knew how sweet and pleasing to the heart it is to hear divine wisdom speaking,” how much happier they would be.<sup>70</sup> So for Servasanto, trying to help his audience to develop the love of God that he hoped would lead them to penance, the first reason he gave for such love was that it should be natural, sweet, and pleasurable.

Wanting to help his audience develop the love of God that would lead to repentance, as it had for Magdalen, Servasanto also urged more tangible reasons that should lead people to the love of God besides his natural desirability. One was gratitude for God’s gifts, while he suggested that the greatest of all reasons that should lead one to love God was a more specific reason for gratitude, namely gratitude for God’s love of man.<sup>71</sup> In a sermon for a confessor, “*Beatus vir qui suffert temptationem*,” Servasanto argues that animals love their own benefactors and that man should do likewise.

“Animals,” he writes, “love and are very faithful to their own benefactors, just like many

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<sup>69</sup> “*Quem ad modum*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.102r., “Item miro modo aquila delectatur dum solis pulcritudinem intuetur... et si tanta est pulcritudine in create hoc sole quanta est in sole creante et cunctis rebus pulcritudinem dante. Est igitur salvator noster de quo dicitur Pe. *in quem desiderant angeli prospicere*.” [1 Peter 1:12].

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., f.103r., “o scirent miseri peccatores quam sit dulce quam suave intus in corde divinam sapientiam loquentem audire omnia dimitterent de nullo curarent sed ad eius auditum lycis affectibus aspirarent...”

<sup>71</sup> In his *De virtutibus*, Servasanto lists these two, gratitude for gifts and God’s love for man, as two separate motives; it strikes me, though, that recognizing God’s love for man as a motive to love God entails gratitude for God’s love, so I link them here.

examples of lions, dogs, and horses prove.”<sup>72</sup> In the *De virtutibus* also, Servasanto urges that the example of all creatures should incite man to a love of God as “even dogs recognize their lords and benefactors and are faithful to them and die for them.”<sup>73</sup> Just as animals are grateful to man for the benefits man gives, so too man should be grateful and love God for the many natural benefits that God gives including the benefit of the human body. Just as a blind man would love one who gave him sight so too, Servasanto suggests, should man love God who gave him a body.<sup>74</sup> Presenting the benefits of God this way and the need for people to remember them was common in medieval preaching. Kimberly Rivers, for instance, pointed to how preachers reminded man of God’s benefits, confident that such a memory would help to extirpate vice and lead to penance.<sup>75</sup> The greatest of these benefits was not physical, however, but spiritual, specifically the passion of Christ.

As Servasanto preached about the motives for the love of God, he preached about what he evidently saw as the greatest motive to love God: God’s love for man. In preaching about God’s love for man, he hoped to motivate in his audience the love of God that he hoped would lead them to seek God in penance. He had argued that man’s love of God should be pure and “not mixed with lesser metals,” and likewise writes that God’s love of man is likewise pure, for God loves man for his own sake and not for any

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<sup>72</sup> “*Beatus vir qui suffert temptationem*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.103v., “amant animalia et sunt suis benefactoribus valde fidelia sicut leonum anum, et eorum multa probat exempla...”

<sup>73</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.31r-31v., “...ad deum amandum omnis incitat creatura propter quod omnia creature... et nonne canes benefactores suos et dominos recognoscit et in tamen eis fideles sunt quod pro eis in mortem se tradunt...”

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, f.30v., “secundo ad amandum deum incitat ipsa natura a deo accepta nonne si cecus esses eum diligere qui tibi oculos daret... et si leprosus esses non illum diligeres qui sanum te faceret, ergo quam deus est diligendus qui totum corpus tibi dedit et sanum te fecit et si tamen amandus est propter corpus ad des cum tibi datus est animus ad ymaginem dei factus...”

<sup>75</sup> Kimberly Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice: Memory, Images, and Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 232.

benefits man can convey on God. Hence, “God loves us when he gives us grace, forgives our guilt, and protects us from sinning.”<sup>76</sup> Besides loving man and hence granting grace, forgiving guilt, and guarding from sin, Servasanto urges that his audience especially consider God’s love and patience to sinners. In the sermon, “*Caritas pociens est*,” written for the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, Servasanto wrote a sermon primarily on charity, how it caused other goods to have value, how it rightly orders a man to his neighbor and God, and its other benefits. In the course of the sermon, however, he refers to charity not only as man’s love for God, but also as God’s love for man, especially for sinners. Writing of divine charity, he cites part of verses 3:17-18 of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians:<sup>77</sup> Servasanto turns that citation into a reflection on divine love and patience to sinners: “*being rooted and founded in charity in order that you might be able to understand with all the saints what is the length of divine patience [given] to sinners for repentance, from seeing the wideness of divine mercy, [and] the sublimity of divine sensitivity in forgiving sins...*”<sup>78</sup> For Servasanto, God’s love for man is great and this is especially the case in respect to sinners and he urges his audience to consider divine love and mercy for sinners.

Finally, the greatest sign of God’s love for man that should lead man to love God

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<sup>76</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.32r., “quarto ad deum amandum movere nos debet si consideremus quare nos diligit numquid ad suam utilitatem qui bonis nostris non indiget si enim ex bonis nostris proficeret summum bonum esse non posset quia perfecto bono nulla fieri potest additio ergo divina dilectio est tamen nostra provection... tunc enim nos diligit quando gratiam tribuit quando culpam dimittit et quando nos a peccando custodit...”

<sup>77</sup> Ephesians 3:17-19., Christum habitare per fidem in cordibus vestris: in caritate radicati, et fundati, ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quae sit latitudo, et longitudo, et sublimitas, et profundum: scire etiam supere minentem scientiae caritatem Christi, ut impleamini in omnem plenitudinem Dei.

<sup>78</sup> “*Caritas pociens est*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.38v., “unde scribit apostolus ad eph *in caritate radicati, et fundati, ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quae sit latitudo* divine patientie peccatores ad penitentiam ex spectando *latitudo* divine misericordie peccata condonando *sublimitas* divine sensibilitate...”

in return was the Incarnation and Crucifixion. Servasanto had urged that man should love God in gratitude for the gifts and benefits that God had given, and the greatest of these benefits was himself given for man's redemption. Servasanto preached on the Incarnation and Crucifixion in many of his sermons, especially his Lenten sermon, "*Per proprio sanguinem*,"<sup>79</sup> which spoke extensively of Christ's suffering, and "*Mihi absit gloriari*,"<sup>80</sup> as well as his *De virtutibus*. In the Lenten sermon, "*Ambulate*," which spoke so extensively of love and penance, Servasanto wrote that among God's gifts that should motivate man to love him, the greatest gift God gave was himself. "How could one not love him with the whole heart," Servasanto asks, "who gave all things for you and even gave himself and his life for you?"<sup>81</sup> Likewise in the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto tells his audience how God's love, greater even than his omnipotence, led him to take flesh and be fixed to a cross for mankind.<sup>82</sup> He argues that this love should mean even more to person when he realizes the great distance between God and himself and then reflects on the great improbability that a high lord would ever hand himself over for a lesser servant. He argues that one should be motivated to a love of God when he realizes that God treats a servant like a son or brother and redeems him not with gold, but with himself and, since he cannot suffer as God, he "[assumes] human nature, by which he could make satisfaction for us. O how great was this love, that a most worthy emperor would hand

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<sup>79</sup> "*Per proprio sanguinem*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.45v-46v.

<sup>80</sup> "*Mihi absit gloriari*," Vat. Lat. 1261 f.92r-f.94r.

<sup>81</sup> "*Ambulate in dilectione*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r., "...quomodo non toto corde eum amabat qui totum tibi dedit et se totum etiam pro te dedit et totum animam tibi donavit."

<sup>82</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.28r., "Dico quod primo quod est potentior ceteris apud deum nam quid omnipotente potentior at caritas. Videtur omnipotenti vim intulisse eum decel' adduxisse summere nostram carnem fecisse et eum ab nostrum amorem cruci patibulo affixisse et mortem turpissimam pati fecisse igitur ipsa virtus est potentissima."

himself over for a most common servant.”<sup>83</sup> God thus becomes a loving father, a forgiving husband, and a loyal lord. The cause of such preaching was Servasanto’s hope that he would inspire in his listeners the love of God that he hoped would lead to penance.<sup>84</sup> To imagine the effect of such preaching is also worthwhile, since it means that Servasanto largely presented God in a positive way. Rather than focus on God as an angry judge who one needed to appease, such preaching focused on an optimistic picture of God and his love for man.

### *Love and Penance*

For Servasanto the intended point of this preaching was that he should instill in his audience a love of God that would lead them to seek God in penance. In sin, man loved the wrong things whether gold, power, himself, or pleasure. When confronted, however, with the love of a God who redeemed man at the cost of a crucifixion to himself, man should respond to this love with a gratitude and love that would lead him to repent his wrong loves and turn to the right love of God. The chief exemplar and model for imitation of this was Mary Magdalen, whose love for God led her to seek him in penance. Just like her, Servasanto hoped that one factor that might lead his audience to

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<sup>83</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.32r., “Item secundo cum hoc considerare te volo non solum quis est qui te amat sed quam te diligit. Magnum enim esset si dominus habeat aliquem vel modicum affectum ad servum sed quid esset si eum ut filium vel ut fratrem amaret quid si eum captum multo auro redimeret... ipse non immemor tui factus sed ad te maximo amore commutatus non pro redimendo te dedit aurum, non aliquem servum non suorum aliquem amicorum non consanguinem... sed quod fuit maximum tradidit semetipsum. Et considera magnitudinem huius amoris quia cum pati pro nobis in divina natura non posset factus est super noster naturam humanam assumens in qua pro nobis satisfacere posset. O quantus amor hic fuit se imperatorem dignissimum dare pro vilissimo servo... quis umquam regem hoc fecit vel facere voluit. Lego alios se morti exposuisse filios occidisse pro patrie sue amore sed nullam recolo me legisse se pro suis hostibus tradidisse...”

<sup>84</sup> I will say more about the Crucifixion in the next chapter, which concerns Servasanto’s preaching on suffering and its spiritual and penitential value.

penance was a love of God.

In several sermons including, not surprisingly, one on Mary Magdalen, Servasanto urges that one's love should lead him to penance. It should lead one both to penance in general and also to specific parts of penance, including contrition for sin and making satisfaction for it. In "*Remittuntur*," after referring to how people today love the wrong things, ox, ass, and gold, and seek them more than God, he writes how these people "do not care to find the lost Christ in penance."<sup>85</sup> If people fail to seek Christ in penance because they do not love him rightly, then this directly suggests that a proper love for Christ should lead a person to seek him in penance, as it led Mary Magdalen to do. Likewise, in, "*Levantes Oculos*," a Lenten sermon heavily about love and penance, Servasanto suggests that love should lead one to piously seek God, as it led the sinner in Luke's gospel who prayed, *O God, be merciful to me a sinner*.<sup>86</sup> Though Luke's sinner is not explicitly referred to in the gospel as having repented from love, by providing his repentance as an example of how "love ought move us to the having to be sought piety of God,"<sup>87</sup> Servasanto makes him into an example of one whose love led him to seek God in penance and hence something that his audience should do as well.

This love of God should not only lead one to penance in general; rather, Servasanto also writes about how a love of God can lead to specific parts of penance like

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<sup>85</sup> "*Remittuntur*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.105v., "O quot sunt qui diu dormiunt in peccatis nec curant per penitentiam Christum perditum invenire..."

<sup>86</sup> Luke 18:13.

<sup>87</sup> "*Levantes oculos*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.41b.v. (two successive folios labeled 41, I distinguish them by referring to 41a and 41b), "dico quod amor nos primo movet ad supplicandam domini pietatem... dicitur tamen de publicanum in luc qui non audebat o. le. ad celum *sed a longe stans percutiebat pectus suum dicens deus propicius esto michi*..."

The actual vulgate passage is: *Et publicanus a longe stans, nolebat nec oculos ad caelum levare: sed percutiebat pectus suum, dicens: Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori. Dico vobis, descendit hic justificatus in domum suam ab illo: quia omnis qui se exaltat, humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat, exaltabitur.* (Luke 18:13-14).

contrition and satisfaction. In this way, he made it clear that contrition should proceed from a sincere love of God from which would come a real sorrow for sin. This was, of course, especially the case with Magdalen whose love for Christ caused her to wash his feet with her tears, but other sermons make this point as well. Servasanto had written of the reasons that should lead one to love God and chief among these had been gratitude and love for the benefits that God had conveyed. In the Lenten sermon, “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Servasanto spoke extensively of the need for contrition for sin, writing how a real sorrow for sin should proceed especially from a love of God when one considered how he wronged one who had given him such great benefits. Consideration of these benefits and the love and gratitude that proceeded from these benefits should make a person blush when he considered his sins. Servasanto writes,

Our penance ought to be sorrowful with the heart full of bitterness... [for] if man weeps when he offends his earthly lord, how much more ought he to weep when he offends his most high friend... and lord, who has conveyed such benefits on us.... We have a sign of this in the sons of Israel, entering the desert of penance, passed through the red sea that by “the sea” you might note the bitterness of penance, but “by the red,” [you note] the greatness of love, since sorrow should proceed from love.<sup>88</sup>

From considering God’s benefits, one should proceed to love of God and, from love of God, one should be moved to contrition and from there to works of penance, satisfaction, like prayer and alms. This is most clear in the *De virtutibus*, where Servasanto writes

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<sup>88</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r., “...et penitentia debet primo esse dolorosa multa amaritudine corde plena. Si enim dolet homo si suum offendat amicum si consanguinem si terrenum dominum cogita quantum sit tibi dolendum summum amicum summe nobis beneficium a quos nobis est omne bonum summum patrem... ac redemptorem benignissimum tantis iniuriis tantam obedientiis provocasti unde in huius signum filii Israeli intrantes penitentie desertum transierit per mare rubrum ut per mare notes penitentie amaritudinem sed per ruborem amoris magnitudinem quia dolor debet procedere ex amore...”

how charity is necessary to make other good works have value. Among those works, he specifically lists the works of prayer alms and fasting, traditionally considered, and considered by Servasanto, as the main ways by which one made satisfaction for sin. “Without charity,” Servasanto writes, “no virtue is fruitful and at length it produces goods like to pray, to fast, [and] to give alms.”<sup>89</sup> Such works, widely known as works of satisfaction were the result of charity and made effective by it.<sup>90</sup>

Indeed, this leads to the next point: that love is not only useful in leading one to penance, but an important part of penance itself. Just as it makes works of satisfaction themselves effective, so too does love make penance effective for, without it, penance loses its value and will not be efficacious. At the same time, love helps make the challenges and difficulties of penance bearable. In the Lenten sermon on penance, “*Haec est voluntas*,” which includes much material on sin and penance, he writes about the three parts of penance as necessary for one’s sanctification.<sup>91</sup> For one’s sanctification, which explicitly includes contrition and confession, the right intention is also necessary and in order to have the right intention, one needs charity. “Indeed,” writes Servasanto, “no intention makes a work meritorious if charity is lacking.”<sup>92</sup> Love is necessary for right intention, and the right intention is necessary for our sanctification, which happens, in large part, by penance. Finally, for Servasanto, love plays an important role in making

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<sup>89</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.28r., “secundo, virtus est ceteris fructuosior immo ut plus aliud dicam sine ea nulla virtus alia est fructuosa qui et si<sup>1</sup> ferant aliquando in genere bonos ut est orare ieunare elemosynas dare...”

<sup>90</sup> This is most noteworthy in the treatise, but even in the sermon, “*Ambulate*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42v Servasanto refers to how love of God should be “laborious and full of good fruits” (*operosa et fructibus bonis plena*). In the sermon, though, Servasanto’s main example of love in works is keeping divine commands.

<sup>91</sup> “*Hec est autem voluntas*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.41av., “...nota ergo quod sanctificatio nostra debet esse timorosa per mentis humilacionem esse dolorosa per gemebundam confessionem debet esse recta per puram intencioni et debet esse diuturna per finalem continacioni...”

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, “nulla enim intencio opus meritorium facit si caritas desit unde Bernardus dicit quod ad rectam in intencionem requiritur ut veritas sit in electione et caritas in intentione.



penance bearable. Servasanto knew that penance could appear difficult and he tried to overcome this difficulty in his preaching in many ways working to convince people both of the sacrament's necessity and even attractiveness. This also reveals one reason he preached about love in some of his penitential sermons and that he tried to instill in his audience a love of God: he believed that this love could make penance, which could seem so difficult, bearable. Hence, love not only led one to penance, but helped one to deal with its harshness. In the Lenten sermon, "*Ambulate in dilectione*," he says as much explicitly, while urging his audience to love and penance. After writing that penance must be loving, Servasanto explains, "indeed, harshness is not able to be borne... unless love is present... [since] nothing is difficult to the one loving."<sup>93</sup> Love thus not only leads a person to penance, as it had led Mary Magdalen, but it was an essential part of penance itself, leading one's repentance to have value and helping one to bear the process of penance that might otherwise seem too harsh to bear.

### *Love, Forgiveness, and Avoidance of Sin*

Part of the ultimate greatness of love lay in its power to forgive sins. For Servasanto, of course, the great example of this was Mary Magdalen whose love led her to seek Christ in penance and merited her to hear "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."<sup>94</sup> Besides his Magdalen sermons, Servasanto also referred to Magdalen's love having driven out her sin in his Lenten sermon, "*Ambulate in*

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<sup>93</sup> "*Ambulate in dilectione*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.42r., "quarto penitentia debet esse amorosa. Non enim asperitas portari posset nec etiam mentioria esset nisi amor adesset, qui levigaret nichil enim est amanti difficile..."

<sup>94</sup> Luke 7:47.

*dilectione*,” while pointing to the forgiveness of sins as one of the fruits of love.<sup>95</sup> In that sermon, Servasanto had written of the need for penance to be loving and for contrition to be motivated by a love of God, before pointing to the fruits of love, which included the forgiveness of sins. In the sermon, “*Caritas paciens est*,” for the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, Servasanto had written about how love was a greater virtue even than God’s omnipotence. There he called charity the greatest of all virtues and wrote how it led God to be patient to sinners.<sup>96</sup> After calling charity a virtue that attracts God as a magnet attracts iron,<sup>97</sup> he wrote how by charity man can be called a son of God and “so, therefore, charity had the purgative virtue against all sin,” since this is what makes a person live as God causes his sons to live.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, in the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto also wrote of how charity could forgive sins, mentioning Magdalen as an example of one who had her sins forgiven because of her love and pointing to love as a virtue that destroyed iniquity.<sup>99</sup> Thus even in sermons and preaching material not primarily on Magdalen, Servasanto points to the power of love to forgive sin and holds up Magdalen as the chief example of this.

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<sup>95</sup> “*Ambulate in dilectione*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.43r., “dico primo fructus [dilectioni] est omni peccatorum dimissio unde de Magdalena dicitur Luc. VII [sic v] *demittantur ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum* etc.”

<sup>96</sup> “*Caritas paciens est*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.38v., “unde scribit apostolus ad eph *in caritate radicati, et fundati, ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quae sit latitudo* divine patientie peccatores ad penitentiam ex spectando *latitudo* divine misericordie peccata condonando *sublimitas* divine sensibilitate...”

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., “et quid mirum si caritas traxit deum nam maior est conveniencia caritatis ad deum quam sit magnetis ad ferrum... ergo si magnes quadam latenti virtute attrahit ad se ferrum multo videtur fortius quod caritas possit attrahere deum...”

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., “... si ipsa homines aliquando morituros in mortem pro Christo adducit si mortuos vivere fecit si filios dei suos possessores constituit unde dicitur I Io. III *Videte qualem caritatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur et simus...* sic ergo caritas habet virtutem purgativam contra omne peccatum...”

<sup>99</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.33v., “dico quod primus fructus dilectionis in via est iniquitatis destructio... exemplum de nobili Magdalenae quae vitiis cunctis plena tam fortem contra vitia pugnam supersit quod audire promeruit *remittuntur ei peccata multa quoniam dilexit multum*. Divinus enim amor ignis consumens est et instar ignis rubiginem peccati consumit...”

For him, love could not only purge sin in general, but also help to remove the individual vices from a person. In the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto wrote that charity serves to remove evil from a person and specifically that charity helps to remove the vices of lust, pride, and greed. On avarice, for example, Servasanto reasons that since love of God and love of the world are contrary to each other, the latter may be driven out by the former. “Love of God,” he says, “is the foundation of heavenly citizenship, while love of the world is the principle of citizenship in Babylon.”<sup>100</sup> Later, he writes of pride that “love of God destroys pride in us.”<sup>101</sup> As it had for Magdalen, love could forgive sins and drive out the vices. So Servasanto worked to cultivate in his audience a love of God and preached on the value of that love. This must have contributed to the overall attractiveness of his picture of penance.

Love not only helped to forgive sins, it could help one avoid sin in the future. As discussed in the previous chapter, Servasanto believed that a skilled confessor and preacher should not only help people repent past sin, but also help them avoid those sins in the future. For Servasanto, this is part of the power of love. Not only does it cover a multitude of past and present sins, but it can also help a person to avoid sin in the future. In the *De virtutibus*, he is quite direct about this: “divine love indeed preserves the soul from all corruption and stain.”<sup>102</sup> This seems to be, at least in part, because love will lead a person to obey God’s commands. “One sign of love,” he writes, “is to preserve God’s

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<sup>100</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.30r., “Secundo amor divinus non solum expugnat luxuriam sed etiam omnem avaritiam. Amor enim dei et amor mundi sunt sibi contrarii et quod amor dei est fundamentum civitatis superne sed amor mundi est principium civitatis babilonie.”

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., “tertio dilectio ipsa divina cum lascivia similis et avaritia habet expugnare superbiam. Tertio dilectio ipsa divina destruit in nobis ipsam superbiam...”

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., f.32v., “Tertio ut deum amemus cogitemus pro magno beneficio nobis datum esse decorem... divina enim dilectio preservat animam ab omni corruptione et macula...”

commands,”<sup>103</sup> while in another place, he points out that even apes love and hence obey their king, hence man should do likewise. “Indeed, apes, since they love their king, obey him in all things,” hence man too should be led by his love to obey God.<sup>104</sup> If one loves God properly, then he will find his sins forgiven and also will be kept from sin since he will wish to obey God’s commands.

Finally and perhaps most interesting, love can help one to avoid sin by making one more like God. This fits well with Servasanto’s general understanding of penance, where the task of the Christian is not only negative, to wipe away sin, but also positive, to develop the virtue that is necessary to reach the highest good that is God. One key step is to think of God often, as Magdalen did for, Servasanto writes, “where indeed the treasure of man is, there too his heart will be. [People] often think of their loves, whence the greedy man of gain, the proud of dominion, and the gluttonous of food.”<sup>105</sup> Against these, which he refers to in both his *De virtutibus* and the Magdalen sermon, “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,”<sup>106</sup> stands Mary Magdalen who, because she loved God, thought more about him than anything else. The reason such love is ultimately so important is that it can make one more like God. In “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” after writing about the importance of memory of and thinking of the one loved, Servasanto explains the importance of this by calling love “a transformative force which transforms the one

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<sup>103</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.35v., “VI signum est dei mandata servare...”

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., f.36r., “apes enim quia regem suum intime amant in omnibus illi obtemperant... Dominus dicit *Si quis diligit me*, sermonem meum servabit...”

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., f.35v., “dico quod primum signum dilectionis divine est sepe de deo cogitare. Ubi enim thaurus est hominis ibi et cor eius erit sepe enim recogitantur amata unde avari de lucris superbi de dominiis gulosi de cibis sepiissime cogitant.”

<sup>106</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104v., “... si deum vere diligas vel si aliquid plus deo amas attende si plus de eo quam de rebus aliis cogitas quod plus amas ubi enim est thaurus tuus ibi est et cor tuum... ergo si plus cogitas de mundo, plus de lucro, plus de carnali amico vel socio quam de Christo non veritas in dubium sed sit tibi certissimum argumentum quod amas plus ista quam Christi...”

loving into the one loved.”<sup>107</sup> Similarly, in “*Caritas paciens est*,” Servasanto wrote how charity rightly ordered a man to God.<sup>108</sup> This then, explains the ultimate importance of repenting one’s wrong loves and loving the right things as Magdalen did and why Servasanto connected love and penance, arguing that love should lead to penance, wipe away sin, and the need for a love of God. Just as his theology and preaching held that penance was not only about wiping away sin, but developing the virtue to see God, so too by putting penance in terms of love he placed penance in a broader context that could let him present penance in a more positive and attractive light.

In Chapter 2, I discussed Servasanto’s interest in preaching penance and how central it was to his own thought and to his conception of his own and his brothers’ ministry. In Chapter 3, I moved to considering not what Servasanto preached, penance, but how he preached it. A study of his sermons and treatises meant for preaching suggested that he preached penance in a generally positive way, presenting sin not only as a crime that required punishment, but an illness that needed a cure. Hence he presented going to a priest in confession as more like going to a doctor than a judge and encouraged his brothers to see themselves as, and act as, skilled doctors of souls. This chapter has continued to consider how Servasanto presented penance in his preaching material, with emphasis on his portrait of penance as something positive, attractive, and even beautiful. Trying to present penance as necessary and a priest as a skilled and

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<sup>107</sup> “*Remittuntur ei peccata*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.104v., “Est igitur primum signum vere dilectionis assiduitas recordationis dilecti amor enim si verus sit cor quiescere non sinit sed continue ad sue amati recordationem impellit ubi enim amor ibi cor enim amor... vis transformativa dum amantem transformat in amantum...”

<sup>108</sup> “*Caritas paciens est*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.38r., “Secundo ostenditur eius excellencia respectu aliorum virtutum quedam sunt politice quedam theologice et prime ordinant hominem ad proximum sed secunde ordinantur ipsum ad deum...”

sensitive doctor might not by itself be enough to persuade all the laity to a task that might appear to them difficult and challenging. A person might believe in the necessity of going to a dentist and believe that the dentist means him well, but might still hesitate and delay going. From his work, we know that Servasanto saw this potential for delay as both tempting and dangerous. Hence, he tried to present penance not only as something necessary and tolerable, but as something attractive and beautiful. To this purpose, he found in Mary Magdalen, as had so many other late medieval preachers, a perfect example of penance. What made Mary Magdalen so significant for Servasanto was not simply that she became a striking example of a sinner who did perfect penance, but that she was an example of *loving* penance. She represented a terrible sinner, yet one with an important redeeming feature: the love of Christ that drove her to penance.

Because of this, Servasanto was able to use her in order to explain sin and penance in terms of love. In some of his preaching, sin became a failure to love rightly or to love the right things. If one does love rightly, however, if he loves God, then love can lead a person to penance as it led Magdalen. At the same time, love should be a part of penance, a part that could help a person to bear the harshness of penance. Finally, love could forgive sin and help a person to avoid committing future sin. That he thought love should be an important part of penance and described sin as a failure to love rightly suggests that for Servasanto sin was not simply a matter of a crime or a rule broken, but of a relationship broken, as when he described the sinful soul as an adulterous bride. Because he saw the love of God as an important and central part of penance, Servasanto was concerned, by his preaching, to help his audience develop this love same love of God that had driven the sinner Mary Magdalen to seek Christ in penance. This led him to

speak positively of God and often give reasons to love him, such as gratitude for God's gifts, the Incarnation, and the Crucifixion.

#### Servasanto and His Contemporaries

There are perhaps obvious examples in currently published work of Servasanto's contemporaries preaching on penance as love like Servasanto did. Nonetheless, a few significant similarities exist. R.M. Ball stresses Thomas Cyrcetur's interest in contrition, sorrow for sin based on a sincere love of God. In a sermon dealing with infirmity and death, "Cyrcetur speaks of the filial 'fear which used to torment many saints for past sins.'"<sup>109</sup> Elsewhere, he is careful to place the essence of contrition in terms of love, commenting on the importance of love of God as foundational for salvation.<sup>110</sup> "You," he writes, "will be saved, since the foundation of the love of God remains in you."<sup>111</sup>

Richard Fishacre, a thirteenth-century Dominican, in a Lenten sermon, can also be found sometimes placing penance in terms of love and connecting penance to love of God. In a sermon for the fourth Sunday of Lent with the theme, *Non enim heres erit filius ancille cum filio libere* (Gen 21:10). He stresses the idea of the soul as the spouse of Christ, going into more detail than even Servasanto did on this subject. He refers to a passage from the *Song of Songs* "you have wounded my heart, my spouse, you have wounded my heart (Songs 4:9). He refers too to Hosea, who he calls a "second Christ," and who was famous for having been abandoned by the wife he dearly loved.<sup>112</sup> The

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<sup>109</sup> R.M. Ball, "Thomas Cyrcetur: a Fifteenth Century Theologian and Preacher," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.37 (1986) 205-239; 235.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 235, "tu autem salvus, eris quia in te permansit fundamentum caritatis dei."

<sup>112</sup> Maura O'Carroll, "Two versions of a sermon by Richard Fishacre OP for the fourth Sunday of Lent on

bridegroom, Christ, has thus been wounded by his spouse, the human soul, wounded, according to Fishacre, citing Isaiah 53:5, “because of our iniquity, pierced because of our sins.”<sup>113</sup> Hence, like Servasanto, Richard, in his penitential sermon, encourages the idea of the soul as the bride of Christ, thus stressing Christ’s love for the soul. Just as Hosea loved and was ready to forgive his unfaithful wife, so too does Christ love the soul though it has harmed him through its sin. The soul must live according to the spirit and not the flesh; to live according to the flesh (in sin) makes one a prostitute (*meretrix*) and an adulteress.<sup>114</sup> Like Servasanto, there is the idea of the soul as spouse of Christ, a spouse who loves her, suffers for her, and awaits her with mercy. Yet, the soul, through sin has become an adulteress, prefer lesser loves over the love of Christ. As an Oxford theologian preaching to students, Richard is less explicit than Servasanto in drawing some of these ideas out. Where Richard refers more to “the flesh”, Servasanto would more explicitly refer to specific sins of greed, lust, pride etc. Yet, the implications of Richard’s work are much the same; one who follows the flesh by sin is an adulterous soul, while the reference to Hosea would unmistakably convey the message of the soul’s sinfulness, yet Christ’s love and mercy for the sinful soul.

Servasanto clearly went to significant effort to present penance in terms of love

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the theme: *Non enim heres erit filius ancille cum filio libere* (Gal. IV 30),” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 54 (1984) 113-141; 123.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 125-126. “... carnalis carnis est filius; meretricis enim est filius, quia caro meretrix est... cum omnibus mundialibus fornicatur filius huius meretricis, scilicet quilibet carnalis, ius in hereditate non habet. Unde Judic. 5. Dicitur ad Jepte: *heres in domo patris nostri esse non poteris quia de adultera* (sic) *matre natus es.*”



with Mary Magdalen as his great exemplar of a terrible sinner who repented out of love of God and whose love forgave her sins. Nor does it seem he was alone in this as there is some indication that some of his contemporaries too discussed penance in a similar way. The significance of this for how it may have affected lay views of penance, the lay experience of penance, and the popularity and success of the friars will be developed in Chapter 6.

## Chapter 5: Painful Penance, Penitential Pain: Penance, the Value of Pain and the Problem of Suffering

By now something of the mendicant friars' achievement should be readily apparent. They carried on a ministry of preaching and hearing confessions, tried to serve as skilled and sensitive doctors of souls, and produced a number of treatises designed to facilitate preaching on penance. By doing so, they helped to bring the penitential theology of the schools to the laity, bringing the laity into contact with new developments in the theology and sacrament of penance. At the same time, they helped to carry out the papal goal of the reform of society through the sacrament of penance while responding to growing penitential and moral reform impulses among the laity. In this, they were remarkably successful, being widely recognized as popular preachers and confessors even to the point of occasioning some conflict with the sometimes less well trained secular clergy, who might see those accustomed to confess to them confessing to the friars instead.<sup>1</sup>

The friars' achievement on penance, however, went beyond simply presenting the value, necessity, and even attractiveness of penance itself. The language of penance and

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<sup>1</sup> Though in Augustine Thompson, *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes, 1125-1325*, (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), Thompson warns that this supposed conflict between the secular clergy should not be exaggerated. Many secular clergy were indeed grateful for the assistance of the friars in preaching and hearing confessions.

its theological developments over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries provided the friars with a way to talk about the suffering that troubled the laity even in their everyday lives. Their preaching on suffering was thus closely connected to their preaching on penance. By this preaching, the friars, helped to explain some causes and the spiritual value of that suffering, and offered ways to help cope with it. Their preaching on suffering thereby helps to show again the importance of penance in the later Middle Ages by showing how penance, its theology and language, helped also to explain the existence of suffering in the world. This helps show how penance could be a common part of lay life, because suffering was. It shows too, another way in which the friars helped to improve the pastoral care in the later Middle Ages and another reason for the friars' own popularity and success.

Suffering has been a perennial problem of mankind. The ancient skeptic Sextus Empiricus argued that "those who affirm positively that God exists cannot avoid falling into an impiety. For if they say that God controls everything, they make Him the author of evil things; if on the other hand, they say that He controls some things only, or that He controls nothing, they are compelled to make God either grudging or impotent, and to do that is quite obviously an impiety."<sup>2</sup> Questions in this tradition generally focus on the compatibility between a good, omnipotent God and the existence of suffering. Another form the problem of suffering takes is more practical than theoretical: granted that suffering exists, what ought one to do about it?<sup>3</sup> Finally, there are the emotional

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<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1946), 229.

<sup>3</sup> This is the general approach taken by N.T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006). See, especially his Chapter 1, "Evil is Still a Four Letter Word," 13-41.

problems associated with suffering. In this line, the problem is that whether or not suffering can be reconciled with the existence of God, it is repulsive to experience. What comfort is there for one undergoing it?<sup>4</sup>

## THE VALUE OF PENITENTIAL SUFFERING

In the Middle Ages, the same masters who took up the study of penance in the universities also took up the question of suffering and considered the theology of suffering. In *Pain and Suffering in Medieval Theology*,<sup>5</sup> Donald Mowbray studied a developing theology of suffering and some ways in which it applied to “issues of pastoral care and the improvement of sinner’s souls, in life and after death.”<sup>6</sup> The voluntary suffering that one underwent in the sacrament of penance was central to this, especially the voluntary suffering of contrition. “The nature of this suffering was important for the masters,” Mowbray writes, “because it was voluntary, but the idea of accepting pain voluntarily went against the framework masters had constructed for understanding pain and suffering.”<sup>7</sup> This was part of the significance of their discussion of penitential suffering and the pain that one voluntarily underwent in the process and sacrament of repentance. Pain and suffering were not typically something voluntarily done; indeed, their very nature seemed to imply that they were by definition something contrary to one’s own will. Aquinas, for instance, explained that one could suffer externally, by

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<sup>4</sup> The contemporary philosopher Alvin Plantinga, who has written extensively on the theoretical problem of pain has also commented on the emotional problem of evil in Alvin Plantinga, “Self-Profile,” *Alvin Plantinga*, ed. Jas. Tomberlin (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985), 36.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Mowbray, *Pain and Suffering in Medieval Theology: Academic Debates at Paris in the Thirteenth Century*, (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

being joined to an evil repugnant to the body, and internally, by being joined to an evil repugnant to the appetite.<sup>8</sup> It might seem that such an understanding of suffering could leave little room for a willed suffering since it could appear that by definition pain was contrary to the will.

Albert Magnus addressed this problem by explaining that the voluntary pain of contrition was “directly related to the will rather than to the interaction between the soul and body.”<sup>9</sup> Bonaventure too held that contrition for sin was a pain found in the will, a voluntary pain, “which prompts a human to burst into tears.”<sup>10</sup> Pain, then, was an essential feature of contrition, but it was a positive sort of pain and suffering that could help to wipe away sin. Another key part of penance, satisfaction for sin, also entailed a sort of voluntary suffering. It helped make restitution for sin as well as reordering the disorder between body and soul that was caused when one turned from the eternal good that was God to various temporal goods.<sup>11</sup> This then, seems to have been one of the great achievements of the masters’ study of penance, that they were able to explain by penance how one could suffer voluntarily and how this voluntary suffering could indeed be positive and medicinal.

Previous chapters have considered the question of how developments in penitential theology that took place in the schools reached the laity at large, and the answer is the same in this case of the theology of suffering as it was in the case of penitential theology. The preaching of friars like Servasanto da Faenza transmitted these

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<sup>8</sup> Mowbray, *Pain and Suffering*, 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>11</sup> For more, see my Chapter 3, where I discuss penitential suffering as related to contrition and satisfaction further.

new developments to the laity by their ministry as preachers and confessors. Servasanto wrote extensively on the value of the voluntary suffering of penance, calling it a bitter medicine and declaring such medicine to be far more effective than the sweet.<sup>12</sup> By this and similar preaching, Servasanto conveyed the necessity of penance, just as one needs a bitter medicine. But he also accounted for the suffering that was a part of a good penance, just as taking a useful medicine could involve suffering. Indeed, the very suffering that penance could, and indeed, should, occasion was itself evidence of its utility. There is no need to say more on the voluntary suffering of penance since I have written on it further in Chapter 3, but it is clear that to Servasanto suffering was an essential part of penance that proved its utility in curing one of sin.

#### THE PENITENTIAL VALUE OF INVOLUNTARY SUFFERING

For Servasanto, however, it was not only the voluntary suffering of penance, a fact he repeatedly urged in his treatises and sermons, that had spiritual value. Rather, the language of penance and development of penitential theology and practice helped him to assert that even involuntary suffering, patiently born, could have penitential and spiritual value in a variety of ways. Involuntary suffering, for instance, could lead one to recognize one's own sinfulness and hence one's own need to repent. In the sermon, "*Non sunt condigne passionēs*," a sermon written for the feasts of several martyrs, Servasanto urges that one consider precisely this value of suffering. The text of the sermon is taken from St Paul's letter to the Romans, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not*

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<sup>12</sup> "*Venerunt nuptiae*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.60r. "o utinam attenderent quam sit utilis penitentia licet modo videatur amara. Nam et videmus quod amara medicina magis quam dulcis est proficua. Dicunt enim physici quod amigdalus amara plus quam dulcis valet ad medicinam..." For more on this, see my Chapter 3.

worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.<sup>13</sup> He suggests that there are three different senses in which the sufferings may be said to be “*non condigne*”, not worthy. “First, I say that the penalties are not worthy because they are owed to us... they are owed to us because we are born in sin” and so deserve penalties and afflictions. Hence, it is said in Genesis 42, *by merit we suffer since we have sinned against our brother*.<sup>14</sup> For Servasanto, the suffering that we undergo is unsurprising, since it is simply a natural result of sin, and so he urges people to remember when they suffer, they should not be surprised by it since they should recognize their own sins. “It is certain,” he writes, “that we are all sinners and that we all suffer justly.”<sup>15</sup> The sins are both original and actual, including the original sin man is born under, but also “actual” sins committed throughout life as a result of one’s own will. Man’s suffering is explained by his own sinfulness. In turn, this makes penance the right and natural response to suffering.

The view is also found in his treatises, both the *Penitentia* and the *De virtutibus*, where he includes extended discussions on suffering. In the *De virtutibus*, for instance, in a discussion of “many things that help one in bearing tribulations,”<sup>16</sup> he suggests that in suffering, a person should remember what he has done: “Indeed, when one sees himself to suffer evils, he ought to remember his own evils. A man will bear torments

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<sup>13</sup> Romans 8:18, Existimo enim quod non sunt condignae passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quae revelabitur in nobis.

<sup>14</sup> “*Non sunt condigne passiones...*” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.98r., “dico primo quod pene non sunt condigne quia sunt debite... quare quia debite nos enim quia in peccatis nascimur.... penis et afflictionibus degni suus unde dicitur gen. 42 [sic 41] *merito haec patimur quia peccavimus in fratrem nostrum...*”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., “sed certum est ex hiis dictis quod omnes peccatores sumus, ergo et iuste patimur.”

<sup>16</sup> *De virtutibus*, ff. 124r-125v.

more easily when he remembers that he has offended God.”<sup>17</sup> Likewise, in the *Penitentia*, Servasanto explains that man should recognize that he is a sinner and because of this, suffers justly.<sup>18</sup> The link between suffering and penance for Servasanto is strongly suggested by how much he wrote in the *Penitentia* about enduring suffering or tribulation. All people sin, he writes quoting 1 John 1:8, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*”<sup>19</sup> And so, writes, Servasanto, echoing similar remarks in his other works, “when you are worn down with blows, recognize that you are a sinner and that what you suffer is just.”<sup>20</sup> Suffering, then, was an occasion to remember one’s own sinfulness and the memory should help one understand one’s own suffering better. By this, Servasanto was able to offer some explanation of why one suffers and to make that suffering understandable, using the memory of one’s own sin to do so. Second, he provided a practical way that could help a person to deal with his own suffering by urging a person in pain to reflect on his own sinfulness.

Secondly, this memory of sin, occasioned by suffering, could lead to the appropriate consequence of that reflection: to return to God and seek him in penance. In the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto writes that sufferings can indeed lead one to seek God. Tribulation can “illuminate the mind,” and “soften the soul.”<sup>21</sup> He gives the example of

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<sup>17</sup> *De virtutibus*, ff.124r-125v, “secunda meditatio debet esse circa ea quae fecimus, debet enim quisque dum viderit se mala pati malorum suorum reminisci facilius enim portat homo tormentum dum neminit offendisse se deum unde... *merito haec patimur quia peccavimus in fratrem nostrum...*”

<sup>18</sup> *Penitentia*, f.222r., “remedia contra divina flagella sunt plura, et est remedium primum ut cogites sicut et veritas est quia peccator es. Quis est enim sic iustus qui sic bonum faciat ut non peccatur.”

<sup>19</sup> 1 John 1:8, *Si dixerimus quoniam peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est.*

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Ergo, frater, dum flagellis attereris cogita quod peccator sis et quod te iustum est flagellari. Et quia omne quod iustum est bonum est et quod iuste fit bene fit non habes unde debeas conqueri, sed potius iustum est te letari...”

<sup>21</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.126r., “primo mente illuminat... secundo tribulatio instar ignis emollitionem in anima causat...”



the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar<sup>22</sup> who, when wealthy and prosperous, turned away from God in pride. In wealth, however, he scorned Daniel's advice to repent and return to God.<sup>23</sup> God, therefore, caused him to lose his mind and live like an animal for seven years, and Nebuchadnezzar repented his pride and returned to God.<sup>24</sup> Seeing his suffering, the mark of his own sin, Nebuchadnezzar, proud in prosperity, was repentant in weakness. Similarly, Servasanto refers to the examples of the Israelites who worshipped idols in prosperity, but who repented and turned to God in adversity.<sup>25</sup> In prosperity, one's heart might be hardened, but tribulation and adversity could soften a hardened heart and lead one to repentance. In another place, Servasanto writes of men who do not serve God throughout their whole lives, but then turn to him in affliction and so rejoice in their sufferings. Suffering, he writes, can reconcile one with God: "we see sometimes men who in their whole lives did not serve God, but in sickness return to him."<sup>26</sup> It was not, then, only the voluntary suffering of penance that could have penitential and spiritual value; rather involuntary sufferings that one endured could themselves serve as reminders of one's sinfulness and thereby lead one to seek God in penance. In this way, Servasanto

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<sup>22</sup> Daniel 4.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel 4:24, *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps he will forgive thy offences.*

<sup>24</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.125v., "exemplum habemus in Daniel ubi Dan. Regi ait, *septem tempora mutabuntur super te, donec scias quod dominetur Excelsus in regno hominum, et cuicumque voluerit, det illud... post finem Igitur post finem dierum, ego Nabuchodonosor oculos meos ad caelum levavi, et sensus meus redditus est mihi...*

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., "...tribulatio instar ignis emollitionem in anima causat... sic et corda quae prosperitas facit dura adversitatis facit per contrarium mollia. Exemplum de Manasse folio Ezechie qui in prosperitate crudelissimus fuit prophetas occidit ydola adoravit sed captus et in carcere ponitus ad deum reddit..."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 127r., "egritudines sunt pacis cum deo... et deo reconciliatione, videmus enim aliquando homines qui in tota vita sua deo non servirent ad deum in egritudine redierit..."

For a similar idea elsewhere see, *De virtutibus*, f.125r., "tertio tribulatio non solum est a summo bono sicut ab inferente sed est ad summum bonum ad finem. Si enim secundum philosophum omnia bonum exoptant constat quod exoptant maxime summum bonum. At tribulatio ducit hominem ad finem, ergo si cuius finis bonus est ipsum quoque bonum est restat tribulationem esse optimam et ab omnibus appetendam..."

was able to use penance to show the value of suffering, but at the same time, use suffering as a way to urge people to practice repentance.

Servasanto also suggested that involuntary suffering could have penitential value by helping to purge one of sin. It was well known that the voluntary suffering of penance could purge sin, but Servasanto also argues that the involuntary suffering one undergoes could have a similar salutary effect. He suggests that first, people should see their sufferings as divine corrections and second, closely related, that suffering could purge sin.

Sufferings, Servasanto writes, are intended as divine corrections and hence, should actually be seen as a sign of God's love. In the *Penitentia*, after discussing the first remedy against suffering, that a person should recognize himself to be a sinner, Servasanto urges the second, related, one. He writes that when one suffers, he should realize himself to be corrected by suffering. "The second remedy against divine blows is that you should recognize yourself to be corrected by these blows and through these sufferings to be purged of sin and that you are in no way punished in vain."<sup>27</sup> Referring to the Aristotelian principle that nature does nothing in vain, Servasanto suggests that this fact, that one is corrected in sin, is obvious enough. Since the created and lesser nature does nothing in vain, how much more is this true of uncreated nature, "which is constituted in the highest of all goods; wherefore when you are worn down by temporal flagellations, realize that it does not happen in vain, but that you might be cleansed from sordid things wherefore they must be rejoiced in and not wept over."<sup>28</sup> Sufferings may

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<sup>27</sup> *Penitentia*, f.222v., "secundum remedium contra divina verbera est ut te emendari et corrigi cogites per flagella et te per haec mala a peccato purgari et nullo modo te frustra puneri..."

<sup>28</sup> *Penitentia*, f.222v., "si enim iuxta philosophorum sententiam sicut extimo valde veram quia valde rationi

seem difficult, but one should realize there is a positive purpose to them in helping to cleanse one from sin. He makes much the same point in the *De virtutibus* treatise where he argues that when one suffers, he should recognize that this is the divine correction of a loving Father. “A wise son,” he writes, “when he knows himself to be fervently loved by a father, he patiently bears whatever that father inflicts when the father does this from love.”<sup>29</sup> In this way Servasanto is able to counsel that since sufferings are divine corrections, one should bear them patiently. He goes further, suggesting that these sufferings, corrections of a loving father, are much more valuable and to be desired than the embraces or kisses from those of bad intent. “The blows one of loving are better than the kisses of one hating since the one loving strikes for the good of the son... but the one hating kisses... in order that he might betray.”<sup>30</sup> Such, says Servasanto was the case with Judas, who kissed Christ, but by this betrayed him to his death.<sup>31</sup>

By preaching about suffering in this way Servasanto is able to present a purpose to suffering because it has positive value being the corrections of a loving father. Second this allowed him to stress the love of God for a person even when, perhaps most especially when, that person suffered. In the *Penitentia*, for instance, the third remedy Servasanto proposes to help one bear suffering, after realizing that one is corrected by suffering, is that one is struck by a loving father.<sup>32</sup> One should understand that God is one’s greatest lover and that because of this, “he would do nothing unless he knew it to

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consona hec inferior creataque nature quae in summo est bonorum omnium constitua eo quod simpliciter sit perfecta quare dum flagello temporali te atterit non frustra id agit sed ut a sordidibus expurgeris quare gaudendus est non dolendum.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., f.125r. “filius sapiens cum sciat se amari ferventer a patre patienter quicquid infligat cum ex amore hoc faciat...”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., f.125r., “meliora sunt ei verbera diligentis quam oscula odientis quia amans ad bonum filium verberat ut eum ab innoxiiis retrahat, sed odians osculat ad hoc facit ut prodant.”

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., “exemplum de Iuda qui osculatus est Christum prodidit.”

<sup>32</sup> *Penitentia*, f.222v-223r.

be useful for you.”<sup>33</sup> Likewise, in the *De virtutibus*, Servasanto, citing Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews, reminds his audience that: *God dealeth with you as with his sons; for what son is there, whom the father doth not correct? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are made partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons.*<sup>34</sup> The point for Servasanto is that, paradoxically, suffering does not prove that God does not love a person, but that he does.<sup>35</sup> This because of the penitential value of even involuntary suffering patiently born.

The purpose of such trials, besides causing one to recognize his own sinfulness, inspiring one to repent, and serving as divine corrections, is that the trials and sufferings themselves can work to purge one from sin. In the *De virtutibus*, writing on the value of tribulation, Servasanto writes that tribulation, like fire, serves to purge the soul from sins, “for fire is able to purge all metals from impurities.”<sup>36</sup> “Indeed,” writes Servasanto, “God does this when he sends tribulations; it is like purging a thing in fire... since just like in fire it penetrates the iron material so that no particle might remain in it... so also divine justice which lets no sin pass unpunished, whence tribulation, a certain sort of divine fire that purges the human heart.”<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere, in the *Penitentia*, Servasanto writes similarly on how trials can purge one from sin, even though they seem difficult at the time.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., “...et quod amator maximus tui est et quod nichil quaeret nisi quod tibi utile esse novit quare ad modum medici summi et in cunctis experti quaerit in te morbos corruptentes evertere non nutrire.”

<sup>34</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.126v., Hebrews 12:7-8, “*In disciplina perseverate. Tamquam filiis vobis offert se Deus: quis enim filius, quem non corripit pater? Quod si extra disciplinam estis, cuius participes facti sunt omnes: ergo adulteri, et non filii estis.*”

<sup>35</sup> See also the sermon, “*Non sunt condigne*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.97v-99r., where Servasanto also remarks on how suffering is proof of divine love, also citing Hebrews 12:7-8.

<sup>36</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.126v., “sexto tribulatio instar ignis a peccatis animas purgat nam ignem purgare omnia metalla a scoriis.”

<sup>37</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.126v., “Deum enim purgationem hanc facit dum tribulationes immittit. Ipse enim est quasi in ignis conflans et quasi herba follonum quia sicut ignis penetrat materiam [m<sup>am</sup>]ferream ut nullam in ea particulam dimittat intactam et a scoria non purgatam... sic divina iustitia nullam peccatum dimittit impunitum, unde tribulatio est quidam divinus ignis quo deus cor purgat humanum...”

Nonetheless, the prudent man, he writes, will be patient in such circumstances recognizing that such trials are indeed for his own good. Writing on temptation,<sup>38</sup> Servasanto urges that the holy man, when tried by God, does not clamor, but preserves himself in patience... for [by trials] he is purged from all sin, [and] his stains are scattered.”<sup>39</sup> Hence, it was not only the voluntary suffering of penance, especially contrition and satisfaction, that could serve to help cure a person of sin. Rather, even involuntary suffering patiently borne had the power to wipe sin away. For Servasanto, the sacrament and process of penance provided a way to explain how even involuntary suffering could have penitential value. This helped to explain how a loving God could allow suffering and how that suffering could even be positive in helping one to reach God.

#### OTHER SPIRITUAL VALUE OF INVOLUNTARY SUFFERING

In his preaching, however, Servasanto did not only suggest that suffering could have penitential value specifically, but that it could have spiritual value more broadly. It could help one not only recognize his sinfulness and purge one of sin, but also help improve one's moral character and help one acquire merit. Suffering was positive in the same way penance was, its value was not only negative, i.e., wiping away sin. Rather, like penance, the role of suffering was also positive; it helped one to develop the moral

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<sup>38</sup> *Penitentia*, f.221v.; it is evident that Servasanto does not mean “temptation” in the modern sense of the word where it indicates an enticement to sin or taboo activity, but that for him “temptatio” seems to be synonymous with “tribulatio” and simply indicate trials and sufferings, since he suggests that by “temptatio” one can be purged from sin.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, “...sic et vir sanctus temptatus a deo non clamat sed in omnibus pacientiam servat nulla ira ideo dividitur sed caritate amplius dilatur non in merito [or immerito] sub flagello minuitur sed potius augmentatur et purgatus amplius ab omni peccati scoria separatur...”

character necessary to reach God and earn the merit that could be rewarded. In showing how suffering could improve one's character, Servasanto makes frequent use of the image of a man being tried like gold tried in fire. In the sermon, "*Non sunt condigne*," Servasanto writes how trials prove the just man just as the furnace proves gold.<sup>40</sup> Similarly in the *De virtutibus*, he writes how tribulation can prove man<sup>41</sup> and what is more, strengthen the soul.<sup>42</sup> "Tribulation," he writes, "is a fire that strengthens and firms up the soul. We have an example of this in raw clay, which dissolves when it is placed in water, but when heated in the furnace grows hard and is made firm... and so the apostle has said, *tribulation works patience*<sup>43</sup> and so patience makes man strong so that he should not fear the infernal enemy.<sup>44</sup> Tribulations might soften a heart, hardened by sin, and lead a man to seek penance, but they could also serve to make firm a weaker soul, strengthening a person. This is not quite the same as arguing that tribulations have penitential value since the point here is not that they wipe away sin or help one recognize his own sinfulness. Nonetheless, it does argue that such trials have spiritual value in helping to develop one's character.

This idea of patience in suffering as helping to improve one's moral character and develop virtue is present elsewhere in Servasanto's sermons and treatises as well. In the sermons, "*Mihi absit gloriari*," and "*Proposito sibi*," Servasanto discusses the virtues of

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<sup>40</sup> "*Non sunt condigne*," Vat. Lat. 1261 f.98r., "sicut ergo fornax probat aurum, lima ferrum, ignis denarium sic probat deus omnem virum iustum..."

<sup>41</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.126r., "tribulatio instar ignis homines probat..."

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Romans 5:3, *Non solum autem, sed et gloriamur in tribulationibus: scientes quod tribulatio patientiam operatur.*

<sup>44</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.126r., "tribulatio instar ignis animam firmat et roborat. Exemplum habemus manifestum de luto crudo qui si ponatur in aqua dissolvitur sed decoctus in fornace duratur et fortis efficitur quia dum ignis humiditatem luteam in parte consumit duritiem illam inducit ita ut nunc in aqua dissolui aliqua tenus possit... unde apostolus dicit, *tribulatio patientiam operatur* et constat hominem patientia fieri fortem ut hostem non timeat infernalem..."

both temperance and patience (*patientia* or *tollerantia*), the former a virtue that helps man live wisely in prosperity, the latter the virtue that sees man through adversity.<sup>45</sup> Hence in the sermon “*Mihi absit*,” Servasanto writes of the necessity of tolerance<sup>46</sup> that “those who scorn temperance in prosperous things bear adverse things by patience.”<sup>47</sup> These trials and sufferings that one undergoes help a person grow in the future and so Servasanto suggests the example of a certain tree, which “when it is spoiled of its fruits, by however strongly it is beaten by that much more does it produce more fruit the following year.” Likewise a ship, “which sails more strongly and quickly in a turbulent sea than in a calm one, hence the more does a man profit in tribulations than when he is in comfort.”<sup>48</sup> Sufferings themselves can improve a man’s character and help him grow if only he will bear them patiently. Indeed, this patience is essential for a person’s moral improvement.

For Servasanto, pride might be the queen of all vices, but the root of all virtue was patience. Just as the goal of penance was to wipe away sin and allow for the growth in virtue necessary to reach God, so too could patience serve as the root of this growth in virtue. Patience, then, was not only an essential virtue, but the root of the other virtues. “Patience,” he writes, “consumes the soul in all good things.... patience is the guardian and root and guard of all good virtue. It is called the guard since it protects all the others... it is called the root because it sustains the whole weight of the tree.”<sup>49</sup> Patience is

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<sup>45</sup> “*Mihi absit gloriari*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.92r.-f.94r. and “*Prosito sibi*” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.40v-42v.

<sup>46</sup> He uses *tollerantia* as a synonym for *patientia*.

<sup>47</sup> “*Mihi absit gloriari*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.92r.-f.94r., “secundum ad crucem spiritualem ferendam tamquam brachium sinistrum est necessaria tollerantia adversorum ut qui temperantiam contempsit prospera per tollerantia portet adversa...”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., f.93r., “non solum tribulationes non fugerit sed appetit... velut probant est certo experimento quod navis fortius et velocius mare saltat in mari turbato quam in mari quieto facit quia plus satis homo in tribulationibus proficitur quam dum consolatus existit nam arbor nucis dum suis fructibus expoliatur quanto fortius partita verberata fuerint tanto sequenti anno plures fructus adducit...”

<sup>49</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.124r., “Patientia animam in omni bono consumat... patientia est custodis et radix omnium

what makes the other virtues possible. Without it, they should scarcely last and a soul be unable to see the highest good, God. Patience in suffering was not only the root of all virtues, but their proving ground; to be virtuous in good times might be easy, but to maintain that virtue in adversity required patience and revealed a person's real virtue. Hence Servasanto writes that "patience proves what sort of man one is; it is not known what sort [of man] a soldier is... unless he is in battle. Not in consolation, but rather in tribulation is that which proves a soldier of Christ."<sup>50</sup> Patient suffering thus has spiritual value in helping to improve one's character as well as reveal exactly the sort of character one has. It also seems to be a necessary guardian of virtue since without patience in suffering, one's virtues might be merely superficial and quickly desert one. Without this virtue, however, one could not hope to see the highest good that was God.

Besides helping to develop one's character, suffering had spiritual value in that it could help one to acquire merit and, in turn, the accompanying rewards of that merit. In the *Penitentia*, Servasanto urges that a person remember while he suffers that he acquires both merit and reward for patiently bearing those trials. The fourth remedy against suffering, he writes, "is that you recognize that you acquire merit and reward from divine castigations."<sup>51</sup> If the hope of even merely temporal reward causes men to bear trouble willingly in the present life, then how much more so ought the hope of eternal reward enable man to bear temporal trials. Servasanto suggests that merchants, for instance,

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virtutum et dicitur custos quia protegit omnes alias quasi arma... dicitur radix quia sicut radix sicut radix sustinet omnia arboris pondera... unde in Mt sic legitur *beati qui persecutionem patiuntur...*"

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., f.123r., "Tertio patientia hominem qualis sit probat. Non cognoscitur miles qualis sit... nisi in acie fuerint. Non enim consolatio sed magis tribulatio qualis miles Christi probat, quare gloriosus est militi esse armatus in bello quam nudus in balneo..."

<sup>51</sup> *Penitentia*, f.223v., "quartum ad hoc ipsum remedium est ut cogites meritum divinis castigationibus acquisitum et... premium sic patientibus preparatum."



know this principle well as they endure much trouble for temporal gain.

Who can tell adequately how much evil merchants endure for vain temporal gain... and how great the danger of things when they often pass through barbarous provinces, when they go to remote lands, when they cross great rivers, pass the Alps... and yet when they reach their destination, the merchant is not able to find what he sought. Yet you cannot suffer for divine grace what they suffer for worldly, nor for the king eternal what they suffer for this temporal vile profit.<sup>52</sup>

If merchants will endure so much trouble even for temporal gain, then how much more ought man be willing to bear for the hope of eternal gain? For this reason, Servasanto urges the man who suffers to consider St. Paul's urging in Romans, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*<sup>53</sup> Temporal sufferings might seem great, but they are small indeed compared to the hope of heaven.

The idea that the cross comes before the crown and the hope of heaven represented for Servasanto both a way of helping people to bear the harshness of penance,<sup>54</sup> and of dealing the problem of suffering. This Pauline idea, *I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy...* forms the theme of one of his sermons written for several martyrs where Servasanto urges that people should, when suffering, find their sufferings to be bearable largely on two grounds, that those sufferings are owed man because of sin and second, that the sufferings are not at all great compared to the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., "Quis sufficienter enarrat quanta temporalia lucra vana mercatores substinent mala quanta viarum et latronum discrimina quatuor probatur et rerum pericula dum sepe per transeunt barbarorum provincias dum adeunt remotissimas valde terras dum magna pertranseunt flumina alpium pertranseunt alta iuga et maria navigant procellosa ventis exponents libere se et sua et tum aliquando accidit ut mercator invenire non possit quod tantis requisivit. Ergo tu non potes pati pro divina gratia quod illi substinent pro mundana nec pro regno eterno quod illi pro temporali hoc vili lucro..."

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Servasanto is citing Romans 8:18, *existimo enim quod non sunt condignae passionis huius temporis ad futuram gloriam, quae revelabitur in nobis.*

<sup>54</sup> See my chapter 3.

future reward of heaven.<sup>55</sup> The principle is simple enough and Servasanto opens the sermon by explaining though many things seem very great when considered by themselves, one can realize them to be very small when compared with something else. “For the Earth is very great when considered in itself... and experience proves it to be 24,000 miles in circumference, which nonetheless when compared to the heavens, is just like a point of a star.”<sup>56</sup> Recognizing the smallness of their sufferings compared to heaven and how those sufferings would be rewarded with heaven, some of the martyrs even asked for greater sufferings from their tormentors such as Anastasius who was going to be killed by suffocation, but considered the penalty so mild that he asked also to be torn limb from limb.<sup>57</sup> The greater the suffering, the greater the reward. Indeed, how could it otherwise, Servasanto asks in the *Penitentia*. “For the Excellent Doctor says that where there is no trial, there is no battle, and where there is no battle, there is no victory, and where there is no victory, neither is there a crown, whence the apostle says, *he will not be crowned unless he has rightly struggled*.<sup>58</sup>

Patient suffering thus allowed one to acquire merit, which meant that one could gain the rewards of heaven. If God allowed one to suffer, it was only because the

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<sup>55</sup> “*Non sunt condigne passionibus*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 ff.97r-99r.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., “multa in se ipsis considerata sunt valde magna quae cum aliis comparata sunt parva sum minima nam terra est obiectum valde magnum in se considerata cum dicatur in libro de proprietatibus elementorum et experientia est probatum quod est in circuitu xx quattor milia miliarorum quae tamen si comparetur ad celum esse dicitur sicut punctum stelle in se considerate...”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., “...exemplum de beato anastasio quem dum vellet restibus suffocare ille considerans penam tam levem et tam velociter transeuntem ait ad carnifices ego propter amorem Christi desiderabam a vobis membratim incidi sed grates deo quod me fecit participem martyrum suorum tam parvo supplicio et beata agatha...”

<sup>58</sup> *Penitentia*, f.273v., “... quia ut eximius doctor dicit ubi temptatio est nulla, nulla est pugna, et ubi nulla pugna, ibi nulla victoria ubi autem nulla victoria, nulla debet esse corona unde divinus apostolus ita dicit *non coronatur* [sic *coronabit*] [*qui*] *non legitime certaverit*...”

The verse is from 2 Timothy 2:5.

I have corrected coronabit to “coronatur” which is found in the vulgate and added “qui” for the same reason.

greatness of heaven could outweigh any temporal suffering and by patiently bearing suffering one could, like the martyrs, gain reward and merit. Even involuntary suffering had not only penitential value, but spiritual value more broadly as it could help to develop one's character, prove that character, and acquire the merit that could gain one heaven. Perhaps the greatest spiritual value of involuntary suffering patiently born, however, was that it could bring one closer to Christ and allow him to imitate Christ.

#### REFLECTION ON THE SUFFERING SAVIOR

The move to greater compassion with the suffering savior and devotion to the physical humanity of Jesus that was so important a part of later medieval spirituality depended, at least in part, on theological developments that took place earlier in the Middle Ages. The most important of these was probably a change in major theories of the Atonement—the process by which the Incarnation of Jesus saved man from sin—and acceptance of a new Debt-substitution theory of the sort proposed by Anselm instead of the old Ransom theory. R.W. Southern briefly discusses this change in his classic *Making of the Middle Ages*.<sup>59</sup> Until the end of the eleventh century, Southern writes, the Atonement was generally explained by a sort of Ransom theory.<sup>60</sup> According to this view, by sin man had withdrawn his obedience to God and entered into service with the devil. God contested this surrender and the result was war between God and the devil over mankind. Since man, however, had voluntarily surrendered himself to the devil,

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<sup>59</sup> R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1953, twenty first printing, 1975).

<sup>60</sup> Southern refers the reader to J. Rivière, *Le Dogme de la Rédemption au début du Moyen Âge*, 1934. For a more recent consideration several theologies of the Atonement, see James K Beilby; Paul R Eddy, *The Atonement: Four Views*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2006).

however, God could not, according to the rules of war, defeat the devil by a mere act of power. Man might voluntarily return to God but, being fallen, this was precisely what he could not do. Man's situation would have been quite helpless, then, except that God made a clever strategic move. He became man and the devil did not recognize Him, claiming Him as His own and subjecting Him to death. "In doing so, Southern writes, "he committed that great act of lawlessness—the extension of his authority over One who had made no... surrender of Himself to the devil—and this lost him his empire."<sup>61</sup> The problem with this view, however, Southern suggests, was that man had an essentially static role he was a helpless onlooker in the struggle, while "God had won because he proved himself the master-strategist."<sup>62</sup> This both left little view for man's participation in God's battle and also little room for compassion with his suffering savior.

This changed with St. Anselm's *Cur deus homo*,<sup>63</sup> which proposed a more debt-satisfaction view of the Atonement. According to Anselm's view, through sin, man had acquired a debt that he could not repay. In his mercy, however, God became man, paying the debt of satisfaction that man owed for sin. "The way was now open," Southern writes, "for a fresh appreciation of the human sufferings of the Redeemer... the devil slipped out of the drama and left God and man face to face."<sup>64</sup> This change in theology thus allowed most crucially for a greater sympathy with and compassion for the suffering savior. At the same time, it allowed for one to understand those sufferings at least partly

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<sup>61</sup> Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, 235.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> See Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Cur deus homo*, (München : Kösel, 1970), and Anselm, *The Major Works*, eds. G.R. Evans, Brian Davies, (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>64</sup> Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 236. Southern comments that Anselm's view did not acquire universal acceptance, though Anselm did succeed in causing the older Ransom theory to be discarded. Given this, whatever view one adopted, such as Peter Abelard's Moral Influence view [see Richard Weingart, "The Atonement in the Writings of Peter Abelard," (PhD diss. Yale University, 1965)] the way was still open for greater sympathy with the suffering Christ.

in penitential terms, where God made satisfaction not for His own sins, but for those of mankind.

The schoolmen and masters of theology also began to put a greater stress on Jesus' suffering in their own work as they accepted that Christ's suffering on the cross had redeemed the sins of mankind. They thus found themselves challenged to account both for Christ's suffering and for his divinity.<sup>65</sup> The masters tried to avoid the taint of earlier heresies, but were especially concerned with a more modern one. Medieval Catharism tended to deny the suffering of Christ altogether, generally adopting a Docetism that claimed that Jesus only appeared to suffer, but since he lacked any physical humanity did not suffer in reality.<sup>66</sup> By the middle of the thirteenth century, around when Servasanto was writing and in active ministry, Bonaventure still considered it important to argue that Christ physically suffered. He condemned "certain heretics" who claimed that Christ did not actually suffer but only seemed to and argued that this suffering was necessary for human redemption.<sup>67</sup> Confronted by modern efforts to downplay the physical suffering of Christ, the theology masters found it necessary to affirm that Christ had physically suffered. This provided another motive to focus on the suffering savior.

Such considerations of medieval theology, changing views of the Atonement and an increasing need to emphasize the suffering of Jesus against certain modern heretics who denied it, lead to the same question as the fact of developments of penitential theology. Given that such intellectual changes took place in the schools, how did such

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<sup>65</sup> Mowbray, *Pain and Suffering*, 25-26.

<sup>66</sup> On the Cathars, see Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars*, (Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

<sup>67</sup> Mowbray, *Pain and Suffering*, 30-31.

material affect the laity and influence lay spirituality? As with penance, one of the important answer to this lies with the ministry of the mendicant friars. St. Francis, for instance, had been strongly devoted to the physical humanity of Christ and to his passion. A passage in the *Legend of the Three Companions* recounts that Francis was found weeping in Church and, on being asked the cause, replied, “I am weeping over the Passion of my Lord Jesus Christ. Out of love for him, I ought not to be embarrassed to go though the world groaning in this way and crying.”<sup>68</sup> Servasanto himself recognized such devotion to be central to Francis’s spirituality when he referred in the *De virtutibus* to how patient suffering made one like Christ proposing as an example St. Francis who “bore the Lord’s stigmata,” such was his desire to be made like his suffering savior.<sup>69</sup> Such devotion had such effect on lay piety that C.N.L Brooke has suggested that Francis’s own devotion to the physical humanity of Christ may have done far more than Crusade or Inquisition to counter the influence of (docetic and dualistic) Catharism.<sup>70</sup> As with his interest in preaching penance, Francis’s own devotion to Christ crucified seems to have set the tone also for members of his order like Servasanto, who also seems to have had much to say in his preaching material about devotion to Christ crucified. Part of the goal of his preaching was to hold out Christ crucified for devotion and imitation,

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<sup>68</sup> Cited here from André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: the Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, trans. Michael F. Cusato, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 30.

<sup>69</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.123r., “quarto patientia Christo assimilat... exemplum de beato Francisco cui magna est gloria eo quod ferat dominica stigmata...”

<sup>70</sup> C.N.L. Brooke, “Heresy and Religious Sentiment 1000-1250”, in *The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 41 (1968) 115-31, cited here from d’Avray, “Some Franciscan Ideas about the Body,” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 84 (1991) 343. Also important must have been Francis’ sense of kinship with the natural world. Lawrence observes that Francis is often portrayed by modern people as a sort of proto-nature worshipper, but that really he had a sense of kinship with the natural world because of his conviction that “the cosmos was a vast picture book with signs of the Creator’s love.” Lawrence, *The Friars...* 36. This must have also been a powerful consideration when set against Cathar dualism and its negative sense of the natural world.

which could help people to better bear their own suffering.

In his preaching and most notably in his Advent sermons, Servasanto regularly stressed God incarnate. In the sermon “*Suscipite invicem*,” written for the second Sunday of Advent, Servasanto wrote about the different ways in which God “lifted us up,” and first among these was by his assuming human nature. “I say,” he writes, “that Christ raised us up when he assumed our nature... in order that anything that is said concerning the son of God, could also be said of the son of Man.”<sup>71</sup> Servasanto continues, reflecting on the mystery of a God who would become man writing, “what amazing dignity, what highest humility, what charity... when sediment is united with God, when the highest becomes the lowest, and the strongest becomes weak... what is more admirable than that the Lord should wish to become our brother.”<sup>72</sup> Similarly, in the advent sermon, “*Veniet desideratus*,” Servasanto reflects on God taking up human nature, calling his coming “long awaited, acceptable, and venerable by reason of his assumed human nature.”<sup>73</sup> Like the founder of his order and like the schoolmasters, Servasanto was concerned to preach the coming of Christ incarnate.

He also preached the purpose of that coming, writing in the sermon “*Per*

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<sup>71</sup> “*Suscipite invicem*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.6v., “dico quod Christus nos suscepit cum nostram naturam assumpsit... ut quicquid dicitur de filio dei possit de filio hominis dici.”

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., “o dignatio mira o humilitas summa o karitas in experta o pietas excupenda quando deo unitur limus et summus fit imus et fortissimus infirmus quid admirabilius quid potest pre cogitari predilecius quam dominum nostrum videre factum esse fratrem nostrum.”

In talking about the reality of the Incarnation and reflecting on God’s goodness in taking human flesh, Servasanto also shows awareness of some of the theological questions such an Incarnation raised regarding the nature and substances of a triune God becomes incarnate.

<sup>73</sup> “*Veniet desideratus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.2r., “... dum ergo dicens quod deus ad nos venit intelligimus secundum quod deus non... mutavit locum sed quod homo mutatus est quem assumpsit et in eo visibilis mundo apparuit... ipse adventus est expectabilis acceptabilis sive venerabilis ratione humanitatis assumpte...” Later, writing more on the subject in the same sermon “*Veniet desideratus*” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.2r., Servasanto writes further on God taking human flesh and human nature: “... in medio enim nostri dominus habitavit quando nostram naturam assumpsit per quam in medio nostri stetit ipse enim operatus est salutem in medio terre o quam venerabile o quam acceptabile quam amabile videre deum hūatū verbis carnem factum...”

*proprium sanguinem*,” that Christ took on human flesh in order to shed his blood, not for his own sins, but for those of mankind. He had to have flesh in order to suffer and he had to suffer in order to redeem. Servasanto calls Christ’s blood a “most pious effusion,” and says, “indeed, he did not suffer for his own fault, but that of another” and he suffered “not as an impious man, but as a just one.”<sup>74</sup> In fact, it was the very sinlessness that enabled his suffering to be effective in taking away sin since Christ alone was pure enough to take away sin since he was himself sinless. “Christ alone,” Servasanto writes, was most clean since he had neither original nor actual sin, had never sinned, and was not able to sin.”<sup>75</sup> It was this alone that allowed his Incarnation to be effective in taking away the sins of mankind.

In preaching the purpose of Jesus’ coming as to take away the sins of mankind, Servasanto explained how this worked by a view of the Atonement that was very similar to that of Anselm of Canterbury. In “*Veniet desideratus*,” he begins, as above, by speaking of God’s humility and charity in taking on human flesh.<sup>76</sup> Servasanto then goes further explaining not only that God took human flesh, but why: that it was necessary to free man from hell.<sup>77</sup> Later he writes of the utility of Christ’s coming saying that “through his coming we are illuminated, absolved of our sins, freed from hell, and returned to grace.”<sup>78</sup> He explains precisely how this worked according to the formula

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<sup>74</sup> “*Per proprium sanguinem*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.46r., “dico quod sanguis domini fuit effusus effusione piissima si consideretur causa non enim passus est pro culpa propria sed aliena... fuit ergo piissima quia non est passus ut impius sed ut iustus...”

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., “sed solus Christus mundissimus fuit quia nec originale nec actualiter nunquam peccavit immo peccare non potuit...”

<sup>76</sup> See note 73.

<sup>77</sup> “*Veniet desideratus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.1v., “tertio necessitas per urgebat nam omnes ad infernum descendebant et quadem violentia eos dyabolus detinebat nihil nisi per Christum inde liberari poterant...”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., f.2r., “... nam per eius adventum sumus illuminati sumus a peccatorum vexibus absoluti sumus a tartaro liberati sumus gratie restituti celi sunt nobis aperti...”



worked out by Anselm that God became man to pay that debt man could not pay himself. Man had sinned, writes Servasanto, and the whole human race had offended God and “because the divine offense was infinite, man could not satisfy God by himself since he was finite. Nor could he render back a fitting fine by nature since the whole human race had turned from God.”<sup>79</sup> Man then, as in Anselm’s view, was trapped.<sup>80</sup> In sinning against an infinite God, he had acquire an infinite debt yet, being only finite, could not pay the whole amount. “Behold, therefore,” Servasanto writes, “the remarkable clemency of our God, who became man... for Christ, since he was God and man, insofar as he was God, he could satisfy the debt and insofar as he was man, he owed it.”<sup>81</sup> In this way, Servasanto closely followed Anselm in his understanding of the Atonement, presenting that view in his preaching. In this way, like Anselm, Servasanto was able to explain Christ’s coming at least partly in penitential terms. As a sinless God, Jesus could not do penance or make satisfaction for his own sins, but according to this explanation of the Atonement, conceived by Anselm and found in Servasanto’s preaching, he could make satisfaction for the sins of mankind.

As R.W. Southern observed in *The Making of the Middle Ages*, this view of the Atonement, which stressed Christ’s suffering as having made satisfaction for human sin, allowed for a greater opportunity for compassion and sympathy for the suffering savior.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., “dico ergo quod Ihesus venit ut genus humanum redimerit nam miser homo pecaverat deum offenderat totum genus humanum sibi abstulerat... et quia divina offensa quodammodo infinita erat per ea satisfacere deo non poterat quia finitum erat nec eciam pro dampna aliquid dignum reddere poterat natura quia totum genus humanum deo abstulerat.”

<sup>80</sup> Aquinas also espouses similar ideas in *ST III*.q.48. “...But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race. First of all, because of the exceeding charity from which He suffered; secondly, on account of the dignity of His life which He laid down in atonement, for it was the life of one who was *God and man*...”

<sup>81</sup> “*Veniet desideratus*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.2r., “vide ergo clemencium dei nostri qui homo factus est ut similis esset qui satisfacere posset et qui deberet nam Christus quia deus et homo erat in quantum deus satisfacere poterat et in quantum homo debebat.”

Servasanto follows Francis in doing precisely this; in his preaching he often dwells, not just on the humanity of Jesus *per se*, but his suffering as he urges reflection on and compassion with the suffering savior. This is especially the case, for instance, in his Lenten sermon, "*Per proprium sanguinem*," which I have already discussed briefly as an example of Servasanto preaching the cause of Christ's coming.<sup>82</sup> This sermon dwells significantly on Jesus' suffering and repeatedly urges gratitude for and compassion with that suffering. Jesus' innocence, justness, and divine nature may have been precisely the reason why his suffering was able to work to take away sin, as Servasanto explained. This innocence, justness, and nature, however, also meant that Jesus' suffering were especially harsh. "The blood of Christ," writes Servasanto, "had been shed in a most penal effusion if his nature is considered. For his nature was very gentle, tender, and was the best constituted; whence it was never sick... and for that reason, the penalty inflicted on it was the most harsh."<sup>83</sup> This fits with similar reflections on Christ's suffering throughout the same sermon: on its harshness<sup>84</sup> and fullness since Christ shed his blood plentifully for those who, unworthy and ungrateful, had made themselves his enemies.<sup>85</sup> These reflection on the suffering savior, Servasanto argues should lead also to compassion with him. Hence, by reflecting on Christ's suffering in this way, Servasanto is clear that reflection on his sufferings should lead to compassion with those sufferings. Hence, toward the end of the sermon, Servasanto concludes that man should reflect often

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<sup>82</sup> "*Per proprium sanguinem*," Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.45v.-46v.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., f.46r., "tertio sanguis Christi fuit effusus effusione penalissima si consideretur natura nam eius natura erat tenera erat nimium delicata erat optima complexionata unde nuncquam fuit infirma erat suavissima nullius amoris humoris superflui lesione turbata et ideo pena illi inflicta fuit acerbissima et hoc colligi potest ex eo quod dicitur Luc. Xxii..."

<sup>84</sup> "*Per proprium sanguinem*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.45v., "...in quo verbo describitur dominica passio ut acerba ut voluntaria et ut perfecta..."

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., f.46r., "secundo sanguis Christi fuit effusus effusione plenissima...pro nobis indignis pro nobis adversariis [sic adunsariis] et pro nobis ingratis sanguinem suum fudit."

on the passion “with much attention in heart,” and that as he does so, “he will not be able to be without devotion, much compassion, or much effusion of tears.”<sup>86</sup> No man could reflect on the passion without feeling devotion and compassion for Christ crucified.

The purpose of this reflection of Christ’s passion was not devotion alone, but also that such reflection also had value in helping one to bear suffering. Reflection on his savior, who had also suffered, could help man to hear his own suffering patiently. In the same Good Friday sermon “*Per proprium sanguinem*,” that contained such extensive reflections on Christ’s suffering and urged compassion with it, Servasanto suggested that reflection on such suffering should help one better bear his own. A good soldier, for instance, does not feel his own wounds when he sees those of his king.<sup>87</sup> He makes a similar suggestion in the sermon, “*Surrexit Saulus*,” for the feast of St. Paul, which also reflects extensively on Christ’s suffering. There, Servasanto again suggests that a person should keep the suffering savior before his eyes and urges the value of such reflection.<sup>88</sup> “For you will more lightly bear your own sufferings if you see the bitterness of the Lord’s passion.”<sup>89</sup> Such was the case for Apostle Paul who, on seeing Christ’s sufferings, was himself more willing to expose himself to sufferings and pains.<sup>90</sup> Likewise, in the *Penitentia*, Servasanto lists as the fifth remedy against suffering that a man recognize that he is a Christian and not more innocent than his captain, who also suffered. “Therefore,” he writes, “when you are beaten by some tribulation, say, ‘I am a Christian,’ not only in

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., f.46v., “...quia talis aspectus esse non potest sine devotione et multa compassione nec non et lacrimarum effusione...”

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., “...quis enim fidelis miles in suis vulneribus si sic vulneratum regem conspiciat, Bernardus, bonus miles vulnera sua non sentit de benigni ducis vulnera intuetur.”

<sup>88</sup> “*Surrexit Saulus*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.61v., “Ad hanc passionem habendam pre oculis nos invitat...”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., “nam levius inquit vestras invitias ferretis si videritis amaritudinem dominice passionis...”

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., f.62r., “quare apostolus Paulus dum vulnera Christi vidit totum se exposuit penis carnem afflixit et virginem et puram servavit...”

your mouth, but in heart and work,” and follow Christ.<sup>91</sup> Finally, in the *De virtutibus*, he urges those in tribulation to contemplate the Lord’s passion, since “a good soldier, as Bernard says, does not feel his own wounds when he considers the wounds of his kind leader. What faithful soldier would flee battle if he saw his king fighting there and gravely wounded?”<sup>92</sup> This, Servasanto explains in the sermon, “*Mihi absit gloriari*,” is precisely why so many images of Christ are placed in Churches. “Therefore, images of the savior are placed in Churches in order that when you suffer, when you are in struggles, when you deal with trials, you might see Christ hanging on the cross, for even apes, when fatigued, regain their strength when they see their king.”<sup>93</sup> This increasing reflection on and compassion with the suffering savior thus had the consequence of also helping a person to better endure his own suffering. When a person felt himself pressed by trials, Servasanto urged him to consider also his generous Lord and God who had also suffered and who had done so, in order that man’s sins might be wiped away.

Such reflection also had penitential value because it could help one to avoid sin. Part of man’s suffering was occasioned by his struggle against sin. Reflection on the passion, Servasanto suggests, could help a man in this struggle thereby showing another way in which the crucifixion could help in the process of penance. In “*Videbit omnis caro*,” a Christmas sermon, Servasanto spends significant time speaking about Christ’s

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<sup>91</sup> *Penitentia* f.224r., “ergo dum aliquae tribulatione pulsaris Christianus sum dicas non tamen ore si corde et opere et tibi pro magna gratia reputa si in penis valeas sequi Christum a quo te appellari intelligis Christianum.”

See also Servasanto’s *Virtutibus* f.124v., “gregorius dicit quod si passio domini ad memoriam revocetur quod nihil tam durum quod non equo animo tolleretur...”

<sup>92</sup> *Virtutibus*, f.125v., “tertio salsa est dominicarum et contemplatio passionum, bonus enim miles ut Bernardus dicit vulnera sua non sentit dum benigni ducis vulnera intuetur. Quis fidelis miles de prelio fugeret si regem suum ibi bellantem et graviter vulneratum attenderent, at Christus rex utique summus...”

<sup>93</sup> “*Mihi absit gloriari*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f. 93v., “ergo in ecclesia ponuntur ymagines salvatoris ut dum angustiaris dum adversitatibus premiis dum temptatione temptaris pulsaris aspicias Christum in ligno pendente. Apes enim quantumcumque fatigate resumunt vires dum vident regem suum...”

suffering.<sup>94</sup> He argues that to see Christ crucified is itself the greatest remedy in helping one to battle sin and temptation. “I say that he who amuses himself in carnal delights should see Christ having suffered. It is, indeed, the greatest remedy against all incentive of the flesh to perceive one’s... most kind redeemer so bound to the pillar, so sharply beaten, and so extended on the cross.”<sup>95</sup> Similarly, in the sermon, “*Deposuit potentes*,” Servasanto urges that consideration of Jesus’ humble suffering on the cross should help to defeat pride in his audience. If God could be so humble to endure such cruel sufferings, then how could man be proud?<sup>96</sup> To see and reflect on Christ crucified should itself help one to battle temptation, a fact that may explain at least in part why Servasanto does preach so often on Christ crucified. As the central part of his ministry as a preacher and confessor was to serve as a doctor of souls, helping people to repent and avoid future sin, he evidently considered preaching the crucified Christ useful for this purpose.

Finally, the principle is especially clearly expressed in the sermon, “*Surrexit Saulus*,” where Servasanto urges that reflection on the passion of Christ should help one in resisting sin and help one’s struggle with his carnality. He reflects extensively on Christ’s sufferings: “I say that, above all, we ought to see Jesus afflicted with pains namely, taken like a thief by his own people, with his eyes hidden, presented to judges and bound to a column, bloodied by whips, mocked by soldiers... condemned by Pilate,

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<sup>94</sup> “*Videbit omnis caro*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 ff.12r-13r.

The twentieth-century theologian Fulton Sheen occasionally remarked how the shadow of the cross fell over the manger; it seems this was not only a twentieth century idea.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., f.12r., “dico quod deliciis delectatur carnis aspiciat Christum passum. Est enim summum remedium contra omnem carnis incentivum cernere... et benignissimum redemptorem suam sit ad columpnam ligatum sic acriter verberatum, sic in cruce extensum...”

<sup>96</sup> “*Deposuit potentes*,” Vat. Lat. 1261 f.112r., “ergo dominus rex noster humiliavit se usque ad corporis flagellationem usque ad spinarum coronationem et usque ad vilissime mortis tolerationem quis fetida quid inflaris o caro misera princeps tuus est humilis et tu membrum inflaris...”

and hung on a cross.”<sup>97</sup> After continuing to describe Jesus’ sufferings further and to urge his audience to keep those sufferings always before their eyes, Servasanto argues that reflection on such sufferings should help a person to avoid sin and to battle in his own struggle against sin.

For you will more lightly bear your own struggles, if you see the bitterness of the Lord’s passion, so if such was the bitterness of the flesh of the Lord savior, who, save a son of Gahanna, would dare to be lascivious? Who would presume to continue in carnal delights? It is neither just for consonant with reason that with the head sorrowing, the members should strive to live delicately. For a soldier is not held to be a friend of the king, who is idle in luxuries and carnal delights when his king, clothed with arms in battle, is exposed to wounds and full of pains... for I find that even the pagans detested carnal lasciviousness.<sup>98</sup>

To reflect on the sufferings of one’s savior who suffered in the battle against sin should itself inspire people to struggle against their own vices and temptations whether they be sins of the flesh, like lasciviousness, or of the spirit, like pride. Indeed, reflection on the passion should make it clear that such resistance was actually a duty. For Christ was man’s Lord, come to battle against sin. Joining in that battle therefore became a duty, for when man saw his Lord wounded and suffering in battle, how could he himself refrain?

Finally, reflection on the suffering Savior imposed a duty of imitation. If the king battled, so ought the soldier. The new theology of the Atonement that focused on

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<sup>97</sup> “*Surrexit Saulus*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.61v., “dico quod ante omnia debemus videre Ihesum penis afflictum scilicet tanquam latronem a populo suo captum oculis velatum iudici presentatum et ad columpnam ligatum flagellis celum sanguine cruentatum a militibus illudum ad herode spretum a pylato condempnatum in cruce elevatum clavis duris affixum lancea perforatum...”

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, f.61v-62r., “... nam levius inquit vestras invitias ferretis si videritis amaritudinem dominice passionis, ergo si tanta fuit amaritudo carnis domini salvatoris quis de cetero nisi sit filius gehenne audeat lascivire quis ultra presumat in deliciis carnem [p’cat’cē] nutrire. Non est iustum non rationi est consonum ut sub capite dolente membrum laboret vivere delicate non habetur miles ille amicus regis qui tunc vacat luxuriis sive carnis deliciis quando rex suus armis indutus bellis est exponitur vulneribus plenus et penis... nam invenio paganos sit detestatos esse carnalem lasciviam...”

Christ having made satisfaction for human sin, allowed greater reflection on, devotion to, and compassion with Christ's suffering. This compassion also naturally led to a need to imitate those sufferings, perhaps especially vividly exemplified by St. Francis's reception of the stigmata.<sup>99</sup> Hence, in the Lenten sermon, "*Per proprium sanguinem*," after reflecting extensively on Christ's suffering on the cross and its value in wiping away human sin, Servasanto urges the duty of both compassion and imitation on his audience.<sup>100</sup> He urges that man attend to the passion with his whole heart since such "is not able to happen without devotion, much compassion, or effusion of tears."<sup>101</sup> To reflect on the passion required compassion, and compassion required imitation.

The first and main way that one might imitate the passion was by patiently bearing suffering. Reflection on the passion could not only give one the strength to patiently bear suffering since such a person could know that God too had suffered; rather bearing suffering itself in patience represented a way fulfill what became the highest duty of a Christian, that of imitating Christ. Writing about the value of patience in the *De virtutibus*, for instance, Servasanto urges that patience in bearing suffering makes one like Christ, hence the example of Francis and the stigmata.<sup>102</sup> "When, therefore, the whole life of Christ was [spent] in difficulties, it remains that his soldier should be similar

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<sup>99</sup> Besides the earlier sources I have referred to on this, see also Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 117-118.

<sup>100</sup> "*Per proprium sanguinem*," Vat. Lat. 5933 f.46v., "secundi sunt Christum passum respicientes vivacitate attentionis unde homo in ipsum attendit toto corde attentione quia talis aspectus esse non potest sine devotione et multa compassione nec non in lacrimarum effusione... tertii sunt Christum passum imitantes comitate passionis..."

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., "... secundi sunt Christum passum respicientes vivacitate attentionis unde homo in ipsum attendit toto corde attentione quia talis aspectus esse non potest sine devotione et multa compassione nec non et lacrimarum effusione..."

<sup>102</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.123r., "Quarto patientia Christo assimilatur et nonne militi est gloria magis [mag~] si assimiletur in vestibus regi exemplum de beato francisco cui est magna gloria eo quod ferat dominica stigmata..."

to him in pains, bearing them through patience.”<sup>103</sup> If the king suffers, the soldier may follow him by suffering as well. Servasanto refers to Bernard who remarked that “how great is the glory of the spouse of Christ to be made like her spouse and nothing is thought more glorious than to bear the disgrace of one’s spouse,” and to such a one, “the ignominy of the cross is welcome”<sup>104</sup> Patience makes men to be like Christ, who also bore his suffering patiently and makes them into his neighbors. Christ suffered for man and so man was obliged to imitate this and suffer for Christ. By doing so patiently, a person made himself neighbor to Christ. “The second thing patience does,” writes Servasanto, “is make men neighbors to Christ. Indeed, Christ suffered for us, so who suffers for Him makes himself His neighbor.”<sup>105</sup>

Because of how bearing even involuntary suffering patiently could have the great spiritual value in allowing one to imitate Christ, who had also suffered patiently, temporal sufferings were thus not to be fled or avoided but welcomed. Servasanto makes this clear not only in his treatises, but also in his sermons where he also insists on the value of such sufferings. He argues this with particular clarity in the sermon “*Venerunt nuptiae agni*,” for the feast of St. Agnes, who St. Ambrose reported was martyred in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century for her love of purity and Christ, not scorning to suffer for Him.<sup>106</sup>

Writing about her willingness to suffer for Christ, Servasanto ends by concluding that “temporal sufferings must not be fled, but rather be born with Christ in order that we

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., “Cume ergo omnis vita Christi in angustiis fuerit restat ut miles eius ei similis sit in penis per patientiam tollerandis...”

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., “Bernardus o quanta gloria est sponse Christi et assimilari nihiloque gloriosus reputat quam sui sponsi portare obprobria grata inquit est ignominia crucis sed ei qui non est crucifixo ingratus quia deferre super se arma regis militi gloriosum existit.”

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., f.123v., “secundo patientia afeit ut vicem homines Christo reddant. Christus enim passus pro nobis ergo ei qui pro eo patitur vicem reddit...”

<sup>106</sup> Ambrose, *De virginitate*, I.2. Cited here from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/34071.htm> [accessed April 22, 2013].



might avoid eternal sufferings and gain eternal prizes, since the apostle says if we were companions of his passion, we will be sharers in his consolation.”<sup>107</sup> Temporal sufferings represented an important way to imitate and to follow Christ, an idea that Servasanto also reinforces in his sermons, “*Proposito sibi*” and “*Non sunt condigne*.” In “*Proposito sibi*,” for the feast of St. Andrew, martyred by crucifixion, Servasanto argued that patience in suffering was an important way that one might follow Christ. Indeed, in patient suffering, one might even make oneself like a martyr. Hence, Servasanto refers to Gregory, “without sword or flame, we too can become martyrs if we truly preserve patience in our spirits,” this just like the martyrs “who preserved patience in their sufferings on account of Christ.”<sup>108</sup> The martyrs followed Christ by their sufferings, yet even with the age of martyrs past, Servasanto suggests, his audience can themselves become martyrs by their patient bearing of suffering. In this way, one fulfills his duty to take up his cross and follow his Master. For, Servasanto writes, “what does it mean to take up the cross and follow the Lord except to persevere in patience when one is afflicted; for who does not preserve his patience in affliction is not worthy of the grace of Christ.”<sup>109</sup>

Likewise, patient endurance of temporal sufferings represented a way to battle

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<sup>107</sup> “*Venerunt nuptiae agni*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.60v., “non erunt ergo fugienda temporalia mala non fugienda tormenta [sic formenta] sed cum Christo potius sustinenda ut per hec fugiamus eterna supplica et premia consequemur eterna quia secundus apostolus si fuerimus socii passionum erimus et consolationum ad hec etc.”

The passage is from 2 Corinthians 1:7, *Ut spes nostra firma sit pro vobis: scientes quod sicut socii passionum estis, sic eritis et consolationis.*

<sup>108</sup> “*Proposito sibi*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f. 42v., “quartum brachium huius crucis est patientia respectu adversorum recte enim a sanctis appellatur martirium quando in penis patientiam exhibet propter Christum Gregorius sine ferro et flammis martires esse possumus si patientiam in animo veraciter conservemus...”

<sup>109</sup> “*Proposito sibi*,” Vat. Lat. 9884 f.42v., “Mt. X, *Qui non accipit crucem suam et sequitur me non est me dignus*. Quid est enim crucem accipere et dominum sequi nisi patientiam servare dum contingit affligi nam qui non servat patientiam in adversis dignus Christi gratia non existit...”

with one's king, another image of which Servasanto made frequent use. He wrote often how one should not be surprised if he suffered, for when the king suffered, the soldier can scarce hope to escape suffering. Hence, if God suffered, man should not be surprised when he does. This sought to make suffering understandable, but Servasanto goes further and urges that patient suffering is still more a duty, a duty of imitation. In the sermon, "*Non sunt condigne*," in which Servasanto writes of the various reasons that suffering should be understandable,<sup>110</sup> he writes too of the duty to imitate the passion saying that "no one can be with Christ save him who imitates His passion."<sup>111</sup> One does this, as the central topic of the sermon suggests, by patiently bearing suffering.

Besides patient endurance of suffering, Servasanto suggests that one may meet his duty to imitate Christ in one other important way. One might imitate Christ by penance. Recall that now, by the twelfth century, Christ's coming was explained at least in part in penitential terms where Christ had done penance, not for his own sins, but those of mankind.<sup>112</sup> If Christ had suffered for the sins of man, then perhaps man too could imitate Christ by voluntary suffering for his own sins that is, by penance. In "*Proposito sibi*," Servasanto talks about both patiently bearing suffering and about penance calling penance "the foundation of all good virtue," and writing of the need for sin to be wiped away by the bitterness of penance.<sup>113</sup> "See that," Servasanto writes, "the holy apostle did strong penance; he afflicted the flesh and forced it to serve the spirit whence he could say

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<sup>110</sup> Including that temporal sufferings are not great compared to heaven, that gold is purified by fire, and that such sufferings are the divine chastisements of a loving God.

<sup>111</sup> "*Non sunt condigne*," Vat. Lat. 1261 f.98v., "nullus cum Christo potest esse nisi qui passionum eius fuerint imitatus..."

<sup>112</sup> It is worth also noting that Bonaventure compared Christ's suffering to the suffering of a penitent who suffers but at the same time finds joy in this suffering. See Mowbray, "*Pain and Suffering ...*" 37.

<sup>113</sup> "*Proposito sibi*," Vat. Lat. 9884 f.41r-41v., "dicamus ergo quod primum brachium et infimum crucis est penitentia respectu peccatorum quae est virtute bonorum omnium fundamentum..."

with the apostle Paul, *I have been crucified with Christ*, that is, I supposed Christ having to be found in the bitterness of penance... but who is there today who does penance...?<sup>114</sup>

To do penance itself allowed a person to imitate Christ's crucifixion and to say, *I have been crucified with Christ*. Penance made one a companion to the crucifixion of Christ, whose suffering was understood, at least in part, in penitential terms where he made satisfaction for the sins of mankind. If God had done so, then a faithful soldier should do no less.

### Servasanto and His Contemporaries

Servasanto da Faenza was not original or unique in his preaching on suffering, the spiritual value of both penitential and involuntary suffering, and Christ's suffering.

Indeed, in his stress on Christ's suffering he was only following Francis, who was himself not likely unique, as Southern has observed.<sup>115</sup> Thomas Cyrcetur in particular is a noteworthy late medieval example of another preacher, who thinks similarly to

Servasanto on other aspects of penance, also showing significant similarity in his own preaching on suffering. He speaks of Christ's suffering on the cross and argues that it should lead one to penance. He writes, "for whatever is said of [Christ's passion] all draws us to devotion and penance. For he called us to penitence by word, but much more by example."<sup>116</sup> Cyrcetur, Ball writes, says that one should "weep with heart and

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., f.41v., "quia nisi ex amaritudine penitentia deleantur peccata bona non degustantur eterna quod sanctus apostola cernens fortem penitentiam egit carnem afflixit et spiritum servire coegit unde poterat dicere cum apostolo Paulo illud gal. ii *Christo confixus sum cruci* id est propter Christum inveniendum amare penitentie supposui... sed quis hodie est qui cum apostolo agat penitentiam..."

<sup>115</sup> Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, 232-233.

<sup>116</sup> R.M. Ball, "Thomas Cyrcetur: a Fifteenth-Century Theologian and Preacher," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986) 205-239; 228.

eyes for the passion of our saviour.”<sup>117</sup> Like Servasanto, he urges reflection and compassion for Christ’s suffering and argues that genuine concern for Christ’s crucifixion should draw a person to repentance.

Much of this seems to be due to the connection between penance, perhaps especially contrition, and suffering as a way to imitate Christ’s. For instance, Ball observes that Cyrcetur sees penance “as perpetual sorrow for sin, turning aside from sin, and patiently accepting whatever sufferings we must bear.”<sup>118</sup> Cyrcetur offers other encouragement for those dealing with suffering, suggesting that even involuntary sufferings, like tribulation and infirmity, can have satisfactory value for sin if they are patiently born.<sup>119</sup> By patiently accepting even involuntary sufferings as works of penance, suffering can have spiritual value and penitential value, as it could for Servasanto. Like Servasanto, Cyrcetur offers different comforts to those dealing with suffering speaking, for instance, about the consolation offered by the hope of future heavenly joy. In one place he addresses the sufferer, “therefore, O Christian soul, labouring in infirmity or death or any other tribulation, be not troubled... Soon it will turn to fair weather for thee.”<sup>120</sup> Yet, in spite of this, perhaps the greatest potential value and the greatest comfort for it, for Cyrcetur, is that it unites a man to Christ even in this life. Since the Christian is to take up his cross and follow Christ, he must suffer in this life, for just as God suffering for man, so too should man be willing to suffer for God.<sup>121</sup> Hence man’s suffering unite’s him to the cross including the voluntary suffering of penance.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>120</sup> Ball, “Thomas Cyrcetur,” 232.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 233.

This meant that for Servasanto, penance could even be a way to imitate Christ. Richard Kilwardby seems to have shared this view, arguing that penance is a way to imitate Christ since in penance, one voluntarily suffers for sin, as Christ did.<sup>122</sup> Like Servasanto, Thomas is fully aware of the fact of suffering and the problems it posed for the laity, offering a range of different ways one might derive comfort in suffering. Most of all perhaps, though, he stresses that suffering, including the suffering of penance, can have the spiritual value of uniting one to the cross and to Christ crucified.

Finally, David D'Avray also, in *Medieval Religious Rationalities* refers to it as “an assumption embedded in medieval Christianity that Christ’s self-denial and then ultimate sacrifice enabled other humans to perform meaningful sacrifices that could play a role in their redemption.”<sup>123</sup> Including other forms of asceticism (fasting, celibacy, monasticism) along with penance, he writes, “ultimately they were all imitations of Christ’s human suffering.” This seems to support that idea the penance was broadly seen as a way to imitate the sufferings of Christ.

## PREACHING PAIN AND THE DECLINE OF CATHARISM

Earlier in this chapter, I referred to the suggestion of C.N.L. Brooke that St. Francis’s own devotion to the physical humanity of Christ may have done even more to contribute to the decline of Catharism than crusade and inquisition. It is now time to return to this interesting idea and consider briefly how Franciscan preaching on suffering, including the suffering savior, may have contributed to the decline of the Cathars in the

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<sup>122</sup>Osmund Lewry OP, “A Passiontide Sermon of Robert Kilwardby OP,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 52 (1982), 89-113; 108.

<sup>123</sup> David d’Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities: a Weberian Analysis*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 50.

thirteenth century and beyond.

One Stradigotto, a Cathar from Orvieto, located between Florence and Rome, declared his beliefs to two Franciscan inquisitors. He held “that this world and all visible things were created by the devil... that priests of the Roman Church do not have the power to absolve men who have confessed and are contrite from sin and that those living in matrimony are living in a state of perpetual damnation.”<sup>124</sup> The beliefs of many Cathar adherents may not have been as developed as those of Stradigotto, who espoused a full blown dualism, but such Cathar ideas gained considerable popularity in much of northern and central Italy in the early and mid-thirteenth century,<sup>125</sup> fading only in the second half of that century.<sup>126</sup> It grew mostly in cities where it was able to gain a foothold and grow in large part because of the struggles between the communes and the Church, and conflict with Frederick Barbarossa, which led to a freedom that permitted greater religious dissidence.<sup>127</sup> Cathar beliefs were probably attractive for several reasons including first, the apparent holiness of the leaders of the sect, the *perfecti*, as a consequence of their voluntary poverty;<sup>128</sup> and the appeal of the *consolamentum* ceremony, which provided salvation from Satan’s fallen world.<sup>129</sup> Thirdly, C.H. Lawrence has commented on how a

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<sup>124</sup> Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy*, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press), 4.

<sup>125</sup> Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars*, (Blackwell, 1998). Lambert has remarked that one cannot easily write the history of Catharism in Italy with precision because evidence of inquisitorial registers is more limited than in Languedoc. Nonetheless, Catharism grew to a position of strength in Italy toward the end of the twelfth century when Jacques de Vitry called Milan “a pit of heretics” (81).

<sup>126</sup> Lansing, *Power and Purity*. 5.

<sup>127</sup> Lambert, *The Cathars*, 81.

<sup>128</sup> Such was especially the opinion of Herbert Grundmann in his classic *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). Lester Little adopted similar views in *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978). C.H. Lawrence has also noted how the Cathars provided an alternate form of piety to a laity unsatisfied by the Catholic clergy. See *The Friars: the Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London and New York: Longman, 1994).

<sup>129</sup> Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the*

dualist cosmology that explains the material world as the creation of an evil god “offered a plausible explanation for the miseries of the human condition and waywardness of the flesh that everyone experiences. It solved the eternal conundrum posed by the existence of evil in a world created by a good and omnipotent God.”<sup>130</sup>

Though attractive for these reasons, Catharism declined as it struggled to gain new recruits and began to seem out of date and unsophisticated. The preaching and ministry of the friars, in particular their preaching on suffering may have helped contribute to this sense of Catharism as an outdated belief system. While the friars, including the Franciscans in Florence, served as inquisitors as part of their effort to combat Catharism, the work of the inquisition is probably insufficient to explain the decline of Catharism.<sup>131</sup> Given the reasons for the attraction of Catharism the friars’ ministry as preachers and confessors must also help to account for this decline.<sup>132</sup> Their commitment to voluntary poverty would have lessened the appeal of the austerity of the Cathar *perfecti*.<sup>133</sup> Further, the developing theology of penance, preached by the friars who also served as sensitive, well-trained confessors could lessen the attraction of the

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*Reformation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Blackwell, 2002), 118

<sup>130</sup> Lawrence, *The Friars*, 6. See also Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 132.

<sup>131</sup> See Rosalind Brooke, *The Coming of the Friars*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., and New York: Banes & Noble Books, 1975), 11 “In north Italy, where Cathars and unreconciled Waldensians were also numerous, there was no crusade; yet the numbers of heretics notably declined. The activities of the inquisition alone can hardly account for this. See also Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars*, 287, “Force alone cannot explain decline. It certainly accelerated a downward trend... but it always interacted with changes in the Italian climate of opinion, often deep-rooted, working over a long period of time against the Cathar interest.” Similarly, Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity*, 157, also points to the limits of coercion.

<sup>132</sup> There were also other ways the friars worked against Catharism by their preaching. d’Avray, for example, has noted how some friars, including Servasanto preached on the good of marriage in a way that was specifically designed to oppose Cathar denials of marriage. See his “Some Franciscan Ideas about the Body, *AFH*, 84, (1991), 343-363.

<sup>133</sup> It was with precisely this goal in mind that the Dominican order, for example, initially committed itself to voluntary poverty, see Lawrence, *The Friars*, 67-68, “It was a question of competing with the *perfect*, the spiritual elite of the Catharist sect, who were famous for their personal austerity and their renunciation of worldly goods.”

*consolamentum* ceremony. The demand for salvation might appear to have been better met by sacramental penance than by the *consolamentum*.<sup>134</sup> Seen in this light, penance appears, to a significant degree, as a response to the demands of the laity for an effective route to salvation.

Finally, it is possible that the friars' preaching on suffering served to improve pastoral care in a way that helped to contribute to the decline of the Cathars. If Servasanto is at all representative, then the friars seem to have engaged in the regular preaching of a sophisticated range of ideas on the penitential and spiritual value of suffering, compassion for Christ crucified, and the spiritual duty of imitating Christ's suffering by patiently bearing one's own. Against this repeated preaching and the popularity of related devotions,<sup>135</sup> Cathar claims about the world as evil, suffering as the result of an evil god, and denials of the physical humanity of Christ could easily appear outdated and unable compete with the new spirituality fostered by the friars. The plausibility of this claim, that friars' preaching on the value of suffering contributed to the decline of Catharism, will depend largely on the extent to which one accepts that: first, coercion alone is inadequate to explain the decline of Catharism, and second, part of the attraction of Catharism lay in its appeal to dualism as an explanation of the suffering in the world.<sup>136</sup> Both of these seem to me more probable than not, though neither may be provable with absolute certainty. Nonetheless, if one agrees with these two points, then it

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<sup>134</sup> See Lambert, *The Cathars*, 288, "Auricular confession, imposed by Innocent III in *Omnis utriusque sexus*, gave birth to a literature instructing the clergy in their duties, developed moral theology and, at its best drew priest and penitent together in a relationship based on counselling and sympathetic insight into the needs of the laity... In the face of a more flexible penitential system of this kind... Cathar rigidities could easily seem out of date..."

<sup>135</sup> Such as those fostered by the confraternities, see Lambert, *The Cathars*, 288.

<sup>136</sup> Mark Gregory Pegg, for instance, would probably deny this, but his radical position that no Cathars existed is not very convincing. See his, *A Most Holy War: the Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom*, (Oxford; NY: Oxford University Press, 2008).



is plausible that part of the way in which the friars contributed to the decline of Catharism was by an improved pastoral care that included preaching on the spiritual and penitential value of suffering and as well as sufferings of Christ.

## CONCLUSIONS

Previous chapters have accounted for how Servasanto da Faenza preached penance in the thirteenth century and wrote treatises as guidelines to help his brothers also serve as well trained preachers and confessors. He presented penance regularly in his sermons and preaching treatises thereby serving as an important example of the increase in penitential preaching after the year 1200.<sup>137</sup> Like his fellow friars, Servasanto worked as a skilled preacher and confessor, generally presenting penance in a positive way and urging his brothers to consider themselves and act as skilled and sensitive doctors of souls, a fact that helps explain the popularity of the friars as preachers and confessors and the general success of the Church's penitential program by the later Middle Ages. At the same time, however, Servasanto preached not only on penance, but also preached extensively on suffering, both the suffering of man and of God. Part of the importance of penitential thought, developing in the schools and preached by the friars was how it helped to account for the spiritual value of even involuntary suffering. Suffering could have penitential value in helping a person to recognize his own sinfulness and hence his need to repent and suffering itself could help to purge sin. Suffering too could have spiritual value in improving one's character, helping one develop virtue, and

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<sup>137</sup> On how the friars after the year 1200 provided a number of well trained men who could use preaching material to preach regularly to the laity, see David d'Avray's work including, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

helping one to earn future rewards. Most importantly, perhaps, was how patient endurance of suffering could help bring one closer to and imitate a God who had also suffered. The Franciscans, like their founder, were devoted to Christ crucified and Servasanto is able to present suffering in a way where, by suffering patiently, a person may show devotion and compassion to, and imitate the sufferings of Christ who himself suffered not for his own sins, but for those of mankind.

This preaching on suffering and its value helped to provide meaning and purpose to one's suffering in large part by building on developments in penitential theology and new understandings of Christ's Incarnation and suffering. Besides serving as skilled confessors and penitential preachers, this represents another important way in which the friars improved the pastoral care in the later Middle Ages and may have helped contribute to the decline of Catharism. They provided improved care to the laity struggling with the problem of suffering, preaching encouragement and urging that such suffering could have meaning, purpose, and value. This preaching on suffering, improved pastoral care concerning the problem of suffering, and devotion to Christ crucified also helps account for the popularity of the friars themselves in the later Middle Ages. This was made possible, in large part, because of their work as penitential preachers and confessors.

## Chapter 6: Penance and the “Oppression Thesis”

In my previous five chapters, a review of the preaching material, the sermons and treatises, of the Franciscan preacher and confessor Servasanto da Faenza, has shown that penance was central to his thought and to his sense of the friars’ ministry. It has shown that he preached penance frequently throughout the year, both on Sundays in and out of Lent as well as saints’ feast days. He presented penance in largely positive terms where it was less about going to a harsh judge and more like going to a skilled and sensitive doctor to be healed of a serious wound. For him, penance was an act of love that could help one to develop the virtue goodness necessary to see the highest good of all, God. The question now concerns the broader significance of this study of Servasanto’s preaching material.

In my introduction, I referred to the “Oppression Thesis,” the claim that “a largely coercive power drove pre-modern penitential activity.”<sup>1</sup> Based on the supposed repressive nature of penance, this Oppression Thesis has sometimes been extended further to characterize, not only penance in the Middle Ages, but Church/lay relations more broadly. The Oppression Thesis regarding penance has been both influential and popular, as well as having a long history. For many, both Reformation Protestants and modern scholars, who support this view, the sacrament of penance itself is the primary

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<sup>1</sup> Abigail Firey ed. *A New History of Penance*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2008), 4.

center of this repression. The sacrament is the place where, according to this hypothesis, a reluctant laity is forced before a judgmental priest, a sort of inquisitor, who will try to ferret out their most private secrets. The priest, representing the hierarchical Church, will then impose a harsh penalty on the penitent with the sacrament representing, most of all, an opportunity for social control by the medieval Church. Tentler remarked of the early Protestant reformers that the “emotional center of their campaign was... [their] denunciation of sacramental confession because it tormented rather than consoled.”<sup>2</sup>

Luther attacked medieval writings on contrition and confession, “which try to frighten people into going frequently to confession.”<sup>3</sup> This view that medieval sacramental penance was harsh and tyrannical is popular even today with twentieth-century Protestant critiques continuing to find penance oppressive. Steven Ozment assumes in his own books that the laity heard a harsh message about penance and were terrorized by it. He accepts Luther’s view that sacramental penance was “sheer tyranny,” saying “confession was not completed upon leaving the confessional; one departed with a sentence to be served, a remedy to be applied, a task still to be fulfilled. One did not ‘go in peace.’”<sup>4</sup>

More recently, Mary Mansfield too agreed with Ozment that penance imposed a significant burden of guilt,<sup>5</sup> with a post-1200 focus on externals that “killed... ‘contritionism.’” Hence, she does not go so far as Ozment in assuming that contrition

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 351.

<sup>3</sup> Luther, cited from Steven Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: the Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), 50. Tentler, *Sin and Confession*... 366, warns, however, against assuming that Luther spoke for everyone. “...we must reject the view that Luther and Calvin simply articulated the reactions of sensitive Christians throughout Europe because this ignores too many sensitive Christians...”

<sup>4</sup> Ozment, *The Reformation in Cities*, 26 and 51

<sup>5</sup> Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 293.

was a particularly harsh requirement; rather, she suggests, contrary to common opinion, that contrition became practically irrelevant after 1200. Consequently, she argues that the laity would have seen Lenten penance as a humiliating experience, something she calls “hardly...accidental.” For her, the very point of “private” Lenten confession was to expose parishioners’ secrets and humiliate “them before their neighbors.”<sup>6</sup> Even more recently, Dyan Elliot too argued for the mostly repressive nature of medieval penance, linking it with the inquisition and stressing sacramental penance’s importance as a type of surveillance designed to limit lay freedom and exercise Church control. For her, relying especially on the penitential *summa* of the canonist Raymond of Penyafort, penance was largely judicial in nature, with the confessor as interrogator, much like a judge of the inquisition.<sup>7</sup> She further stressed the power of confessors over holy women, suggesting the helplessness of such women before such men meant that penance could often be repressive.

Many arguments for the repressive nature of sacramental penance rest on seeing its function as a form of social control. H.C. Lea in the nineteenth century argued that sacramental penance was a novelty used primarily to control the laity.<sup>8</sup> In the second half of the twentieth century, Tentler differed from Ozment somewhat in admitting penance also offered consolation to many, but he particularly stressed confession as a “comprehensive and organized system of social control.”<sup>9</sup> By social control, he meant,

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<sup>6</sup> Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners*, 90.

<sup>7</sup> Dyan Elliot, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, (Princeton 2004), 13, 19, 24-26.

<sup>8</sup> Henry Charles Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*, (Philadelphia, 1896).

<sup>9</sup> Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 345. “The Summa of Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control,” in Trinkaus and Oberman eds. *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion. Papers*

citing Gamson, that “perhaps the most powerful and common means of social control is simply the conveying of expectations with clarity and explicitness coupled with clear and direct accountability for the performance of such expectations...”<sup>10</sup> Sacramental penance, for Tentler was the way in which the medieval laity were controlled and held accountable for their behavior. Though he tried to moderate this conclusion, admitting that confession consoled as well as controlled, Tentler wrote about the Church interest in preserving authority for its own sake, the onerous nature of the penitent’s obligations, and the source of guilt that sacramental confession could be.<sup>11</sup>

The Oppression Thesis regarding medieval penance has often been applied to medieval religion as a whole. Indeed, this is much of the reason why it is so significant. The supposedly repressive nature of medieval penance has been used to support the claim that relations between Church and laity were characterized by conflict, with the laity as objects of social control of a powerful and hierarchical Church with little agency of their own. Largely based on what he saw as the oppressive nature of sacramental penance, Ozment argued that Protestant Reformers set out to overcome the perceived oppressive superstition of the Church as a whole.<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere, he referred to a “swelling popular desire to be rid of the psychological and social burdens of late medieval religion.”<sup>13</sup> Based in large part on her conflation of sacramental penance with inquisition, and what she saw as the repressive nature of relationships between holy women and their

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*from the University of Michigan Conference*, (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 103-137. Here he stresses too the power and authority of the confessor over the penitent and referred to a “culture of guilt in sacramental penance.”

<sup>10</sup> Tentler, “Response and Retraccio,” *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval Religion. Papers from the University of Michigan Conference*, Charles Trinkaus and Heiko Oberman eds., (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 131-137; 136.

<sup>11</sup> Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 346-347.

<sup>12</sup> Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 210.

<sup>13</sup> Ozment, *Reformation in Cities*, 9.

confessors Dyan Elliot openly admitted that her story was largely one of repression and restraint. She spoke of the creation of an “inquisitional culture” in medieval society, and she argued that this especially affected women’s religious experience in the Later Middle Ages.<sup>14</sup> Such views dovetail with similar images that do not consider penance but still stress the repressive nature of late medieval religion and society. R.I. Moore’s *Formation of a Persecuting Society* is one influential example of seeing late medieval society as characterized by repression. Medieval Europe became a “persecuting society,” an “inquisitional culture” and, in many versions, penance was a key a part of that.

Despite how influential the Oppression Thesis has been and continues to be, it suffers from several problems. As Lawrence Duggan points out, the claim that penance was oppressive rests on the assumption that most people confessed often enough to be effectively controlled by the parish clergy.<sup>15</sup> The Fourth Lateran Council, however, only mandated that the laity confess once per year. To know with certainty if people confessed even this often is not easy, though it is plausible that many did.<sup>16</sup> It is not even clear how the requirement to confess annually could have been enforced. People may have chosen to meet that requirement, but if they remained hesitant, it is hard to know how effective policing measures were. Complaints by the council of Paris in 1419 about people failing to make their annual confession suggest that at least a significant number

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<sup>14</sup> Dyan Elliot, *Proving Woman*.

<sup>15</sup> See Lawrence Duggan “Fear and Confession on the Eve of Reformation.” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 75 (1984), 153-175; 159. Lawrence Duggan argues that the Oppression Thesis regarding penance rests on four assumptions: first, that people confessed frequently enough to be under the thumb of the clergy, second, that private confession was the norm, third, that priests were regularly harsh and legalistic, and fourth, that people had little choice in their confessors.

<sup>16</sup> Duggan suggests that they probably did, “Fear and Confession,” 159-161.

were avoiding confession,<sup>17</sup> even if it is hard to know how widespread this problem was. Furthermore, some idea about the challenging of compelling the reticent may be gleaned from an instance in Passau in 1470 where the clergy were unsure of what to do with those who did not confess or receive the Eucharist.<sup>18</sup> This may suggest that even by the very Late Middle Ages, the enforcement ability remained limited.

Even if most people did generally meet their obligation to confess annually, mere annual confession, even if an unpleasant experience, could easily be rare enough that to guess at its impact among the laity would be difficult. In this case, it would be difficult to generalize from the repressive nature of penance to the oppressive nature of medieval religion and Church/lay relations as a whole. Duggan, for instance, concludes that “even if it be safe to conclude that most people did confess at least once a year, there is virtually no evidence that they confessed often enough to permit us to conclude that a tangible degree of clerical control existed.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, even among regular confesseees, it is hard to see how they could be forced to confess a sin they wished to withhold. Clergy might complain and warn about the danger of withholding a sin in confession, but their power to compell would have been limited.<sup>20</sup> Servasanto himself told of a man who, moved by his preaching, voluntarily came to him, proposing to confess his sin of sodomy, but who changed his mind and pulled back. “Even as he sat,” Servasanto writes, “he arose, saying he wished to withdraw and I could not prevail on him to confess. And so scarcely could I get him to open his mouth for confession, this sin making him

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<sup>17</sup> Duggan, “Fear and Confession,” 160.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>20</sup> At most they might ask a penitent if he had committed certain sins, but could not force a response unless perhaps the sin were a very public one already known to the whole community.



mute.’<sup>21</sup> Servasanto’s power to compel was limited as he could neither force the man to remain with him nor to confess his particular sin. The freedom to withhold sins, which surely most of the laity possessed, would also have militated against the sacrament being overly repressive even for those members of the laity who might have attended their annual confession with more reluctance than others. In this case, if sacramental penance was an attempt at a form of social control, it seems likely it was a often rather unimpressive and ineffective form of it.

Let us assume, however, that many did confess more than one time per year. Many confraternities, for instance, popular forms of lay religious life in the later Middle Ages, mandated more frequent confession and Eucharist.<sup>22</sup> John Henderson, for instance, refers to the confraternity of Gesù Pellegrino, active in the fourteenth century, which required quarterly confession. Writing of Renaissance Bologna, Nicholas Terpstra also observed how confraternities made use of increased confession and communion. Either monthly or sometimes quarterly, members would confess to the confraternity’s priest.<sup>23</sup> But in these cases where more frequent confession occurred, it was clearly voluntary, which makes it difficult to regard as oppressive.

The laity also had great flexibility to choosing to whom they might confess. The Fourth Lateran Council required the laity to confess their parish priests, but clearly many

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<sup>21</sup> *Virtutibus* f.74v., “unde ipse vidi quod quadam violentia ad penitentiam duxi quemdam hominem desperatum qui in quadam mea prédicatione mutatus est, me, prédicatione completa, secutus confiteri proponens. Cumque ad me venisset, vix potui facere quod sederet. Surgebat etiam sedens, se velle recedere dicens, confiteri non valeo. Sicque vix ab eo extorsi ut ad confessionem os aperiret, hoc peccatum eum mutum efficiens.”

<sup>22</sup> John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 136.

<sup>23</sup> Terpstra, See, for instance, Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Henderson, *Piety and Charity*, 39. Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities*, 59, even writes how confraternity statues praised frequent confession, “drawing mostly frequently on medical analogies,” as Servasanto da Faenza himself did so often in his own preaching.

did not.<sup>24</sup> Clergy complained about parishioners who did not respect parish boundaries.<sup>25</sup> The laity were provided even more choice with arrival on scene of Franciscan and Dominican friars, who were popular confessors, perhaps especially among people hesitant to confess to their own parish priest. This went so far as to sometimes create conflict between the friars and the clergy.<sup>26</sup> Evidently, people had the flexibility to choose milder priests and avoid harsher ones. As Duggan suggests, this competition between priests, both diocesan and regular (especially mendicants) must have significantly limited “any vigor remaining in the penitential system.”<sup>27</sup> This choice in confessor could easily prevent priests from behaving too harshly, while any that did would find their penitents simply confessing to other priests.

This flexibility in choosing priests meant that while confession may have been a chance for the clergy to judge the laity, it was also a chance for the laity to judge the clergy. Even Tentler, who stressed the social control aspect of the sacrament of penance, observed that authorities wanted to avoid the problem of ignorant confessors and so gave some encouragement to the laity to judge their confessors.<sup>28</sup> This was true even in attempts to stress the importance of penance beyond the Middle Ages. Wietsche de Boer, who also stressed confession as social discipline, pointed out that the same was true in Counter-Reformation Milan with one writer urging the laity to report bad confessors and

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<sup>24</sup> Duggan, “Fear and Confession,” 165. John Bossy stresses the same point in “The Counter Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe,” *Past and Present*, 47 (1970) 51-70; 53-62. For instance, Bossy mentions people who preferred to skip confession altogether rather than be forced to reconcile with their neighbors (56).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>26</sup> Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages*, 147.

<sup>27</sup> Duggan, “Fear and Confession,” 167.

<sup>28</sup> Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 346.

de Boer himself suggesting that the laity simple hesitated to confess to bad priests.<sup>29</sup>

What happened in Counter-Reformation Europe must certainly have happened earlier when priests had less authority than they had in Borromeo's Milan. Confession, therefore, was not only a chance for the clergy to judge the laity, but for the laity to judge the clergy.

A final weakness of the Oppression Thesis is that it often relies on extraordinary examples. Steven Ozment, for instance, makes much of Martin Luther's own anxiety for his salvation and the writings in which he came to see sacramental penance as "sheer tyranny." Ozment seems to assume that Luther spoke for most late medieval Europeans. But as Tentler observes, "...we must reject the view that Luther and Calvin simply articulated the reactions of sensitive Christians throughout Europe because this ignores too many sensitive Christians."<sup>30</sup> The challenge of drawing more general inferences is also evident in Dyan Elliot's study. Her example of Elizabeth of Hungary under the control of her repressive confessor Conrad of Marburg is certainly startling, but seems likely to be an extraordinary case and it is not clear what generalizations one can make from it.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Elliot admits that her example is an extreme case, though she suggests that it shows the vulnerability of religious women to their confessors.<sup>32</sup>

These considerations suggest that it is difficult to regard the Oppression Thesis as historically probable. On the contrary, such considerations provide some reason for

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<sup>29</sup> De Boer, *Conquest of the Soul*, 16-18.

<sup>30</sup> Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 366. He cites the examples of Ignatius of Loyola and Batolomé de Las Casas who both found confession helpful and consoling rather than an overly harsh tyranny. It seems evident that Ozment's view applies logically not only to Europeans on the eve of Reformation, but to Europeans of earlier centuries since the aspects of penance he finds so oppressive on the eve of Reformation were also present earlier (concern with contrition, imposition of work of satisfaction by the priest etc.).

<sup>31</sup> Elliot, *Proving Woman*, chapter 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

thinking that penance was far less repressive than actually claimed. It is possible to see penance, not just as a top down tyranny imposed on an at best ambivalent and, at worst, resistant laity by a hierarchical Church aiming at social control to “protect its institutions and power.” Rather, one might see the medieval Church’s interest in penance partly as a response to lay demands and interests. This idea of penance as fueled by lay interests would fit well with an influential historical interpretation, that of Herbert Grundmann, who wrote of a religious movement with its roots in the late eleventh century and that swept twelfth-century society. In the second half of the eleventh century, the Gregorian reform movement sought the “liberty of the Church,” freeing the Church from secular influences. It tried to make clergy holier, making them more like monks, not least through clerical celibacy, and having greater avoidance of worldly affairs. The reform movement, however, was controversial, and the popes appealed for support to the laity. In turn, many of the laity responded, supporting the call for greater holiness among the clergy. This had the perhaps unexpected effect, however, of leading many of the laity to desire to participate in the religious movement that swept twelfth century society.<sup>33</sup> In the earlier Middle Ages, holiness had been the business of the monks, “those who pray.” Now, according to Grundmann, “Many who had been awakened by the Gregorian Reform movement began to ask... whether each and every Christian might not be called by the command of the Gospels and the example of the apostles to model his or her life on the Gospels and apostolic standards.”<sup>34</sup> This led to Church concern when this popular

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<sup>33</sup> Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, ed. and trans. Steven Rowan, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 7-8.

<sup>34</sup> Grundmann, *Religious Movements*, 7.

enthusiasm could lead to popular heretical movements.<sup>35</sup>

In this context, it is possible to see the focus on penance as part of a response to lay demand for holiness, but through orthodox channels. The laity were offered an opportunity for increased personal holiness that many of them sought in the twelfth century religious movement, while the Church had the assurance that this would happen in an orthodox fashion. It is no coincidence that the same Pope, Innocent III, who called the Fourth Latern Council, was also credited by Grundmann with saving the apostolic poverty movement for the Church. He did this in part by authorizing the Franciscans as penitential preachers and later generations of Franciscans would indeed travel throughout Europe as penitential preachers and confessors. C.H. Lawrence suggests that much of the reason for the friars' success lies in how they responded to and fulfilled lay spiritual aspirations. He writes,

To lay people dissatisfied with their role as passive spectators of religious observances and hungry for guidance in personal religion... [the friars] offered new possibilities of active participation. In a sense, they pioneered the idea of the devout life for the laity both by their teaching and example... It was a hopeful message that contrasted with the pessimism of traditional monastic spirituality, which regarded the monk as the only complete Christian and offered only a tenuous hope of salvation to the married laity<sup>36</sup>

Seen in this light, penance was indeed, as Ozment, Elliot, and others believe, a central feature of late-medieval religion and point of contact between lay and clerical interests, but not necessarily or fundamentally characterized by ecclesiastical surveillance and oppression.

While this picture of penance is a possible, and perhaps even plausible, one, it has

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<sup>35</sup> On which see Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 2002).

<sup>36</sup> C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: the Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society*, (London; NY: Longman, 1994), 121.

not been an easy one to confirm or reject based on sources penance historians have traditionally used.<sup>37</sup> Hence the contributors to the *NHP* are reluctant to guess at the impact on the laity of the Church's penitential program.<sup>38</sup> This thesis has argued, however, that sermons are a way of filling this gap. As a medieval form of mass communication, they represent a central way clerical ideas about penance were communicated to the laity and over time would have been key in shaping lay view on penance. A brief consideration of the nature of sermons and how they are valuable as sources about penance and the generally positive way in which Servasanto preached penance allows further assessment of the Oppression Thesis. Previous chapters have considered how Servasanto preached on penance; it is now time to draw on that image to consider its significance for the claim that medieval penance was typically harsh and repressive.

Even though the laity were only required to confess annually, it is still probable that penance was still an important part of lay religiosity. D'Avray in *Medieval Religious Rationalities* argued for the importance of penitential discourse in the Middle Ages.<sup>39</sup> Wietsche de Boer too saw penance as a key point of interaction between the lay and clerical worlds.<sup>40</sup> Ozment too was probably right in considering a penance a central point of contact between clergy and laity.<sup>41</sup> My own study of Servasanto's preaching material suggests we should indeed see penance as a central theme of medieval religion, but for a

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<sup>37</sup> See my "Introduction," 13-14.

<sup>38</sup> R. Emmet Mclaughlin, for instance, in "Truth, Tradition, and History," *NHP*, ed. Abigail Firey, 68-71, wondered, given the relative rarity of actual confession (annual), how much of an impact new clerical concern with penance would actually have had.

<sup>39</sup> David d'Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities: a Weberian Analysis*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 49-53. Specifically, he includes the idea that penance was a common theme in preaching.

<sup>40</sup> Wietsche de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Ozment, *Reformation in Cities*, 16.

reason sometimes overlooked by other writers. Even if many of the laity confessed relatively rarely, they would have encountered penitential ideas in the sermons of Servasanto da Faenza, and evidently a number of his contemporaries, far more frequently. It has been evident that penance appears regularly in Servasanto's preaching not only in the seasons of Lent and Advent, but throughout the year on Sundays and saints' feast days. Penance was also connected to other aspects central to medieval religion like reception of the Eucharist.<sup>42</sup> This suggests that penitence, if not sacramental penance, was indeed a regular part of lay life and medieval religion considering not only the number of times the laity would have received the sacrament of penance, but also heard penitential preaching. In this case, penance would have been a central part of medieval religion, would have been a central message preached by the clergy, and hence should be considered as important for how medieval religion and Church/lay relations are characterized.

A second significant fact is the well-known popularity of the friars as preachers and confessors. Robson notes that this was especially the case in Lent and Advent. He refers to Humber of Romans, the thirteenth-century Dominican, who commented that in the busy preaching seasons of Lent and Advent the friars tended to be absent from the friaries.<sup>43</sup> But, indeed, throughout the year, the friars' preaching found popular appeal.<sup>44</sup> The best explanation of the friars' popularity as preachers and especially penitential preachers during the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent, lies in what they preached

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<sup>42</sup> As the Fourth Lateran Council linked the two, making penance a condition of receiving Eucharist.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Robson, "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors: the Pastoral Impact of the Friars," *A History of Pastoral Care*, (London; New York, Cassell, 2000), 132. Robson cites Humbert of Romans's *Instructiones de officiis* in *Opera II*, 254-61, where Humbert notes how the friaries emptied during the busy preaching seasons of Lent and Advent.

<sup>44</sup> C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars*, Chapter 6, especially 120-123.

and how. This should not be controversial since to deny it would commit one to the implausible belief that the friars were popular as preachers, especially in the penitential seasons, but not popular for what and how they preached. Once this hypothesis might have been possible when it was thought that the friars' preaching occurred in Latin, but this hypothesis is now generally regarded as "wildly implausible."<sup>45</sup> The voluntary nature of attendance at sermons also suggest the friars' popularity as penitential preachers. People could and did leave sermons when they touched on matter the audience disliked. This was true of even so famous and influential a preacher and St. Bernardino of Siena who, on at least one occasion, found his audience abandoning him when it disapproved of his message. When a group of mothers balked his preaching on sexuality, they began to leave, forcing the famous preacher to plead with them to remain.<sup>46</sup> In order to be successful, a preacher had to take into account the tastes, concerns, and preferences of his audience. The popularity of the friars in general, suggests that, on the whole, they were successful at taking into account lay preferences in their preaching. This was likely also the case of Servasanto da Faenza himself. He was clearly regarded as a successful preacher by his fellow friars, who specifically asked him

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<sup>45</sup> David d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 84.

<sup>46</sup> See Cynthia Polecristi, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and His Audience*, (Washington D.C.: the Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 52-53. Polecristi writes how St. Bernardino attempted to educate his audience regarding the sexual sins they should avoid and struggled to get the mothers in his audience to bring their daughters to hear his sermons. The mothers evidently disapproved of what they considered to be the adult content of his preaching. He reprimanded them for their neglect but, as Polecristi writes, "this reprimand was less than succesful because a few minutes later, as he starts talking about the sexual obligations of spouses, he has to interrupt the sermon by pleading: 'don't go, don't leave; wait, so that you perhaps hear things that you haven't heard!' This was precisely the problem—and the scandalized mothers were voting with their feet. As this tense exchange shows, even great preachers like Bernardino could meet with various forms of resistance, some subtle, others not."



to prepare preaching material for them.<sup>47</sup> It is unlikely that Servasanto's brothers would have asked him to prepare preaching material for them if Servasanto was regularly losing his audience. Rather, they probably saw him as an effective preacher—in other words, one who took into account the interests and preferences of his audience yet still able to preach his message of penance and moral reform.

The importance of sermons as sources for penance and the friars' popularity as preachers suggests the significance of Servasanto's sermons as a case study that plausibly reflects larger trends. Penance may or may not have served the function of social control very successfully, but this is not its greatest significance. At most this would describe its function but, as Caroline Walker Bynum reminds in *Holy Feast, Holy Fast*, function is not meaning. She suggested that women's food practice was, to a great extent, a rejection of Church attempts at moderation. Yet, for her, much of the significance of women's food practice lay elsewhere.<sup>48</sup> Something similar seems to be the case with Servasanto da Faenza. Sacramental penance, including inner sorrow for sin, confession to a priest, and works of satisfaction, to him clearly meant something other than an opportunity for social control. Rather, Servasanto clearly and primarily saw penance as an opportunity to grow in holiness for clergy and laity alike. This is especially evident given the place of penance in his theology, his fondness for medicinal analogies, and his view of the role of the confessor.

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<sup>47</sup> As I discuss in my Chapter 1; *De virtutibus*, f. 1r., "Sed quia magnum librum de hiis omnibus feci, imo illuminante me Domino conscripsi, set a pauperibus fratribus non possit haberi; rogatus ut inde quedam utiliora exciperem, disposui me Christo iuvante et beatissima eius matre, utilitati communi annuere, Domine me caritate cogente."

As I discuss there, the best explanation of Servasanto's popularity with his brothers is that they saw him as as effective preacher.

<sup>48</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 243-44.

In the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent, and throughout the year in *dominicales* and *de sanctis* sermons, Servasanto preached on penance,<sup>49</sup> and the image he preached was largely a positive one. As we have seen, for him, sin and penance were not primarily a matter of crime and punishment, but a matter of disease and cure and developing the virtue necessary to “see” the highest good, which was God. He often presented sin not only, or even primarily, as a crime, but as a disease that “blinded” a person. Man, he explained, needed the highest good to be happy and indeed desired this happiness by nature.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, however, man suffers blindness from several causes including heresy, but especially sin.<sup>51</sup> If he was to have a chance of reaching that happiness, his mind would have to be purged by the good virtues and by penance.<sup>52</sup> The first step in purging a man’s sin lay in the need to feel contrition, a genuine sorrow for sin based on a love of God, whom man had wronged from sin. In Servasanto’s preaching, sin thus became not only a crime, or even a disease, but a matter of loving the wrong things. Further sin lay in failing properly to love God, who had conferred such benefits on man.<sup>53</sup> While he stressed the responsibility of the penitent to feel a sorrow for sin for having wronged a loving father, he presented sacramental confession as comparable to a sick man going to a skilled and sensitive doctor for a cure. If sin was a disease, then the

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<sup>49</sup> As I discuss in Chapter 2.

<sup>50</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.1r, “Nam et dicitur in principio Ethicorum: omnia bonum exoptant. Nec dubium quin appetant summum bonum quod omne desiderium complet humanum...”

<sup>51</sup> “*Cecus quidem sedebat*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39r., “...sed notandum quod licet omne peccatum que maxime hominem cecant nam cecant hominem humor avaricie, cecat livor invidie, cecat timor superbie et cecat ardor luxurie...”

<sup>52</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.1r “Mentes autem purari non possunt nisi optimis moribus... nisi sacris virtutibus...”

For more detail, see my chapter 2, where I discuss how Servasanto saw the relationship of the virtues and vices to penance.

See also: “*Cecus quidem sedebat*,” Vat. Lat. 5933 f.39v, “dico quod cecitas humane anime curatur felle id est amaritudine penitentie...”

<sup>53</sup> As I discuss in detail in chapter 4.

priest was a doctor offering a cure. At once knowledgeable, sensitive, and discreet, the ideal confessor was less a judge than a doctor, whose responsibility it was to listen to the penitent and offer him a helpful medicine. This medicine was the work of satisfaction, which according to both Aquinas at the university level and Servasanto at the popular preaching level, served not simply as punishment, but as a restorative cure to an illness.<sup>54</sup>

Servasanto does not seem to have been unique in the positive image of penance he preached. As D'Avray has observed, "thirteenth-century sermons are not the best place to look for original ideas."<sup>55</sup> It would be very surprising if Servasanto was unique in what he preached and comparative soundings in other preachers' sermons suggest he was not. Key similarities in content can be found among some of Servasanto's contemporaries and near contemporaries. Thomas Cyrcetur, from the fifteenth century, stressed the call to penance in his sermons, as did John Capistrano in the fifteenth on his preaching tour. Servasanto's thirteenth century contemporaries, Richard Fishacre, Kilwardby, and Ranulphe of Houblonnière all preached penitential sermons in Lent and, like Servasanto, they stressed the importance of penance. As R.M. Ball has remarked of Cyrcetur "[His] message as a preacher is, above all, a call to repentance, especially a call to contrition."<sup>56</sup> Much like Servasanto, Cyrcetur stressed the need for ongoing contrition driven by love of God, sympathy for Christ's suffering (which should lead one to penance),<sup>57</sup> and the hope of the future joys of heaven.<sup>58</sup> Ranulphe too frequently preached penance in his Lenten sermons, referring to God's love for his erring sons and

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<sup>54</sup> See my "Chapter 3," 141-148.

<sup>55</sup> D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 258.

<sup>56</sup> R.M. Ball, "Thomas Cyrcetur: a Fifteenth Century Theologian and Preacher," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986) 205-239; 228.

<sup>57</sup> Ball, "Thomas Cyrcetur," 228.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

comparing the penitent to a patient and the priest-confessor to a doctor giving the penitent a restorative drug.<sup>59</sup> In another Lenten sermon, he wrote that God is always ready to receive the man who repents through contrition, confession, and satisfaction.<sup>60</sup>

Kilwardby too, argued that penance is a way to imitate Christ since in penance, one voluntarily suffers for sin, as Christ did.<sup>61</sup> Finally, Richard Fishacre, like Servasanto,<sup>62</sup> spoke of the soul as the bride of Christ for whom God struggled to the death. For this reason, Fishacre argues, one should not let his soul be corrupted. If one does, however, since sin is a spiritual wound, one should see a spiritual doctor, a priest, in confession.<sup>63</sup>

Servasanto clearly saw all the parts of penance as important and situated them in a positive framework where penance is driven by a love of God, undertaken with the aid of a priest who should behave like a sensitive, learned doctor of souls. He undeniably saw the role of the priest as important and believed that not only contrition, but confession to the priest and satisfaction were necessary parts of penance. This would mean a significant role for the priest and, while a focus on contrition is typically thought to indicate a milder view of penance, emphasis on the priest's role is often thought to support a harsher view of penance with little room for lay participation or responsibility.<sup>64</sup> Hence, one might see Servasanto's concern for confession to a priest as

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<sup>59</sup> Ranulphe de la Houblonniere, Nicole Bériou ed., *La prédication de Ranulphe de la Houblonniere: sermons aux clercs et aux simples gens a Paris au 13. Siecle*, (Paris: Etudes augustinienes, 1987), 77-78.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 85-86.

<sup>61</sup> Osmund Lewry OP, "A Passiontide Sermon of Robert Kilwardby OP," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 52 (1982), 89-113; 108.

<sup>62</sup> And, one suspects, like many others as well.

<sup>63</sup> Maura O'Carroll, "Two versions of a sermon by Richard Fishacre OP for the fourth Sunday of Lent on the theme: *Non enim heres erit filius ancille cum filio libere* (Gal. IV 30)," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 54 (1984) 113-14; 122-125.

<sup>64</sup> Dyan Elliot, *Proving Woman*, for instance, seems to consider the role of the priest as particularly intrusive. On 13-14, she argues that while penance in the time of Abelard stressed contrition and love of God, penance over time came to refer more to stress the role and authority of the priest. In the rest of her

well as satisfaction as supporting, rather than contradicting the hypothesis that penance was typically repressive and coercive in the later Middle Ages.

Certainly one cannot separate Servasanto into a sort of “contrition school” opposed to a “confession/satisfaction” school where the former stresses the sole ability of contrition to forgive sin with the role of the priest being only minor and ceremonial. He spent too much space on satisfaction in his *Penitentia* for that. Nonetheless, contrition was clearly central to his concerns. His concern to preach God’s love for man as a motive to repentance, to urge sympathy with the suffering Christ, and to preach on Mary Magdalen as an example of this love that one should strive to imitate, all testify to the centrality of contrition to him. Penance had to be sincere, driven by a sorrow for sin that sprang from having offended a loving father. In this, much of the responsibility was the penitent’s own, not only in annual confession, but throughout the year. Hence, for him, there was still much that was in lay control despite the significant role for the priest. In this respect, the priest could guide or offer advice, but could not compel. Furthermore, while he does write much on satisfaction in the *Penitentia*, his sermons speak of the need to do works of satisfaction, but do not place the same stress on satisfaction as his treatise did. This is logical. His sermons were more for the laity, while the *Penitentia* was strictly for the clergy; a detailed discussion of satisfaction was more appropriate for the latter. When Servasanto does preach on confession and satisfaction, though, he does so

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book, she compares sacramental penance with inquisition and stresses penance as generally repressive. This is possible because she stresses the role of the priest in the process. Mansfield, given how she saw penance as humiliating and talked about the death of contrition after 1200 would probably also share this view that a greater role for the priest was connected to seeing penance as having a more repressive nature.

in a clearly mild way, far more often in medicinal than judicial terms.<sup>65</sup> He even warns the confessor to be mild in his satisfaction “lest the medicine... might pass into poison.”<sup>66</sup> In his vision, much remained in lay control, especially the crucial need to feel genuine sorrow for sin, to seek a priest in penance, and to avoid future sins. While the role of the priest is indeed important, it was a mild role.

One might attempt to raise another argument in support of the Oppression Thesis based on the importance of satisfaction in Servasanto. In Chapter Five, I discussed the role of suffering in Servasanto’s preaching. Suffering is a basic fact of life and to address it effectively is a necessity of any successful religious system or philosophy. I suggested that the language of penance gave the friars a way to talk about suffering that helped them to answer the pastoral challenge posed by the problem of evil. The friars urged sympathy with Christ crucified, a key point of Francis’s own spirituality as well as the value of suffering in penance and the spiritual value of suffering. In doing so, the friars were able to offer improved pastoral care in a way that could make Cathar dualism seem outdated and unsophisticated.<sup>67</sup> It might be argued, however, that this opens the door to potential abuse. If suffering is seen as positive, zealous confessors could impose harsh satisfaction on their penitents in the belief that they were benefitting them. This perhaps especially if involuntary suffering was understood as spiritually useful; confessors might

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<sup>65</sup> As I discuss in chapter 3. John Bossy, in “Practices of Satisfaction 1215-1700,” *Studies in Church History*, 40 (2005) 106-118,” associates this with Aquinas’s view of satisfaction.

<sup>66</sup> *Penitentia*, f.147r., “Itaque ad superiora omnia est notandum quid medici spirituali iustitia... (nunquam?) esse debet sum multa misericordia et intima cordis compassione vestita ne medicina quae debet esse egrorum remedium omissa misericordia transeat in venenum...”

<sup>67</sup> As Lambert writes regarding the friars work as confessors and new penitential theology and pastoral care, see: Lambert, *The Cathars*, 288, “Auricular confession, imposed by Innocent III in *Omnis utriusque sexus*, gave birth to a literature instructing the clergy in their duties, developed moral theology and, at its best drew priest and penitent together in a relationship based on counseling and sympathetic insight into the needs of the laity... In the face of a more flexible penitential system of this kind... Cathar rigidities could easily seem out of date...”

justify imposing harsh suffering on unwilling penitents in this way. Dyan Elliot's example of Conrad imposing harsh, punitive, suffering on Elizabeth in Hungary seems like a case in point.<sup>68</sup>

While preaching the benefits of even involuntary suffering, accepted for love of God might theoretically open the door to abuses like Conrad's,<sup>69</sup> several factors would significantly militate against such abuse being common. First, the generally mild and positive character of Servasanto's and his contemporaries' preaching indicates that a sadistic infliction of penance was not at all their intention. Nor does it seem to be an interpretation that many adopted. Conrad was an outlier, as Elliot acknowledged.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, satires, as I discuss further below suggest that if anything, the friars were known (at least in the eyes of their critics) for being too soft rather than too harsh.<sup>71</sup> This reputation for mildness is hard to explain if they regularly engaged in harsh punitive action in the belief they were benefitting the laity by imposing harsh suffering on them.

Furthermore, Bossy has suggested that since penances largely became a token, it followed that satisfaction became unimportant in the thirteenth century and beyond. While he is probably mistaken about the inference, there is no need to think he is

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<sup>68</sup> See Elliot, *Proving Woman*, "Chapter 3."

<sup>69</sup> Though it is not obvious that it even opens the door logically to such abuses (though it could in practice). From that involuntary suffering could be spiritually beneficial if responded to rightly, it need not follow that another person is doing something morally good in imposing that suffering voluntarily. Martyrdom might be seen as spiritually beneficial for the martyr (as Servasanto preached), but he hardly saw this as a justification for the persecutor.

Additionally, one might also observe that Servasanto often discusses this involuntary suffering as beneficial in sermons for the feasts of martyrs, where the suffering is being imposed by the enemies of the Christian, not by friends, who the priest was supposed to be.

<sup>70</sup> Elliot, *Proving Woman*, 116.

Furthermore, several factors mentioned already like the freedom to choose confessors, the likelihood the laity avoided harsh confessors, and only annual confession being required, would have militated against many confessors taking this harsh interpretation.

<sup>71</sup> C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars*, 163-164,

mistaken about the initial fact.<sup>72</sup> As I argue in chapter 3, the amount of time Servasanto spent on satisfaction in the *Penitentia* hardly suggests that he saw it as unimportant. This is, however, consistent with works of penance prescribed by the priest being largely minor token works as Bossy thought. In fact, it may even be that the friars began to offer relatively mild works of penance *because* they thought it was so important and they wanted to ensure it was done.

In fact, it seems that harsh impulses were more likely to arise from the laity than the clergy. Elizabeth of Hungary may have been treated harshly by Conrad, but Catherine of Siena's fasting was so extreme that she had to be ordered to eat by her own confessor, Raymond of Capua, who was concerned at her severity.<sup>73</sup> One thinks too of popular flagellant movements that arose from lay impulses like those of 1260 and others in the wake of the Black Death<sup>74</sup> and of Francis's own interest in the life of a penitent, by which he often meant physical penance.

The positive framework in which Servasanto situated his preaching on penance also has significance for the lay experience of confession and how priests behaved in the confessional. Preaching about sin as disease and confession as a matter of going to a skilled, sensitive, and discreet doctor would have not affected only the laity, but the friars themselves. They would have come to see themselves as learned and solicitous doctors of souls. Developing this self-image, they would have tried to behave accordingly in the

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<sup>72</sup> And it would also be consistent with the friars being ridiculed for being too soft in satires.

<sup>73</sup> Raymond, and E. Cartier, *Life of Saint Catharine of Sienna*, (Philadelphia: F. Cunningham, 1859): 113. Second part, chapter 4: "Even her Confessor commanded her to take food daily and not to give heed to any visions that would give her contrary advice. In vain, Catharine assured him that she was well and strong, so long as she received no nourishment, and became sick and weak as soon as she used it, — he continually prescribed to her to eat..."

<sup>74</sup> Mentioned in R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe c.1215-1515*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 205.



confessional. This self-image would have also caused confessors to see their power to compel as limited. A judge might force a sentence on a person, but a doctor would find it more difficult to force a cure on a patient, especially if the final goal was not only a change in practice, but a change in mind and heart and growth in moral character.

If people liked the friars for the attractive image of penance they preached,<sup>75</sup> then they probably chose as confessors friars who attempted to practice what they preached in the confessional.<sup>76</sup> There is even some evidence for the mildness of the friars in the confessional in the form of some anti-fraternal satires in the later Middle Ages that explain the friars' popularity as a result of their excessive softness and the easy penances they gave in the confessional. One thinks, for instance, of Chaucer's friar, "an esy man to yeve penaunce/... as he wiste to have a good pitaunce."<sup>77</sup> Such satires admit the popularity of the friars as preachers and confessors and suggest the reason for that popularity lies in the friars' own mildness. To the enemies of the friars, perhaps not understanding the friars' basis for their mildness, this was the result of the friars' love of money. What to their embittered enemies and critics, however, was too great softness, could easily have been the friars trying to act as sensitive, well trained doctors of souls.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> This seems likely enough given the popularity of the friars as preachers and the frequency of penance in their message. As I argue earlier, it would be very odd if the friars were popular as penitential preachers, but not popular for what and how they preached.

<sup>76</sup> If friars in the confessional failed to do so, the laity, as discussed early, could simply have chosen another confessor.

<sup>77</sup> One thinks of the friar in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, "Prologue," 209-269: ... Ful swetely herde he confessioun/ And plesaunt was his absolucioun/ He was an esy man to yeve penaunce/ Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce. / For unto a povre ordre for to yive / Is signe that a man is wel yshryve.

C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars*, 163-164, refers also to Fals Semblant, a greedy friar in the *Roman de la Rose*, "which provided the model for Chaucer's friar—the confidence trickster who sold easy penances and traded on the credulity of pious women.

<sup>78</sup> Lawrence, *The Friars*, 164 refers to many clergy "whose plight caused them to envy the popular success of the friars and to resent their competition in the pulpit and the confessional. They saw with bitterness their richer and more educated parishioners and potential patrons drawn away by the superior pastoral skills of an intellectual *corps d'élite*."

Given this the claim that the laity experienced penance in the Middle Ages as harsh and repressive seems difficult to sustain. Neither does Servasanto's preaching support that view that Church/lay relations in the period should be seen through that lens where the laity were merely the helpless, terrorized, objects of social control.

Many of the laypeople may have liked the friars for this positive view and mildness, without necessarily sharing the friars' view of penance.<sup>79</sup> Certainly there is some evidence from Servasanto's own sermons of people avoiding penance and finding it difficult. He told of a man who came to him to confess and yet changed his mind, pulling back.<sup>80</sup> In particular, while discussing the sin of sloth in the *Virtutibus*, he particularly saw this sin manifested by peoples' slowness to repent, which suggests he did see this hesitation to repent as a significant concern.<sup>81</sup> Ranulphe of Houblonnière also acknowledges this hesitation that many felt when he spends some time in one Lenten sermon discusses why people avoid confession and urging them to go anyway.<sup>82</sup> Servasanto's near contemporary Bindo of Siena, a late-thirteenth-century Franciscan preacher, seems likewise to have been aware how unpopular penance could sometimes seem difficult and unpopular, writing how many give up penance because it seems hard.<sup>83</sup> D'Avray has argued convincingly that the friars' preaching was so frequent and well

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<sup>79</sup> I should mention here the obvious point that "the laity" probably had many views about penance. Some were probably quite enthusiastic. Many of these would have provided the basis the later growth and popularity of penitential confraternities. Others were probably more hesitant, perhaps hesitating even to make their annual confession, while many probably fell in the middle, making their annual confession with little difficulty, but perhaps not frequently seeking the sacrament beyond the pre-Easter Lenten confession.

<sup>80</sup> *De virtutibus*, f.74v.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, f.117v-120r; This includes chapter headings like: "De dilatione conversionis ad deum," "De hiis quae faciunt conversionem dilatam difficiliorem," and "Quod dilatio conversionis est fatua."

<sup>82</sup> Ranulphe, *Sermo 7*, Berioú ed., 93-96.

<sup>83</sup> L.J. Bataillon, "Les sermons du franciscain Bindo da Siena pour les dimanches," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 92 (1999), 95-116. As a consequence, Bindo tries to assure his audiences that there is really great joy to be had in the virtues and that in the end, virtue is easy.

organized to widely disseminate a message that it must be regarded “as a social force in the same kind of sense as a modern mass medium.”<sup>84</sup> In this way, preached repeatedly over time, the friars’ message about penance would have slowly come to have an impact of lay outlooks. D’Avray called this the “dry-drip method of inculcating beliefs.”<sup>85</sup> He made this argument about marriage, but given the even greater frequency of penitential preaching, it is even more likely that over time the friars’ message about penance came to have an impact. Even if, then, many of the laity did view penance negatively, the friars’ views of penance likely slowly became part of the familiar furniture of religious thought among the laity as well as the clergy. In some cases the friars’ views were probably shared by the laity. Even when they were not, however, those ideas would, over time, become common property as they were reinforced by the preaching of the friars, what D’Avray called “Mass Communication in a Culture without Print.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 58.

<sup>85</sup> David d’Avray, “Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons,” *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History, and Sanctity*, ed. Nicole Bériou and David d’Avray, (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’Alto medioevo, 1994), 3-19; 9.

<sup>86</sup> D’Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons: Mass Communication in a Culture without Print*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

## APPENDIX ONE: Works and Manuscripts

- ***Liber de Virtutibus et de Vitiis***: incipit: *unam petii a Domino hanc requiram ut inhabitem in domo Domini...* explicit: *...si qua non bene sunt dicta, simpliciter imputans. Amen.*

- Ms Bologna, Univ. 1696 (Frati 878)	s.XIV
- Ms Cesena, Bibl. Piana 3.170 fols. 1ra-180vb	s.XIV
- Ms Firenze, Naz. Conv. Soppr. E.VI.1046	s.XIV <i>in</i>
- Ms Würzburg, Univ. M.ch.f.240	

Other (including from inventory lists):

- Ms Nap. Naz. VI.D.68, a reference to SS writing a “summam luculentam de viciis et virtutibus.”

- catalog #289 from Humphreys, *Library of Franciscans at Padua*... not extant.<sup>1</sup>

- #403 from Humphreys, *Library of Carmelites at Florence*.<sup>2</sup>

- A.719; B.257, Milan, *Sforza*.<sup>3</sup>

- ***Summa de Poenitentia***:<sup>4</sup> incipit: *Quoniam in libello de exemplis naturalibus a me scripto dictavi de poenitentia quedam pauca...* explicit: *...Et ideo cum ipso quem gratia Dei concepit, peperit et lactavit, sit per omnia secula benedicta. Amen, amen, amen, dicat omnis creatura.*

- Ms Firenze, Naz. Conv. Soppr. G. VI.773	s.XIV
- Ms Nap. Naz. VII.E.19	s.XIV

<sup>1</sup> K.W. Humphreys, *The Library of the Franciscans at the Convent of St. Anthony of Padua at the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century*, (Amsterdam, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> K.W. Humphreys, *The Library of the Carmelites at Florence at the End of the Fourteenth*, (Amsterdam, 1964). This library also includes a copy of the *Breviloquium* of John of Wales

<sup>3</sup> *La Bibliothèques des Visconti et des Sforza: ducs de Milan au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1955).

<sup>4</sup> Oliger, “De duo novis codicis Fr. Servasanti de Faenza OFM” 1 *Antonianum*, (1926), seems to list two more, one penance book in Munich. Catalogue of Rosenthal bibliopolae Monacensis notissimi... “In codice 93 dicti catalogi (94s), Membr. Saec. XIV, mm. 285x206, ff.336... *Summa de poenitentia et eius tribus partibus*, as well as a ms of *Sermones de communi sanctorum*.”

- Ms Padova Ant. 404	s.XIV
- Ms Padova Ant. 458	s.XV
- Ms Vat. Lat. 4272	
- Ms Paris BN Nouv. acq. lat. 3052 <sup>5</sup>	s.XIV
- Ms Barcelona, Univ. 109 (beg missing)	
- Ms München, Clm 12312	
- Ms Torino, Naz. I.VI.43	s.XIV
- Cod. Lat. 12313 Bibl. di Stato a Monaco in Baviera	s.XV (1449)
- Bibl. Stat. Mon. Naz. di S. Scol. di Subiaco Ms 40 ff.1-185	s.XIV <sup>6</sup>
- Printed Louvain, 1485, <i>Antidotarius Animae</i>	

Other :

- Ms München Katalog Rosenthal 93	sXIV <sup>7</sup>
- Saint-Eustorge OP	sXIV <sup>8</sup>
- Bologna <i>Fabio Vigili</i> ...p.97 [385] Couvent de S. Domenico, refers to Servasanti OM, "liber de penitentia magnus." <sup>9</sup>	(before 1386)
- Bologna <i>Fabio Vigili</i> ... p.230 [389] Couvent de S. Domenico, "Item de penitentia ad predicandum"	

- ***Mariales***: incipit: *Exordium salutis nostre dicit Beda, fratres carissimi, intenta curemus aure percipere, ut ad promissa salutis dona mereamur pertingere...* explicit: *et ita per omnes plateas Jerusalem in eternum et ultra cantabimus alleluia, amen, amen, amen.*

- Ms Bibl. Laurenziana, Firenze, Plut. XXXV sin. Cod.4, membr.	s.XIII
- Ms Firenze, Naz. Conv. Soppr. B.IV.725	s.XIII

<sup>5</sup> Seems to be the one referred to by Lauer Philippe "Un nouveau manuscrit de la Summa de poenitentia du franciscain Servasanti," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, Année (1939), Volume 100, Numéro 1 229 - 230

<sup>6</sup> Listed in the catalogue as a ms of Servasanti's *Liber exemplorum naturalium*, but the incipit is "quoniam in libello de exemplis naturalibus a me scripto," which is the incipit of Servasanti's *Penance Book*. The *Exemplis* seems to be included in the manuscript after the *Penance Book*.

A note at the end of the manuscript reads: "Iste liber est congregationi casinensis alis sancte Justine deputatus ad usum monachorum monasterii Sublacensis signatus numero 332."

<sup>7</sup> In *Biblioteca Medii Aevi Manuscripta prima pars* (München: J. Rosenthal, 1925)

<sup>8</sup> Listed in a catalogue in this OP monastery by Thomas Kaepelli OP, "La Biblioteca de Saint- Eustorge a Milan a la fin du XVe Siecle," *AFP*, 25, (1955), 5-74.

<sup>9</sup> This Bologna mss are from various inventories to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. See Fabio Vergili et les Bibliothèques de Bologne au debut XVIe siecle, d'après Ms Barb. Lat. 3185 (1943).

- Ms Avignon, Bibl.Civ.284	s.XIV
- Ms Valencia, Bibl. Eccl. Catt.55	s.XIV
- Ms Madrid 8953	s.XIV

- ***Sermones de proprio sanctorum***, incipit: *Mihi absit gloriari nisi in cruce... narrat Valerius Maximus.*

- Ms Padua, Ant. 490	s.XIII/XIV
- Ms Vat. Lat. 9884	s.XIV
- Ms Assisi 530	s. XIV
- Ms Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek clm.8438	s.XV
- Ms Rome Casanatense 333	s.XIII/s.XIV <sup>10</sup>
- Ms Uppsala, UB C 379, incipit “mihi absit”	sXIV
- Ms Sevilla 418	s.XIV/s/XV <sup>11</sup>

Partial mss and other:<sup>12</sup>

- Ms Assisi 446	s.XIV
- Ms Assisi 557	s.XIV/s.XV
- Ms Assisi 387	s.XIII
- Fabio Vigili p.116 Counvent S. Francesco [74] “Iacobi Servasanti Sermones Festivi	(before 1386)
- Humphreys, Padua #65	
- Humphreys Siena #689 <sup>13</sup>	

- ***Sermones de communi Sanctorum***, incipit: *Suscipi coelum... virgo regia* or *Species coeli...per coelum.*

- Ms Assisi 520	s.XIV
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<sup>10</sup> Includes both *De communi sanctorum* sermons and *De proprio sanctorum* sermons (f.1-47).

<sup>11</sup> From José Francisco Sáez Guillén, and Pilar Jiménez de Cisneros Vencelá, *Catálogo de manuscritos de la Biblioteca Colombina de Sevilla*, (Cabildo de la S.M. y P.I. Catedral de Sevilla, Institución Colombina, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> The three Assisi ones are listed in Cenci, Cesare, *Bibliotheca manuscripta ad Sacrum conventum Assisiensem*, ([Perugia]: Regione dell'Umbria, 1981)

<sup>13</sup> H.W. Humphreys, *The Library of the Franciscans of Siena in the Late Fifteenth Century*, (Amsterdam, 1978).

- Ms Vat. Lat. 1261	s.XIII/s.XIV
- Ms Nürnberg, StB. Cent.III, 78 f.128-159.	
- Ms Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 333 (D.IV.42)	s. XIII- XIV
- Perugia, Benedictine Monastery, Cod. 50	s.XV
- Todi, Bibl. Communale 111	
- Basel Universitätsbibliothek cod. A.XI.52 <sup>14</sup>	
- Ms Uppsala, UB C 379, sXIV, incipit “mihi absit”	
- Ms Mainz Stadtbibliothek Hs.I.299	s.XIV <sup>15</sup>

Other (including some mss with just a few Servasanto sermons)<sup>16</sup>:

- Ms München 94, Rosenthal	sXIV. <sup>17</sup>
- Ms Mainz Stadtbibliothek Hs.I.175, ff.47-52	s.XIV
- Ms Mainz Stadtbibliothek Hs.I.177 f.27-28 incipit: “In omnibus divites,”	s.XIV <sup>18</sup>
- Ms Mainz Stadtbibliothek Hs.I.201	sXV (second half of century).
- Ms Mainz Stadtbibliothek Hs.I.207	s.XV
- Ms Mainz Stadtbibliothek Hs.I.218	s.XIV
- Ms Mainz Stadtbibliothek Hs.I.240	ca.1400

- *Sermones Dominicales*, incipit: *Dominus legifer noster...*

- Ms Troyes 1440	s.XIV
- Ms London, Brit. Mus. Harl.3221	
- Ms Toulouse 321 (check reference)	
- Ms. Vat. Lat. 5993	s.XIII
- Ms. Bologna. Archin. A.215	
- Ms Basel, offene und universitätsbibliothek cod.B.X.52	
- Ms Giessen, universitätsbibliothek cod.779	
- Ms Rome, Bibl. Casanatense cod.338	s.XIV

<sup>14</sup> Oliger, “De duo novis codicis Fr. Servasanti de Faenza OFM” seems to list one more, Catalogue of Rosenthal bibliopolae Monacensis notissimi... Codex 94 Catalogi Rosenthal s.XIV.

<sup>15</sup> Seems to contain about 30 Servasanto sermons, mostly *de communi sanctorum*.

<sup>16</sup> Most of the Mainz mss contain only 1-3 sermons attributed to SS.

<sup>17</sup> Rosenthal (München, 1925).

<sup>18</sup> This Ms includes John of Wales’s *Breviloquium*.

- Ms Prag. Univ. XII.C.14 <sup>19</sup>	
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*Other:*

- Humphreys, *Padua* #65
- Humphreys, *Siena* #831
- Some *de temporis* and *de sanctis* sermons printed under the name of Bonaventure (Zwolle, 1479, 1481. Also Bonaventura (Rome, 1596), (Venedig, 1755), and (Paris, 1868).

*Other sermon Mss, where I am unsure of what is contained in the Ms*

- Ms Augsburg, SB 2 219	s.XV
- Ms Darmstadt, LB 918	
- Ms Selestat 21	
- Ms Sevilla, Colomb. Cab. 7-2-36	
- Bologna <i>Fabio Vigili</i> p.252, Couvent S. Domenico, <i>Sermones Servasanti</i>	(before 1421).

- ***Sermones de fesivibus B.M.V.***

- cited by the author in sermon 1 on the BVM of the *com. Sanct.* Collection Vat. Lat. 9884, ff.139-216r.

- **Summa Monaldina**- not extant

- Humphreys, *Padua* #152

- ***Liber/Summa de exemplis naturalibus***, incipit: *cum solis in cella sederem et aliqua de catholica fide mente revolverem...* Some mss also begin: *Occurrit itaque primo discutere utrum sit necesse ponere Deum esse.*

- Ms Cremona 16	
-Ms Firenze. Naz. Conv. Soppr. G.I. 695 f.1-96	
-Ms Firenze, Ricc. 325	
-Ms Milano, Ambr. P.26 sup. F.140-279	
-Ms Montecassino 373 p.237-434,	s.XIV.
-Ms Nap. Naz. I.H.39 f.211-259,	s.XV

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<sup>19</sup> Also includes a few *de sanctis* sermons.



- Ms Nap. Naz. V.H.216 f.1-186 (abbrev.),	sXV
- Ms Nap. Naz. VII.E.19, s.XIV. includes reference to <i>De exemplis</i> , maybe partial copy.	
-Ms Pisa, S. Caterina Conv. OP 173 f. 140-281,	s.XIV
-Ms Roma, Casan. 561,	s.XIV
-Ms Torino, Naz. E.III.26 (DCCCXXIV) f.21	
-Ms Vaticana, Archivio di S. Pietro G.20 f.1-184,	s.XIV <i>in</i> .
-Ms Vat. lat. 4311 f. 49-62,	s.XIV-XV
- Ms Vat. lat. 5048 f.1-106,	s.XIV <i>in</i>
-Ms Venezia, Marc. lat. III, 178 (2153) f. 1-100,	s.XV
-Ms Assisi 47	
- Ms Assisi 142	
- Ms Assisi 656	
-Ms Bordeaux 273 f.1-111	
-Ms Brno, Univ. R.409 f. 231-254	
- Ms Bratislava, Univ. 1 G f. 1-98b (Part III)	
-Ms Cambridge Univ. Ii.2.20: fols.1ra-77ra	
-Ms Cambridge Ii.2.20 fols.1ra-77ra (76ra-77ra: table of contents)	
-Ms Carpentras 127 f.1-159	
- Ms Edinburgh UL MS 108	
-Ms Halle, Univ. Fol. Yc 11 f.283-305	
-Ms Klagenfurt. Studienbibl. Pap. 84 f.2-58; 60-155	
-Ms Klosterneuburg 313 f.191-231	
-Ms London, BM Arundel 198 f.68-104 & 117-124,	s.XIV
- Ms Lilienfeld 15 f. 127-255	
-Ms München, Clm 8439 f.1-83, only book 3,	s.XV (1464)
- Ms München Clm 8350 f.89-158 (part III)	
- Ms München Clm 14749 f.1-73 & 213-248,	s.XIV
- Ms München Clm 18306 f.fols. 112ra (numbered 111)- 173a (numbered 172)	
-Ms München, J. Rosenthal 2439 f.3-101 ,	sXV (1444)
-Ms Praha, Metr. Kap. N.31 (1555) f.78-97	
- Ms Praha O 38 (1662) f.73-100	
-Ms Praha Univ. I.D.29 (169) f.88-189	
- Ms Praha Univ. VI.D.19 (1108) f.3-146	

-Ms Rouen A.245 (674) f.1-234,	s.XV
- Ms Rouen A.340 (675)f.1-185,	sXVI
- Ms Rouen I.31 (936) f.119-202,	s.XV
-Ms Salzburg University. M.II 339 f.1-223	
-Ms Sankt Paul in Lavanttal 36-4 n.2	
-Ms Sevilla, Colomb. Y.130 n.40 f.207-260,	sXIII/s.XIV <i>in</i>
- Ms Sevilla, Colomb. Z. 136 f.1-118,	s.XV
- Bibl. Stat. Mon. Naz. di S. Scol. di Subiaco Ms 40 ff.186-225,	s.XIV <sup>20</sup>
-Ms Barb. Lat. 509	
-Ms Wien, Nat. 1589 f.1-112,	s.XIII-XIV
- Ms Genova, Univ. A.II.40	
- Ms Brancacciano III.A.14 f.150-217	
- Ms Oxford, Bodl. Bodl. 332 f.193-281	
- Ms Padova, Ant. 492 f.73-117 (lib.III),	s.XIII
- Ms Padova, Univ. 523 f.1-201	
- Ms Paris BN Lat. 2338 f.20-78,	s.XV
- Ms Paris BN Lat. 3436 f.1-230,	sXV (1412-1445)
- Ms Paris BN Lat. 3642 B f.1-198,	s.XV
- Ms Paris BN Lat. 10642 f.1-102,	s.XIV
- Ms Paris BN 259 (nouv. acq.) lat. f.1-186 (abbrev.),	s.XIV
- Ms Ravenna, Class. 38	
- Ms Zwettl f.1-12	
- Esisteva according to 1437 catalogue, (from Oliger p.157)	

### Other

- Ms Firenze BML Ms Plut. XVII sin. 8: fols. 50va-72va (s.XIII)

- Ms Glorieux 316 bq

Incipit: nota quod caritas habet multos effectus...

A. Teetaert, "Pecham, Jean" in *DTC* 12/ 1:100-40, here 13.

- Bologna [444] *Fabio Vigili...* Couvent S. Domenico. (before 1386).

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<sup>20</sup> Incipit "occurit discutere utrum sit necesse ponere deum esse..."

- Bologna *Fabio Vigili*... p.230 [393] Couvent de S. Domenico, *liber de exemplis naturalibus*. (before 1386).
- Bologna *Fabio Vigili*...p.321, *Liber aureus de exemplis contra curiosos*. Monastery S. Salvatore vers 15333.
- Humphreys, *Carmelites Florence* #148 and #157.

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