

Eight Deadly Sins and Their Remedies

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Welcome to the “arena,” or the ground where the most difficult combat takes place! (2 Tim. 2:5, “One who strives in the games is not crowned unless he has contended lawfully.” Another translation: “For he also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.”) Many forms of spiritual war we would call a struggle for mental health. Traditionally, monastic life is called “the arena” or place of combat, but any person may undergo this struggle. It is the most difficult form of combat to master. In the Conference of John Cassian and Germanus with Abbot Serapion of the desert in Egypt, the Abbot discusses the eight deadly sins, or “eight principal faults.” These are: (1) Gluttony; (2) Fornication; (3) Covetousness which means Avarice or the love of money; (4) Anger; (5) Dejection; (6) Accidie, which is heaviness or weariness of heart or sloth of mind (or wandering of mind); (7) Xenodoxia (literally worship of something not worshiped) which means foolish or Vain-glory; and (8) Pride. There is not enough time in this lecture, or space in these notes, to cover the subject completely, or examine all of the suggestions concerning faults and virtues in the writings of St. John Cassian.

I am the first of sinners. [I Timothy 1:15] The wages of sin is death. [Romans 6:23, and also “My wages, my wages” from the Moliere play “Don Juan or The Stone Guest” that was adapted by Mozart in “Don Giovanni.”] “Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” [Romans 7:8]

Books:

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume XI, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, of a century ago, reprinted 1982, ISBN 0-8028-2101-4. The section on St. John Cassian is edited by Edgar C. S. Gibson, although he did not translate a few parts. The books that St. John Cassian wrote in detail including rules for monastics and the Eight Principal Faults are referred to as the “Institutes,” and the books detailing instructions from particular Abbots of the deserts in Egypt are referred to as the “Conferences.” All the Institutes and Conferences (except those few that Edgar C. S. Gibson did not translate) are available on the Internet, because some people have put these complete and well-out-of-copyright writings on their website: <http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-11/TOC.htm> (Also look up “Cassian.”) John Cassian is a favorite author that the Benedictines have read in “chapter” through the Medieval period, and they like to share his works. Another long book by St. John Cassian is in the same volume, *On the Incarnation Against Nestorius*, and these theological insights of St. John Cassian were used in the Ecumenical Council at Ephesus.

“Cassian on Chastity: Institute 6, Conference 12, Conference 22, by John Cassian,” translated and with an introduction by Terrence G. Kardong O.S.B. (Richardton, N.D.: Assumption Abbey Press, 1993. <http://www.assumptionabbey.com/Service/Publications/BookIndex.html>

The Assumption Abbey is a Benedictine Monastery, and the Benedictines have a tradition through the entire Medieval period in reading the Institutes and Conferences of St. John Cassian. “John Cassian (c.360-435 A.D.) was one of the most prolific writers in early Christian monasticism. After spending years as an apprentice monk in Palestine and Egypt, he eventually settled in southern France. There, he founded monasteries and wrote extensive monastic essays called twelve Institutes and twenty-four Conferences to transmit to the local monks what he had

learned in Egypt. Included in his writings are three essays on Christian chastity (Institute 6; Conferences 12 and 22) which have never been translated into English. This is because of their startling frankness, but our own age should not find that a barrier. We should be ready to benefit from Cassian's profound insights into the [stru]cture of Christian chastity. The present book contains these three essays in a lively English rendition by Terrence Kardong, plus an interpretive introduction by the translator. The ensemble forms of a coherent and substantial body of doctrine by one of the great masters of early monastic thought. ” 63 pages paper, \$5.00, plus 6% tax, plus \$1.50 shipping: total \$6.80, download the order form from their website, and mail the order to Assumption Abbey, 418 Third Avenue West, Richardton, North Dakota 58652 (Since the rest of the Institutes and Conferences are available for free on the internet, this is a good deal. For those not considering chastity as a way of life, the information is still useful, showing that the mind needs balance in this area.)

Another book on John Cassian is available through Light and Life Publishing: *Cassian the Monk* by Columba Stewart. “John Cassian (c. 360-435) was a theologian of keen insight, realism, and creativity. The only Latin writer included in the classic Greek collections of monastic sayings. This book is a study of Cassian's life, monastic writings, and spiritual theology. Drawing on both his own experience as a monk and his familiarity with the fundamental literary sources, author Columba Stewart establishes Cassian's credibility as a teacher. He pays particular attention to Cassian's view of the monastic journey in eschatological perspective, his teaching on continence and chastity, the Christological basis of biblical interpretation and prayer, his method of unceasing prayer, and his integration of ecstatic experience with an Evagrian theology of prayer. The first major study of Cassian to be published in twenty years, this book will be invaluable to students and scholars of early Christianity and the history of spirituality, as well as to monastic women and men.” (“Light and Life Publishing” is a Greek Orthodox publishing house. The Greeks and Benedictines usually don't read each other's books. I have not read this book, which is too short to contain all the Institutes and Conferences which fill twice as many pages in small type, so this book must consist of commentaries; at best incomplete, but it might be useful nonetheless. Note that the Greeks consider St. John Cassian so important that he is the *only* Latin writer in their series.) 286 pages.” \$25.00, plus shipping, etc.
http://www.light-n-life.com/shopping/order_product.asp?ProductNum=CASS250

There are many other relevant books of a similar nature. St. John Climacus (St. John of the Ladder), some time in the 6th century, wrote *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, which is a favorite in the East. St. John Climacus served at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai, having come from Tola, an unknown place, and living at St. Catherine's for an unnamed time. The Irish list a St. Thola from “disert Thola” on the same day, giving an Irish geneology and history. Some of the virtues and attitudes listed by St. John Climacus look like there had been influence of Pope St. Gregory the Dialogist and others of European origin. (There are some lively quotes in this book, but I prefer the arrangement of the principal faults in John Cassian's books.) One such translation by Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, with an introduction by Bp. Kallistos Ware, 1982 by the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle in the State of New York, Paulist Press, 545 Island Road, Ramsey, N.J. 07446 USA. L of C No. 82-60540 ISBN 0-8091-2330-4 (paper) or ISBN 0-8091-0312-5 (cloth).

The Sayings of the Desert Fathers by Benedicta Ward. These short quotes from some desert fathers are much too short to develop any understanding in context, and sometimes these sayings

seem too simplistic, too harsh, etc., because they are far from complete. But some are useful.

I have given a quick definition of “sin” and “guilt” here, but I have not given nearly enough information to understand the differences in attitudes about sin between later Byzantines and Romans after the great schism (after 800 A.D. to 1100 A.D. or so). The title of this book looks daunting, but it is a lively yet simple book with lots of references: *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology A Concise Exposition*, Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, 1963 and 1973 Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville NY in Russian, translated by Fr. Seraphim Rose, 1983-1984 Saint Hermon of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, CA 96076 Library of Congress No. 84-051294 (No ISBN number.) It appears to be out of print, but there may be similar books available. *The Ancestral Sin* by Rev. John S. Romanides. Newly translated from the Greek by George Gabriel is a similar book, but I have not had an opportunity to read it. 190pp.

A website on the “seven deadly sins:” <http://deadlysins.com/>

A little too whimsical, and of course not complete, but at least this website isn’t very pompous. With quick history, seven sins and seven virtues. Although not the “eight deadly sins,” this list is still informative, and the website does have some historical information.

Disclaimers: Seek Counseling; Some Theology; a Small Sampling. Learn from many Elders.

1. If you or a friend have serious difficulties, seek modern counseling, which is very useful. In all eras, monastics have sought Confession often, and sometimes daily, as well as counseling. In a serious spiritual quest, counseling is needed more often and with more careful examination. I am no great example of virtue or mental health. It is through an examination of my own faults that I know that these meditations are useful. The information in this short lecture is given to be helpful, inspire further research, but not to replace one’s own insights and therapy. Very little attention is given today to mental health problems. Often, this need is not taken care of by medical insurance; is not taught thoroughly enough in Seminaries, police academies, law schools, teacher training. Do not expect most people to “understand” a problem (except for a minority of talk-show hosts); if you see a problem that needs attention, the problem is probably long-overdue for counseling.
2. The Medieval attitudes towards mental health were entwined with their theological attitudes; I touch on the theological attitudes for background sake only, but I try to give complete quotes.
3. This is not an exhaustive look into Medieval mental health practices. A friend of ours, Dr. Joseph P. Farrell, also known as + PHOTIOS, who is a Ph.D. (earned, from Oxford) Professor of Christian Patristics, and has written a many-volume analysis on Medieval philosophy, still admits that he has not examined every writer. The volumes of Migne, which are certainly not every volume of Medieval Christian commentary written, fill a wall of bookshelves in a university library. I chose the writings of St. John Cassian because his work reflects the earliest teaching from the “desert fathers” in Egypt from the first Christian schools founded by St. Mark in Alexandria, and the works of John Cassian continued to be read through the Medieval era to the present by all the Benedictines at least, and many Greeks as well. The inheritance of the teachings of John Cassian found their way into the Irish schools and their missions. There are various lists of sins: John Cassian had eight with many subordinate sins, later writers list seven with re-combined and added sins. One early writer lists twelve. Biblical Gospels and Epistles

list many more than these, so the Egyptian monks organized the sins into “Eight Principal Faults.” In the Conference of John Cassian with Abbot Serapion, chapter XXII, he states, “When the Lord was speaking with Abraham about the future... we find that He did not enumerate seven nations [plus Egypt], but ten, whose land He promised to give to his seed [Gen. 15:18-21]. And this number is plainly made up by adding idolatry, and blasphemy, to whose dominion, before the knowledge of God and the grace of Baptism, both the irreligious... and blasphemous ones... were subject while dwelling in Egypt. But when a man has made his renunciation and come forth from thence, and having by God’s grace conquered gluttony [the first ‘principal fault’], has come into the spiritual wilderness, then he is free from the attacks of these three, and will only have to wage war against those seven which Moses enumerates.”

4. Nobody, even an Elder with a great deal of perfection, has the same virtues to the same degree. The Institutes Book V chapter IV, “For it is an ancient and excellent saying of the blessed Antony (the Great) that when a monk is endeavoring after the plan of the monastic life to reach the heights of a more advanced perfection, and, having learned the consideration of discretion, is able now to stand in his own judgment, and to arrive at the very summit of the anchorite’s life, he ought by no means to seek for all kinds of virtues from one man, however excellent. For one is adorned with flowers of knowledge, another is more strongly fortified with methods of discretion, another is established in the dignity of patience, another excels in the virtue of humility, another in that of continence, another is decked with the grace of simplicity. This one excels all others in magnanimity, that one in pity, another in vigils, another in silence, another in earnestness of work. And therefore the monk who desires to gather spiritual honey ought like a most careful bee, to suck out virtue from those who specially possess it, and should diligently store it up in the vessel of his own breast; nor should he investigate what any one is lacking in, but only regard and gather whatever virtue he has. For if we want to gain all virtues from some one person, we shall with great difficulty or perhaps never at all find suitable examples for us to imitate. For though we do not as yet see that even Christ is made “all things in all,” as the Apostle says [I Cor. 15:28], still in this way we can find Him bit by bit in all. For it is said of Him, “Who was made of God to you wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” [I Cor 1:30] While then in one there is found wisdom, in another righteousness, in another sanctification, in another kindness, in another chastity, in another humility, in another patience, Christ is at the present time divided, member by member, among all of the saints...”

Faults are not all physical, but some people have made this incorrect assumption.

A confusion has arisen on the meaning of the words “flesh” “fleshy” and “carnal.” These words do not only pertain to the physical body, and therefore, the battle with our faults is not only against physical sins. The Conference of Abbot Daniel, Chapter X

“We find that the word flesh is used in holy Scripture with many different meanings: for sometimes it stands for the whole man, i.e., for that which consists of body and soul, as here [Jn 1:14] ‘And the Word was made flesh,’ and [Lk 3:6] ‘All flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ Sometimes it stands for sinful and carnal men, as here [Gen 6:3] ‘My spirit shall not remain in those men, because they are flesh.’ Sometimes it is used for sins themselves, as here: [Rom. 8:9] ‘But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit,’ and again ‘Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God:’ lastly there follows, [I Cor 15:50] ‘Neither shall corruption inherit incorruption.’ Sometimes it stands for consanguinity [blood-kin] and relationship, as here: [2 Sam 5:1] ‘Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh,’ and the Apostle says: [Rom 11:14] ‘If by any means I may provoke to emulation them who are my flesh, and save some of them.’ We must

therefore inquire in which of these four meanings we ought to take the word 'flesh' in this place, for it is clear that it cannot possibly stand for the same thing in the passage where it is said 'The Word was made flesh,' as 'All flesh shall see the salvation of God.' Neither can it have the same meaning as where it is said 'My Spirit shall not remain in those men because they are flesh,' because the word 'flesh' is not used here as it is there where it stands simply for a sinful man - when he says [Gal 5:17] 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.' Nor is he speaking of things material, but of realities which in one and the same man struggle either at the same time or separately, with the shifting and changing of time."

The word "sin." in English is both too narrow and too broad, and stands for too many different concepts. There are better English terms.

The Greek term: 'Amartyr' means out of harmony.

The Latin term: 'Delicto' means deficiency. Psalm 50 Greek numbering, or 51 Hebrew numbering, says in many English translations, "...in sins did my mother conceive me..." However, the Latin that the Irish used was 'delicto,' reading "...in deficiencies did my mother conceive me..." a very different concept. Deficiencies include neglect and ignorance.

The Latin term: 'Peccata' means sin done by choice, an active sin. "Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis." "Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us." The term "peccata" is used because forgiveness of a willed, active, sin is greater than forgiveness of ignorance or neglect, unless the ignorance or neglect is willful avoidance. Not all sins are willful, but may be of neglect, addiction, or even nature (although we were created good, we may have some natural tendencies that may distract us if used incorrectly). The Augustinian presumption that sins are all willful also assumes that by the will alone the sins can be reversed.

'Guilt' and 'sin' are two different ideas. 'Original sin' means the fault of disobedience of Adam, which causes the tendency to sin in all creation. 'Original guilt' is a later concept rejected in the East, but promoted in the West by Augustinians and Montanists, and means that we all have the guilt of Adam. (Guilt means that I committed the sin and am guilty of it. Original sin: if somebody does something wrong, that does not mean that another person is guilty of that sin, but it might mean that they may follow the example later through the deficiency (sin) of ignorance, in this case, disobedience to what is good: And, that is the trouble, especially with humans, who have eaten of the 'tree of knowledge,' i.e., have enough memories and concepts or knowledge of history to try bad examples of others as well as good examples. Following bad examples brings more confusion, and leads to difficulty finding the way out of the mental labyrinth. Ignorance is to be avoided, because then we forget any possible pathway back to health. In some eastern religions, ignorance is considered the first of the sins. Some people have different concepts regarding sin, but I am trying to illustrate the attitudes that were common among those teaching the eight principal faults, or 'deadly sins.') For more information on the concepts of "original sin" and "original guilt" see Michael Pomazansky's *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. Some theological background is needed to understand the basis of faults and free will; much more could be said, but these are some of the attitudes and controversies:

Theology is necessary to understand the basis of the Medieval viewpoint of "faults." (Although pertaining to mental health, these concepts do not deal directly with faults and their remedies.)

The goal of replacing faults with virtues, according to the Medieval mind, is not simply “mental health,” but enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Faults impede enlightenment, and therefore, the first step towards perfection is overcoming faults. Considering that the battle against faults and for mental health is so difficult, needing outside help at least in the form of good parenting, it was expected that a person should seek to attain to perfection and then also help others as much as possible either through prayer or counseling or both.

To understand our responsibility in faults, we must understand “free will.” One line from the Easter Vigil service is, “O happy fault” (by Pope St. Leo the Great) meaning that without the fault of the sin of Adam, there would be no possibility of redemption leading to perfection. This does not mean to seek out faults, but it does mean that without mistakes, there could be no possibility of forgiveness and a closer union with God.

A controversy at the time of John Cassian had an influence in the later Medieval period, resurfacing in the Reformation. This controversy also led to difficulties in healing people of the eight deadly sins. This controversy was between the views of the Pelagius and Nestorius versus later writings of Augustine. The Augustinians (and centuries later the Calvinists) said that any human response or activity in salvation is not possible, in a “radical predestination,” that a person is born without grace but later might be given grace, setting limitations on Divine activity. This appears to be opposite of the Pelagian heretics who thought that only human effort was needed for salvation, that man is the arbiter of his own existence, that we don’t need grace from heaven. In a way, radical Augustinianism and radical Pelagianism are the two sides of one coin: both create a distance between humans and God. Both cut the individual off from Divine Energies and Divine Presence; both tend to deny God’s imminence and continuous involvement in our lives; and both lead to an approach that does not accept our ability to grow through God’s grace, rather than either our own will and striving or a fatalistic destiny. Pelagianism and Augustinianism distanced people from God, because the nature of God and man in Jesus Christ Himself was viewed as the two natures not communicating with each other, as in Nestorianism. (St. John Cassian also wrote *On the Incarnation against Nestorius*, which was the basis of the Ecumenical Council at Ephesus’s decision against Nestorianism.) And, starting with the later concepts of Augustine, many in the Medieval period did try to distance themselves from God, with more and more complex theological theories; which are the opposite from the monastic ideal of becoming closer to God in a very simple and personal relationship. Some monks were accused of “Semi-Pelagianism,” in other words, they believed that prayer and examination of faults together with repentance and contemplation of God is the key to salvation, but the monks did not believe that these ‘works’ alone could achieve perfection, and they did not teach any new doctrine.

On both the fullness, not limit, of grace which God gives (and after all, what God creates is essentially good: Gen. 1:21), and also God’s Will, in the First Conference of Abbot Isaac Chapter XX on the Lord’s Prayer [Mt. 6:10, Lk 11:2], “The third petition is that of sons: ‘Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth.’ There can now be no grander prayer than to wish that earthly things may be made equal with things heavenly: for what else is it to say ‘Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth,’ than to ask that men may be like angels and that as God’s will is ever fulfilled by them in heaven, so also all those who are on earth may do not their own but His will? This too no one could say from the heart but only one who believed that God disposes for our good all things which are seen, whether fortunate or unfortunate, and that He is more careful and provident for our good and salvation than we ourselves are for ourselves. Or at any rate it may be taken in this way: The will of God is the salvation of all men, according to these words of the blessed Paul: ‘Who willeth all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’”

[Tim 2:4] Of which will also the prophet Isaiah says in the Person of God the Father: ‘And all Thy will shall be done.’ [Is. 46:10] When we say then, ‘Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth,’ we pray in other words for this; viz., that as those who are in heaven, so also may all those who dwell on earth be saved, O Father, by the knowledge of Thee.”

Today we look at sin as only a fault, but at one time it was considered a disharmony. Human effort works in “synergy” with God, not apart from God’s grace, because God still allows us free will. Otherwise, salvation would not set us free, but would enslave us. Although the Irish monks referred to themselves as “slaves of God,” they also believed they were free in Christ. They had loosened the “chains of sin” and joined with other Christians in a “chain of charity.” (From the Lorrha-Stowe Mass, after the Epistle just before the Gradual, “Almighty, eternal God, Who didst redeem Thy people by the blood of Thine Only-Begotten Son, destroy the works of the devil, break the chains of sin, that those who have attained to eternal life in the confession of Thy Name may be bound by no thing to the author of death, through...” and also from the Lorrha Stowe Missal, in the Litany of Supplication by Saint Martin of Tours, “...And the divine influence to remain with us, a holy chain of Charity: we ask the Lord: Grant it, O Lord, grant it...”)

But St. John Cassian and other Orthodox Christians believe that Jesus Christ, of two natures, both God and man, still is unified in His Person; that the natures of man and God in all people, created in the image of God, are in synergy or cooperation, “synergia,” with each other. “Synergia” is also influenced by the understanding of the Holy Trinity, which was understood everywhere, until the great schism, as the Father unbegotten, the Son only-Begotten, and the Holy Spirit from Father proceeding, which makes all the Persons of the Holy Trinity equal. This view of the Holy Trinity would not allow a series of three emanations (a Greek pre-Christian theory), with the Holy Spirit conferring a limited grace, a limited partnership with God, and a limited enlightenment. The controversy about the Holy Spirit exploded in a great schism between the Eastern Patriarchates and Roman Patriarchate, and caused further difficulties in the time of the Crusades, although St. Catherine’s monastery at Mt. Sinai in the Sinai desert allowed Crusaders to study there, and ignored the great schism until the late fourteenth century.

One fault may lead to another; Not everybody has the same faults; Sometimes faults may be used against other faults

One fault may lead to another. According to Ezekial 16:49, eating an abundance of bread led to the fornication of Sodom. “The belly when filled with all kinds of food gives birth to seeds of wantonness, nor can the mind, when choked with the weight of food, keep the guidance and government of the thoughts. For not only is drunkenness with wine tend to intoxicate the mind, but excess of all kinds of food makes it weak and uncertain, and robs it of all its power of pure and clear contemplation.” (Book V of the Institutes of John Cassian, Chapter VI)

Not everybody has the same problems. Some other writers suggest that there are only one or two possible problems that people could have, or that the worst problems to overcome are the same in all people, but John Cassian emphasizes that each person’s difficulties are unique. Chapter XIII of the conference of Abbot Serapion, “Although then these eight faults trouble all sorts of men, yet they do not attack them all in the same way. For in one man the spirit of fornication holds the chief place: wrath rides rough shod over another: over another vainglory claims dominion: in another pride holds the field: and though it is clear that we are all attacked by all of them, yet the difficulties come to each of us in very different ways and manners.”

Chapter XXVII: “But you must know that our battles are not all fought in the same order, because, as we mentioned that the attacks are not always made on us in the same way, each one of us ought also to begin the battle with due regard to the character of the attack which is especially made on him so that one man will have to fight his first battle against the fault which stands third on the list, another against that which is fourth or fifth. And in proportion as faults hold sway over us, and the character of their attack may demand, so we too ought to regulate the order of our conflict, in such a way that the happy result of a victory and triumph succeeding may insure our attainment or purity of heart and complete perfection.” In Chapter XIV, “Therefore we must enter the lists against these faults in such a way that every one should discover his besetting sin, and direct his main attack against it...” [with fasting, sighs, groaning of the heart, tears, prayers, vigils, meditation of the heart, etc.] “For it is impossible for a man to win a triumph over any kind of passion, unless he has first clearly understood that he cannot possibly gain the victory in the struggle with it by his own strength and efforts, although in order that he may be rendered pure he must night and day persist in the utmost care and watchfulness. And even when he feels that he has got rid of this fault, he should still search the inmost recesses of his heart with the same purpose, and single out the worst fault which he can see among those still there, and bring all the forces of the Spirit to bear against it in particular, and so by always overcoming the stronger passions, he will gain a quick and easy victory over the rest...”

While the remedies are usually virtues, some sins can be used against others. Chapter XII of the Conference of Abbot Serapion, “But in one matter vainglory is found to be a useful thing for beginners. I mean by those who are still troubled by carnal sins, as for instance, if, when they are troubled by the spirit of fornication, they formed an idea of the dignity of the priesthood, or of reputation among all men, by which they may be thought saints and immaculate: and so with these considerations they repel the unclean suggestions of lust, as deeming them base and at least unworthy of their rank and reputation; and so by means of a smaller evil they overcome a greater one... [Isaiah 48:9] ‘For My name’s sake I will remove My wrath afar off: and with My praise I will bridle thee lest thou shouldest perish,’ i.e., while you are enchained by the praises of vainglory, you cannot possibly rush on into the depths of hell, or plunge irrevocably into the commission of deadly sins.” And, on the other hand, in the Conference of Abbot Daniel, Chapter XIV about the usefulness of some of the physical sins as opposed to a spiritual sin such as vain glory or pride, “For a spiritual substance and one that is not tied to any material flesh has no excuse for an evil thought which arises within, and also shuts out forgiveness for its sin, because it is not harassed as we are by incentives of the flesh without, to sin, but is simply inflamed by the fault of a perverse will. And therefore its sin is without forgiveness and its weakness without remedy. For as it falls through the allurements of no earthly matter, so it can find no pardon or place for repentance. And from this we can clearly gather that this struggle which arises in us of the flesh and spirit against each other is not merely harmless, but actually extremely useful to us.” Abbot Daniel suggests that having the temptation of lust keeps a person humble that would otherwise become proud and vain-glorious over their achievements and perfections.

(Sins used as a remedy against other sins must be used in a very small measure, according to Scriptural references. The Spirit that heals cannot be divided against itself: Mt 12:24-32 “...this man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by

the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can any one enter into the house of the strong, and rifle his goods, unless he first bind the strong? And then he will rifle his house. He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. Therefore I say to you: Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men; but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but he that shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.” However, the Lord did use sins against themselves sometimes: Mt 10:34 “Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword.” Lk 22:36-38 “Then said he unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat, and buy a sword. For I say to you, that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in me: And with the wicked was he reckoned. For the things concerning me have an end. [Isa. 53:12] But they said: Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said to them, It is enough.” Lk 22:49 “And they that were about him, seeing what would follow, said to him: Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” John 18:10-11 “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Mt 26:52 “Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place: for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” [Gen. 9:6; Apoc. 13:10] Luke 22:51 “... And when he had touched his ear, he healed him.”)

Why Eight Principal Faults, and what references did these come from?

Since many sins are listed in Scripture, and what to do about them is confusing at best, the organization of these into eight principal faults and their remedies was a tradition dating back to Apostolic times. (Some attribute them to Evagrius Ponticus 345–399 A.D., but he is contemporary with St. John Cassian, and the desert fathers say that the eight principal faults were taught much before that time.) The symbolism in the Old Testament is used, but the history of the development of this system is not given. It is certain that it developed very early, and there is a mention in the New Testament of seven devils plus one devil, totaling eight that can plague a person [Mt 12:43-45, Lk 11:24-26]. The fact that this system has stood the test of time for almost two thousand years, although the eight faults were reduced in number to seven and some of the faults changed, shows that this tradition has had its uses.

Perhaps not when, but why such organization and spiritual teaching came about is explained in the First Conference with Abbot Nesteros, Chapter XVI. Abbot Nesteros answers a question about why some people with great sin or confusion are able to quote Scripture, while some who seem almost perfect may be more simple-minded or illiterate. This chapter is worth reading... only a few quotes are given here:

“...One who does not carefully weigh every word of the opinions uttered cannot rightly discover the value of the assertion. For we said to begin with that men of this sort only possess skill in disputation and ornaments of speech; but cannot penetrate to the very heart of Scripture and the mysteries of its spiritual meanings... And the Psalmist also sees that this system ought to be followed, when he says: [Psalm 118 Greek or 119 Hebrew:] ‘Blessed are they that are undefiled in the way: who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that seek His testimonies.’ For he does not say in the first place: ‘Blessed are they that seek His testimonies,’ and afterwards add: ‘Blessed are they that are undefiled in the way;’ and by this clearly shows

that no one can properly come to seek God's testimonies unless he first walks undefiled in the way of Christ by his practical life. ... Of those then who seem to acquire some show of knowledge or of those who while they devote themselves diligently to reading the sacred volume and committing the Scriptures to memory, yet forsake not carnal sins, it is well said in Proverbs: [Proverbs 11:22], 'Like as a golden ring in a swine's snout so is the beauty of an evil-disposed woman.' For what does it profit a man to gain the ornaments of heavenly eloquence and the most precious beauty of the Scriptures if by clinging to filthy deeds and thoughts he destroys it by burying it in the foulest ground, or defiles it by the dirty wallowing of his own lusts?... For [Ecclus. 15:9] 'from the mouth of a sinner praise is not comely;' as to him it is said by the prophet, [Ps. 49 Greek or 50 Hebrew] 'Wherefore dost thou declare My righteous acts, and takest My covenant in thy lips?' Of souls like this, who never possess in any lasting fashion the fear of the Lord of which it is said: [Prov. 15:33] 'the fear of the Lord is instruction and wisdom,' and yet try to get at the meaning of Scripture by continual meditation on them, it is appropriately asked in Proverbs: [Prov. 17:16] 'What use are riches to a fool? For a senseless man cannot possess wisdom.' But so far is this true and spiritual knowledge removed from worldly erudition, which is defiled by the stains of carnal sins, that we know that it has sometimes flourished most grandly in some who were without eloquence and almost illiterate. And this is very clearly shown by the case of the Apostles and holy men, who did not spread themselves out with an empty show of leaves, but were bowed down by the weight of the true fruits of spiritual knowledge: of whom it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: [Acts 4:13] 'But when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were ignorant and unlearned men, they were astonished.'..." (And Abbot Nesteros gives many more examples. "Leaves" compared to "fruit" can also be taken to be pages of a codex as compared to fruits of charity. Scripture reference on spiritual blindness: Mt 6:22-23 "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome. But if thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome. If then the light that is in thee, be darkness: the darkness itself how great shall it be!")

The List of Faults and other faults connected to them: Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI, the seven nations whose lands Israel took possession, sometimes called many lands. (Together with Egypt making eight nations.)

"These are the seven nations whose lands the Lord promised to give to the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt. And everything which, as the Apostle says, happened to them "in a figure" [I Cor. 10:6] we ought to take as written for our correction. For so we read [Deut. 7:1-2], 'When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land, which thou art going in to possess, and shall have destroyed many nations before thee, the Hittite, and the Girgashites, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations much more numerous than thou art and much stronger than thou: and the Lord thy God shall have delivered them to Thee, thou shalt utterly destroy them.' And the reason that they are said to be much more numerous, is that faults are many more in number than virtues and so in the list of them the nations are reckoned as seven in number, but when the attack upon them is spoken of they are set down without their number being given, for thus we read 'And shall have destroyed many nations before thee.' For the race of carnal passions which springs from this sevenfold incentive and root of sin, is more numerous than that of Israel. For thence spring up murders, strifes, heresies, thefts, false witness, blasphemy, surfeiting, drunkenness, back-biting, buffoonery, filthy conversation, lies, perjury, foolish talking, scurrility, restlessness, greediness,

bitterness, clamor, wrath, contempt, murmuring, temptation, despair, and many other faults, which it would take too long to describe. And if we are inclined to think these are small matters, let us hear what the Apostle thought about them, and what was his opinion of them: ‘Neither murmur ye,’ says he, ‘as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer:’ and of temptation: ‘Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them tempted and perished by the serpents.’ [I Cor. 10:9-10] Of back-biting: ‘Love not backbiting lest thou be rooted out.’ [Prov. 20:13] And of despair: ‘Who despairing have given themselves up to lasciviousness unto the working of all error, in uncleanness.’ [Eph. 4:19] And that clamor is condemned as well as anger and indignation and blasphemy, the words of the same Apostle teach us as clearly as possible when he thus charges us: ‘Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation, and clamor, and blasphemy to put away from you with all malice,’ [Eph 4:31] and many more things like these. And though these are far more numerous than the virtues are, yet if those eight principal sins, from which we know that these naturally proceed, are first overcome, all these at once sink down, and are destroyed together with them with a lasting destruction. For from gluttony proceed surfeiting and drunkenness. From fornication filthy conversation, scurrility, buffoonery and foolish talking. From covetousness, lying, deceit, theft, perjury, the desire of filthy lucre, false witness, violence, inhumanity, and greed. From anger, murders, clamor and indignation. From dejection, rancor, cowardice, bitterness, despair. From accidie [spiritual sloth, like mania in bi-polar syndrome], laziness, sleepiness, rudeness, restlessness, wandering about, instability both of mind and body, chattering, inquisitiveness. From vainglory, contention, heresies, boasting and confidence in novelties. From pride, contempt, envy, disobedience, blasphemy, murmuring, backbiting. And that all these plagues are stronger than we, we can tell very plainly from the way in which they attack us. For the delight in carnal passions wars more powerfully in our members than does the desire for virtue, which is only gained with the greatest contrition of heart and body. But if you will only gaze with the eyes of the spirit on those countless hosts of our foes, which the Apostle enumerates where he says: ‘For we wrestle not against the flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places,’ [Eph. 4:12] and this which we find of the righteous man in the ninetieth Psalm: ‘A thousand shall fall beside thee and ten thousand at thy right hand,’ [Psalm 90 in Greek numbering or 91 in Hebrew numbering, verse 7] then you will clearly see that they are far more numerous and more powerful than are we; carnal and earthly creatures as we are, while to them is given a substance which is spiritual and incorporeal.”

Chapter XVII

“Germanus: How then is it that there are eight faults which assault us, when Moses reckons the nations opposed to the people of Israel as seven, and how is it well for us to take possession of the territory of our faults?”

Chapter XVIII

“Serapion: Everybody is perfectly agreed that there are eight principal faults which affect a monk. And all of them are not included in the figure of the nations for this reason, because in Deuteronomy Moses, or rather the Lord through him, was speaking to those who had already gone forth from Egypt and been set free from one most powerful nation, I mean that of the Egyptians. And we find that this figure holds good also in our case, as when we have got clear of the snares of this world we are found to be free from gluttony, i.e., the sin of the belly and palate; and like them we have a conflict against these seven remaining nations, without taking account at all of the one which has been already overcome. And the land of this nation was not given to

Israel for a possession, but the command of the Lord ordained that they should at once forsake it and go forth from it. And for this cause our fasts ought to be made moderate, that there may be no need for us through excessive abstinence, which results from weakness of the flesh and infirmity, to return again to the land of Egypt, i.e., to our former greed and carnal lust which we forsook when we made our renunciation of this world. And this has happened in a figure, in those who after having gone forth into the desert of virtue again hanker after the flesh pots over which they sat in Egypt.”

Chapter XIX

“But the reason why that nation in which the children of Israel were born, was bidden not to be utterly destroyed but only to have its land forsaken, while it was commanded that these seven nations were to be completely destroyed, is this: because however great may be the ardor of spirit, inspired by which we have entered on the desert of virtues, yet we cannot possibly free ourselves entirely from the neighborhood of gluttony or from its service and, so to speak, from daily contact with it. For the liking for delicacies and dainties will live on as something natural and innate in us, even though we take pains to cut off all superfluous appetites and desires, which, as they cannot be altogether destroyed, ought to be shunned and avoided... ‘Thou shalt not abhor the Egyptian, because thou was a stranger in his land.’ [Deut 23:7] For necessary food is not refused to the body without danger to it and sinfulness in the soul. But of those seven troublesome faults we must in every possible way root out the affections from the inmost recesses of our souls...”

Other references in Scripture to eight deadly sins: Chapter XXVI of the Conference with Abbot Serapion, “Wherefore while we are practicing fasting and abstinence, we must be careful when we have got the better of the passion of gluttony never to allow our mind to remain empty of the virtues of which we stand in need; but we should the more earnestly fill the inmost recesses of our heart with them for fear lest the spirit of concupiscence should return and find us empty and void of them, and should not be content to secure an entrance there for himself alone, but should bring in with him into our heart this sevenfold incentive of sins and make our last state worse than the first. For the soul which boasts that it has renounced this world with the eight faults that hold sway over it, will afterwards be fouler and more unclean and visited with severer punishments, than it was when formerly it was at home in the world, when it had taken upon itself neither the rules nor the name of monk. For these seven spirits are said to be worse than the first which went forth, for this reason: because the love of good things, that is, gluttony would not be in itself harmful, were it not that it opened the door to other passions; that is, to fornication, covetousness, anger, dejection, accidie, vain glory, and pride, which are clearly hurtful in themselves to the soul, and domineering over it. And therefore a man will never be able to gain perfect purity, if he hopes to secure it by means of abstinence alone, that is, bodily fasting, unless he knows that he ought to practice it for this reason that when the flesh is brought low by means of fasting, he may with greater ease enter the lists against other faults, as the flesh has not been habituated to gluttony and surfeiting.” Also quoted in Chapter XXV “And of this sevenfold incentive of sins Solomon gives the following account in Proverbs, ‘If thine enemy speak loud to thee, do not agree to him because there are seven mischiefs in his heart;’” [Prov. 26:25] Mt 12:43-45 “And when an unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith: I will return into my house from whence I came out. And coming he findeth it empty; swept, and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the

last state of that man is made worse than the first. So shall it be also to this wicked generation.” The reality of devils is twofold: both as external demons that can possess a person, and also as habitual faults or addictions. Here is an illustration of the eight deadly sins: the first sin takes seven others worse than the first into a clean and swept house. The house is a person. The first sin, according to the earliest understanding, is gluttony. This sin cannot be completely overcome, because otherwise it causes starvation, which itself is not good. However, a person who practices fasting for a while does “sweep out” their physical bodies, but it is easy after that to fall into the temptation of all the other faults. Often, people gain weight again after a fast, so the first fault returns. And with it, comes all the others. Often, faults were seen as leading from one to another.

Chapter XXIII of the Conference of Abbot Serapion.

But the fact that we are bidden for our good to take possession of the countries of those most wicked nations, may be understood in this way. Each fault has its own especial corner in the heart, which it claims for itself in the recesses of the soul, and drives out Israel, i.e., the contemplation of holy and heavenly things [that is, the wholeness which is of the divine spirit], and never ceases to oppose them. For virtues cannot possibly live side by side with faults. ‘For what participation hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness?’ [2 Cor. 6:12] But as soon as these faults have been overcome by the people of Israel, i.e., by those virtues which war against them, then at once the lace in our heart which the spirit of concupiscence and fornication had occupied, will be filled with chastity. That which wrath had held, will be claimed by patience. That which had been occupied by a sorrow that worketh death, will be taken by a godly sorrow and one full of joy. That which had been wasted by accidie, will at once be filled by courage. That which pride had trodden down will be ennobled by humility: and so when each of these faults has been expelled, their places (that is the tendency towards them) will be filled by the opposite virtues which are aptly termed the children of Israel, that is, of the soul that seeth God: and when these have expelled all passions from the heart we may believe that they have recovered their own possessions rather than invaded those of others.”

“Seeing God.” Different orders might be found for faults, but they are essentially the same.

As to the previous statement about Israel meaning contemplation, St. John Cassian and Abbot Serapion equate Israel with “seeing God” rather than “wrestling with God,” because as the Beatitudes say (Mt chapter 5:3-12), “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.” All the Beatitudes, which happen to also be eight or nine, refer to virtues that have a heavenly reward, at the end of the phrases “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven... for theirs is the land... for they shall be comforted... for they shall have their fill... for they shall obtain mercy... for they shall see God... for they shall be called the children of God...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.” These Beatitudes are interpreted by many writers, such as St. John Chrysostom “golden-mouth,” to mean that we are humble, meek, mournful of our sins, hungry for goodness, merciful, pure, peacemakers, and patiently endure persecution, including for the sake of the Lord; i.e., the Beatitudes could also be seen as a list of virtues.

The term “Israel,” applied to those who overcome the “nations” or faults, means that the person called “Israel” is no longer blind, but sees God. (More about this after examining the faults, because ultimately, the Saints combated the faults with contemplation.) See John Cassian in his treatise, “Against Nestorius” book VII, chapter ix, “...Did God manifest Himself to him in the midst of thunder and lightning? Or when the heavens were opened, did the dazzling face of

the Diety show itself to him? Most certainly not: but rather on the contrary he saw a man and acknowledged a God. O truly worthy of the name he received, as with the eyes of the soul rather than of the body he earned the honor of a title given by God! He saw a human form wrestling with him, and declared that he saw God....". The editor, Rev. Edgar C. S. Gibson, M.A., of the Theological College, Wells, Somerset, writing one century ago, claims that "seeing God" is a misinterpretation of the Hebrew, but instead it is the circumstances of Genesis 32:30, "And Jacob called the name of the place Phanel, saying: I have seen God face to face, and my soul has been saved." In other words, he was not killed when seeing God, which was more important to early Medieval people than whether or not Jacob wrestled with God (although they do notice this meaning too: in the Conference with Abbot Chaermon on Chastity, chapter XI, "...rise from the struggles of continence and the eradication of vices ...the title of 'Israel,' ...means that his heart is no longer vagrant."). Jacob had to have a special insight or contemplation to survive his wrestling with God. In the Abecedarian hymn about St. Patrick, one verse says that Patrick is called Israel: seeing God. (See the layers of meaning below.)

On the other hand, some writers such as St. John Chrysostom (who ordained St. John Cassian after John Cassian had studied with the desert fathers in Egypt) emphasized Pride as the first sin, because of the order of the Beatitudes, and used that list of virtues. St. John Chrysostom does say that pride is the root of the others, Homily XV on the Beatitudes in St. Matthew in chapter 3, "For whereas the greatest of evils, and those which make havoc of the whole world, had their entering in from pride:- for both the devil, not being such before, did thus become a devil; as indeed Paul plainly declared, saying, 'Lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil' [1 Tim. 3:6] - and the first man, too, puffed up by the devil with these hopes, was made an example of, and became mortal (for expecting to become a god, he lost even what he had; and God also upbraiding him with this, and mocking his folly, said, 'Behold, Adam is become as one of us,' [Gen 3:22]; and each one of those that came after did hereby wreck himself in impiety, fancying some equality with God: - since, I say, this was the stronghold of our evils, and the root and fountain of all wickedness, He, preparing a remedy suitable to the disease, laid this law [Blessed are the poor in spirit] first as a strong and safe foundation..."

The reason that the Old Testament references were used by Abbot Serapion in the Eight Principal Faults, and that St. John Cassian emphasized that list that begins with gluttony rather than St. John Chrysostom's list of the faults and virtues of the Beatitudes is that the concept of the Eight Principal Faults was promoted mainly in the deserts of Egypt, where the monks thought of Egypt as being fat and easy, but the people of Israel needing God in the desert more than their wages as slaves: The Eight Principal Faults were a justification for these monks to live in the desert, and that became the justification for any monk to live a life of penitence with many forty day "Moses" fasts. These faults and overcoming them are parts of an image of struggle, or should we say, as the Medieval definition of Israel, "Seeing God." It is may be odd that St. John Cassian does not quote St. John Chrysostom's homily on the Beatitudes; but unless St. John Cassian was at Constantinople at the same time that this sermon was given, and unless St. John Cassian was able to read the transcriptions of the homilies, he might not have examined the homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew. In a Ninth Century Irish Penitential, gluttony is also the first sin on the list. Again, Abbot Serapion in Chapters XIII and XXVII says that the faults attack different people differently, and in a different order.

But, as to order, and comparing the Beatitudes order, one might also look at the Ten Commandments [Exodus chapter 20] to derive an order (Every Commandment begins with the Hebrew word "La" which means "No" or "Not.") 1. No strange gods before me. 2. No graven thing. 3. Do not take the name of the Lord in vain. 4. Do not dishonor the Sabbath day. 5.

Do not dishonor thy father and mother. 6. Do not kill. 7. Do not commit adultery. 8. Do not steal. 9. Do not bear false witness. 10. Do not covet. (While this order remains the same, traditional Jewish icons often divide these differently; with the first four listed here combined into three, and the last six listed here spread to seven.) The Beatitudes [St. Matthew 5:3-12] bless virtues that are in this order: “[1.] Blessed are the poor in spirit... [2.] Blessed are the meek... [3.] Blessed are they that mourn... [4.] Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness [or justice]... [5.] Blessed are the merciful... [6.] Blessed are the clean of heart... [7.] Blessed are the peacemakers... [8.] Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness [justice’s] sake... [9.] Blessed are you when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for my sake... “ The number and order of virtues in the Beatitudes does not match the Ten Commandments, but it can be seen that they are roughly in reverse order. The last or ninth Beatitude blesses you for receiving persecution caused by your faithfulness to God, which is the first three of the Ten Commandments. The next-to-last or eighth Beatitude blesses you for holding on to justice, interpreted sometimes as doctrine and truth [as in the Rationale worn by the Priests described in Leviticus 8:8], and therefore is a Priestly function, matching the commandment to not dishonor the Sabbath day, which is interpreted by some desert fathers as continuous silence and prayer. (Conference of Abbot John Chapter VIII quoting Isaiah 58:13-14, about keeping silence and prayer on the Sabbath, and comparing the perfections of the Coenobite and Anchorite. Also, First Conference of Abbot Isaac, Chapter III, on keeping thoughts held on God in prayer, and Second Conference of Abbot Isaac, Chapter X.) The seventh Beatitude blesses you for being a peacemaker, which is not dishonoring ones’ father and mother [and one that Christ says He will not always follow, although it can also be interpreted in a deeper meaning: Mt 10:34-37 “Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s enemies shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.”] The sixth Beatitude, blessing the clean of heart, goes with the sixth Commandment not to kill, and also means not to have anger in ones’ heart. [Mt. 5:21-22 “You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, and whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment...”] The fifth Beatitude, blessing the merciful, goes with the seventh Commandment, do not commit adultery, because of all the things people did that were unmerciful, allowing older women to beg for food was one of the worst, and indicated hardness of heart. [Mt. 19:7-9 “They say to him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away? [Deut. 24:1] He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.”] The fourth Beatitude blessing those who hunger and thirst after justice, goes with the eighth Commandment not to steal, because stealing is the opposite of giving life, and every day we need to eat again, because life is stolen away from us. [John 10:10 “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.” John 6:58 “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.” John 4:13-14 “Jesus answered, and said to her: Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever: But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.”] The third

Beatitude blessing those that mourn goes with the ninth Commandment not to bear false witness, because it is truth in communication that brings joy. The mourning here is for past sins, not for personal grief. [John 16:22-24 “So also you now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you. And in that day you shall not ask me any thing. Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full.”] The second Beatitude blessing those who are meek goes with the tenth Commandment to not covet. [Mt. 5:4 “Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.”] and so does the first Beatitude, referring to not only being meek in possessions, but also low in spirit, and thus being able to acquire the Holy Spirit. [Mt 11:28-30 “Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light.”] Therefore, when St. John Chrysostom takes the first Beatitude, and says that the first sin is pride, he is correct, but it can also be said that the Beatitudes are in the reverse order of other arrangements of sins and virtues such as the Ten Commandments. When Pope St. Gregory the Dialogist arranged the number of “deadly sins” into seven, placing pride as the first one as St. John Chrysostom had placed pride as the first sin of the Beatitudes, he may have been trying to reconcile the list of Beatitudes with the list of principal faults. Although the Beatitudes are in their correct order, the order of the eight principal faults and the image of crossing the desert into the promised land should be kept if making a list of sins that are sort-a kind-a the same as the eight principal faults. And the Eight Principal Faults also have Scriptural references. A modern list of seven deadly sins lists them in this order: Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony and Lust. Notice that “vain glory” is not there, and that “accidie” or “sloth” is not well understood.

The Purpose of the Order of the Eight Principal Faults (which happen to be closer to modern theories).

The late Medieval and modern almost reverse order of faults is supposed to show that other sins come from pride, and this may be useful, but the order of eight principal faults in the Conferences and Institutes of John Cassian have their own sense. Conference of Abbot Serapion, Chapter X, “Of these eight faults then, although they are different in their origin and in their way of affecting us, yet the six former: gluttony, fornication, covetousness, anger, dejection, accidie, have a sort of connection with each other, and are, so to speak, linked together in a chain, so that any excess of the one forms a starting point for the next. For from superfluity of gluttony fornication is sure to spring, and from fornication covetousness, from covetousness anger, from anger, dejection, and from dejection, accidie.” [Notice that today, we only notice in a ‘bi-polar’ syndrome a relationship between dejection and mania or restlessness of mind, but the entire chain of the other faults may also be at play. This Irish call this a ‘chain of sin,’ from the Lorrha-Stowe Mass, after the Epistle just before the Gradual, and the virtues a ‘chain of charity,’ also from the Lorrha Stowe Missal, in the Litany of Supplication by Saint Martin of Tours.] “And so we must fight against them in the same way, and with the same methods: and having overcome one, we ought always to enter the lists against the next... Wherefore in order to overcome accidie, you must first get the better of dejection: in order to get rid of dejection, anger must first be expelled: in order to quell anger, covetousness must be trampled under foot: in order to root out covetousness, fornication must be checked: and in order to destroy fornication, you must chastise the sin of gluttony.” [And this might be why some were put into reverse order, so that a person would attack the last one first. But it makes sense for each person to examine how the

connections work in their own lives.] “But the two remaining faults: vainglory and pride, are connected together in a somewhat similar way as the others of which we have spoken, so that the growth of the one makes a starting point for the other (for superfluity of vain glory produces an incentive to pride); but they are altogether different from the six former faults, and are not joined in the same category with them, since not only is there no opportunity given for them to spring up from these, but they are actually aroused in an entirely different way and manner. For when these others have been eradicated these latter flourish the more vigorously, and from the death of the others they shoot forth and grow up all the stronger: and therefore we are attacked by these two faults in quite a different way. For we fall into each one of those six faults at the moment when we have been overcome by the ones that went before them; but into these two we are in danger of falling when we have proved victorious, and above all after some splendid triumph. In the cases then of all faults just as they spring up from the growth of those that go before them, so are they eradicated by getting rid of the earlier ones. And in this way in order that pride may be driven out vainglory must be stifled, and so if we always overcome the earlier ones, the later ones will be checked; and through the extermination of those that lead the way, the rest of our passions will die down without difficulty. And though these eight faults of which we have spoken are connected and joined together in the way which we have shown, yet they may be more exactly divided into four groups and subdivisions. For to gluttony fornication is linked by a special tie: to covetousness anger, to dejection accidie, and to vainglory pride is closely allied.” [And this pairing of faults is much closer to modern psychological theory than the later “seven deadly sins,” because today we recognize a “bi-polar” syndrome that links dejection and accidie; we recognize that much anger comes from worry or covetousness about not being in control of things or people; we recognize that a person with delusions of grandeur may be also very self-centered. Although fornication is not considered a fault very often today, there is now more research into sexual predators; their attitudes towards others do not recognize other people as humans that should be respected, but rather as objects to satisfy desire, in the same way that we might look at meat or vegetables as food rather than as beings with their own life.]

(I thought of a non-Period, or at least non-Christian analogy that might point to why these faults are in this order. In the east the “energy centers” relate to the endocrine system, which today we know a little about. Fat anywhere in the body, and also the intestines and pancreas produce some hormones, and if bloated or given the wrong foods or over rich foods they will start causing trouble. They can aggravate the reproductive organs, which can aggravate the kidneys. If there is too much aggravation of the kidneys, such as the clogging of the kidneys that can follow a strep infection, an auto-immune disease such as rheumatic fever may be caused by the thymus. If the kidneys are out of balance as to salts and calcium, the thyroid and parathyroid can get involved. Ultimately, the pineal and pituitary glands may be involved, one involving light and the other involving the master governing of the body. All in all, these follow the same order as the eight principal faults.)

Eight or Ten Faults...

In Chapter XXII, Abbot Serapion quotes Genesis 15:18-21, where Abraham is promised not seven nations, but ten, whose land was part of the promise. Abbot Serapion then adds the sins of idolatry and blasphemy, “to whose dominion, before the knowledge of God and the grace of Baptism, both the irreligious hosts of the Gentiles and blasphemous ones of the Jews were subject, while they dwelt in a spiritual Egypt. But when a man has made his renunciation and come forth from thence, and having by God’s grace conquered gluttony, has come into the

spiritual wilderness, then he is free from the attacks of these three, and will only have to wage war against those seven” [deadly sins within ourselves] “which Moses enumerates.” (The Irish Penitential, much later included this information about seven deadly sins, but the list is similar to these eight, dropping *acidie* perhaps because of not understanding it.) Should we now match all ten of the principal faults...? It is probably best to focus on the eight the desert fathers looked into, but those sins of idolatry and blasphemy certainly plague many people today, turning themselves away from a clear picture of their needs into a hall of mirrors. Blasphemy and idolatry certainly relate to the first two of the Ten Commandments (No strange gods before me; No graven thing). The rest of the Ten Commandments, in this order: (3. Do not take the name of the Lord in vain. 4. Do not dishonor the Sabbath day. 5. Do not dishonor thy father and mother. 6. Do not kill. 7. Do not commit adultery. 8. Do not steal. 9. Do not bear false witness. 10. Do not covet.) could be said to relate to the eight principal faults: (1. Gluttony; 2. Fornication; 3. Covetousness; 4. Anger; 5. Dejection; 6. *Accidie*; 7. Vain-glory; and 8. Pride.), perhaps following a different order. Vain-glory does seem to relate to the Ninth Commandment “Do not bear false witness;” Anger does seem to relate to the Sixth Commandment “Do not kill;” and Covetousness does relate to the Tenth Commandment “Do not covet.” Other than these assignments, the other Principal Faults are difficult to assign, so either the other principal faults are in an order that is suited to meditation on being released from slavery in Egypt to attaining freedom in the “promised land,” or as in the case of the Beatitudes, a deeper meaning built on meditations of insights from Scripture must be found. All of the principal faults are in Scripture, but not given as an easy list. Either way, my interest is in looking at the earlier order of the eight principal faults, and not examining the later re-organization into seven in a different order by Pope St. Gregory the Dialogist, because in any case, different faults attack different people in different orders of difficulty.

Four Layers of Meaning in the nations or faults, or any reference or mental idea

The desert fathers used symbols such as “nations” for sins, referring to layers of meaning and interpretation in all things they spoke of. Lifted from my icon lecture: Clothing: Not only symbolizes the Law, but also has a deeper meaning. The First Conference of Abbot Nesteros to John Cassian, Chapter VIII, “...practical knowledge is distributed among many subjects and interests, but theoretical is divided into two parts, i.e., the historical interpretation and the spiritual sense. Whence also Solomon when he had summed up the manifold grace of the Church, added, [Prov 31:21] ‘for all who are with her are clothed with double garments.’ But of spiritual knowledge there are three kinds, tropological, allegorical, anagogical, of which we read as follows in Proverbs: [22:20] ‘But do you describe these things to yourself in three ways according to the largeness of your heart.’” And therefore, the folds of the cloth in icons show these parts of spiritual insight unified into the garment. These are Latin terms, and Nesteros describes them more completely than I have space for: that allegorical finds parallels in events; anagogical is more prophetic; and tropological offers moral internal explanation so that we find a representation of a problem in the soul of a person. Abbot Nesteros continues: “...And so these four [including historical] previously mentioned figures coalesce, if we desire, into one subject, so that the same Jerusalem can be taken in four senses: historically as the city of the Jews; allegorically as the Church of Christ, anagogically as the heavenly city of God which is the mother of us all, tropologically as the soul of man, which is frequently subject to praise or blame from the Lord under this title...” [Also can interpret these terms, not necessarily in the same order:] “revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or doctrine...” (In the First Conference of Abbot

Isaac, Chapter IX, a fourfold nature of prayer is explained, quoting St. Paul [I Tim. 2:1], “‘I exhort therefore first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made.’” and in Chapter XV, “...it is clear that all these kinds of prayer of which we have spoken are found to be useful and needful for all men, so that in one and the same man his changing feelings will give utterance...” Abbot Isaac also mentions prayers as vows in Chapter XII.) [More examples in the icon course.]

(Modern dictionaries do not define these terms well, and seem unaware that there might be any difference between them, or what idioms of Greek and Latin they actually might be derived from. But, what can one expect when rhetoric and meaning are rarely taught in universities! One would think that the study of linguistics should include a study of layers of meaning, but often linguistics is only concerned with grammar and phonetic development. From the Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary, 1996: “Allegory 1. A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms; figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another. 2. A symbolical narrative... 3. Emblem from Latin and Greek: to speak so as to imply something other; originally meant to speak [allo] in the assembly [agora]. Anagoge 1. A spiritual interpretation or application of words, as of Scriptures 2. A form of allegorical interpretation of Scripture that seeks hidden meanings regarding the future life. From Latin, from Greek anagoge an uplifting, or an- before, and goge leading. Anagogic 1. Of or pertaining to an anagoge. 2. Psychol. Deriving from, pertaining to, or reflecting the moral or idealistic striving of the unconscious. [This is a modern interpretation, unknown in earlier times, but at least indicating that layers of meaning have come back into use for counseling somebody oppressed with faults, also called “psychotherapy.”] Tropology 1. The use of figurative language in speech or writing. 2. A treatise on figures of speech or tropes. 3. The use of a Scriptural text so as to give it a moral interpretation or significance apart from the direct meaning. From Latin and Greek. Greek tropos means turn or turning.)

Each of the Eight Deadly Sins, more on their Relationships and Remedies

Faults lead to other faults, some later remedies. None of these virtues compares with the pearl of great price: contemplation of divinity. (See Chapter II in the Third Conference of Abbot Theonas, and St. Mt. 13:46. Using lesser virtues to combat the faults is a later adaptation, and seems to say that by works alone it is possible to overcome these problems, which is Pelagianism. Some of these virtues used to combat vices are from a ninth century Irish Penitential, similar to some other Roman documents; the eight principal faults are from the Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI.)

1. For from gluttony proceed surfeiting and drunkenness.

Virtue to combat gluttony: moderation, sobriety. (Food is a good gift, so fasting is only occasionally a virtue.)

2. From fornication filthy conversation, scurrility, buffoonery and foolish talking.

Virtue to combat fornication: chastity of body and spirit.

3. From covetousness, lying, deceit, theft, perjury, the desire of filthy lucre, false witness, violence, inhumanity, and greed.

Virtue to combat covetousness: choosing poverty over riches, prudence.

4. From anger, murders, clamor and indignation.
Virtue to combat anger: patience and kindness, accepting justice from others.
5. From dejection, rancor, cowardice, bitterness, despair.
Virtue to combat dejection: godly sorrow full of joy, pity.
6. From accidie, laziness, sleepiness, rudeness, restlessness, wandering about, instability both of mind and body, chattering, inquisitiveness [what we would call manic].
Virtue to combat accidie: courage (or hope), perseverance, temperance.
7. From vainglory, contention, heresies, boasting and confidence in novelties.
Virtue to combat vainglory: charity rather than selfishness, silence.
8. From pride, contempt, envy, disobedience, blasphemy, murmuring, backbiting.
Virtue to combat pride: humility and obedience. (Sin is disobedience. From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

Sometimes the external spirits either cause or hold us in faults:

In the First Conference of Abbot Serenus, Chapter XXXII, the possessions of spirits of the air (evil spirits) sometimes explains the faults, when an external spirit rather than an internal sin has caused trouble. He mentions seducers (Plani) who either mock or tear apart in fury (like the Gorgon Medusa); those who plant empty pride in the heart (Bacucei); some who lie and also plant false ideas in others (as in I Kings 22:22); some who are deaf and dumb; some incite lust; some of the night and of noonday. “But it would take too long to search through the whole of Scripture and run through the different kinds of them, as they are termed by the prophets onocentaurs, satyrs, sirens, witches, howlers, ostriches, urchins, asps, basilisks..., lions, dragons, scorpions..., prince of this world, rulers of this darkness, spirits of wickedness. ...alluding to their fierceness and madness under the sign of those wild beasts which are more or less harmful and dangerous among us, and by comparing them to the poisonous wickedness or power which among other beasts or serpents, ...one is assigned the name of lion because of the fury of his rage and the madness of his anger, to another that of basilisk because of his deadly poison, which kills a person before it is perceived, and to another that of onocentaur or urchin or ostrich because of his sluggish malice.” [The term ostrich here pre-dates the use of the term as the large Australian bird.] [Eph. 6:12; I Kings 22:22; I Tim. 4:1-2; Is. 13:21-22; Is. 34:13, 15; Ps. 90 (Greek) or Ps 91 (Hebrew):13; Lk 10:19-20; John 14:30] In the Second Conference of Abbot Serenus, Chapter VI, he reminds us that, as Scripture says, “...’everything that God had made was very good’ [Gen. 1:31], For if they were created by God such as they are now, or made for this purpose; viz., to occupy these positions of malice, and ever to be ready for the deception and ruin of men, we should in opposition to the view of the above quoted Scripture slander God as the Creator and author of evil, as having Himself formed utterly evil wills and natures, creating them for this very purpose; viz., that they might ever persist in their wickedness and never pass over to the feeling of a good will...” [In other words, once possessed by them, it would be impossible to escape. But they were not originally created to be evil, and therefore it is possible to escape from them, because they cannot be purely evil, and therefore they are divided against themselves.]

The tendency to faults may be present, even if the actual sins are not strongly displayed.

In the Conference of Abbot John, Chapter XII, the Abbot shows how even a solitary may find roots of faults, for example, when being visited by other brethren. “And so we ought to know that if we retire to solitude or secret places, without our faults being first cured, their operation is but repressed, while the power of feeling them is not extinguished.” Abbot John lists these roots: impatience (at the slowness of another), anger (also slowness of another),

covetousness (if we won't share our books), fornication (if while reading a passage of Scripture that suggests a woman), pride (comparing our own strictness with laxity of another). Abbot John in Chapter XIV: "For those who are anxious for the cure of their ailments [faults] a saving remedy is sure not to be wanting, and therefore remedies should be sought by the same means that the signs of each fault are discovered."

Faults and Virtues are also referred to as "hands" in the Conference of Abbot Theodore Chapter X, and those who are all virtuous are referred to as "ambidextrous."

[Judges 3:15, ἀμφοτεροδεξιον.] Normally, the right hand virtues or spiritual achievements, when with fervent spirit he overcomes "his desires or passions, when he is free from all attacks of the devil, and without any effort or difficulty rejects and cuts off all carnal sins, when he is exalted above the earth and regards all things present and earthly as light smoke or vain shadows, and scorns them as what is about to vanish away, when with an overflowing heart he not only longs most intensely for the future but actually sees it the more clearly, when he is more effectually fed on spiritual contemplations, when he sees heavenly mysteries more brightly laid open to him, when he pours forth his prayers to God with grater purity and readiness, when he is so inflamed with fervor of spirit as to pass with the utmost readiness of soul to things invisible and eternal, so as scarcely to believe that he any longer remains in the flesh." And as to faults, "He has also a left hand, when he is entangled in the toils of temptation, when he is inflamed with the heat of desire for carnal lusts, when he is set on fire by emotion towards rage and anger, when he is overcome by being puffed up with pride or vainglory, when he is oppressed by a sorrow that worketh death, when he is shaken to pieces by the contrivances and attacks of accidie, and when he has lost all spiritual warmth, and grows indifferent with a sort of lukewarmness and unreasonable grief so that not only is he forsaken by good and kindling thoughts, but actually Psalms, prayer, reading, and retirement in his cell all pall upon him, and all virtuous exercises seem by an intolerable and horrible loathing to have lost their savor. And when a monk is troubled in this way, then he knows that he is attacked 'on the left hand.'..."

A quick survey of the Eight Deadly Sins and Remedies:

Gluttony:

1. For from gluttony proceed surfeiting and drunkenness. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI) From gluttony comes immoderate joy, excess of talking, wanton folly, lewdness of thought, impurity of mind, despair, drinking without stint, unbridled drunkenness. (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

Gluttony is very dangerous, because some food must be eaten to keep a person alive. The Institutes, Book V, Chapter V: "And so on the manner of fasting a uniform rule cannot easily be observed, because everybody has not the same strength, nor is it like the rest of the virtues, acquired by steadfastness of mind alone... For it is impossible for every one to prolong his fast for a week, or to postpone taking refreshment during a two or three days' abstinence. By many people also who are worn out with sickness and especially with old age, a fast even up to sunset cannot be endured without suffering. The sickly food of moistened beans does not agree with everybody; nor does a sparing diet of fresh vegetables suit all, nor is a scanty meal of dry bread permitted to all alike. One man does not feel satisfied with two pounds, for another a meal of one pound, or six ounces, is too much; but there is one aim and object of continence in the case

of all of these: that no one may be overburdened beyond the measure of his appetite, by gluttony. For it is not only the quality, but also the quantity of food taken which dulls the keenness of the mind, and when the soul as well as the flesh is surfeited, kindles the baneful and fiery incentive to vice.”

[Some Scriptural references against gluttony: There is a warning against looking at this fault too closely, and being bogged down with the other faults. Mt. 15:15-20 Things that go into the mouth go through the body and leave, but what goes out of a man includes, St. Matthew 15:19-20 “For from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man.” St. Mark 7:21-22 “For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [Gen. 6:5] Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.”]

In the book “Iron and Silk” a number of years ago, the author Mark Salzman, while teaching an English class in Changsha, China in 1982, asked his class what they were most worried about. The first worry was food, and the second was shelter. This surprised the young author, because in his experience in the United States of America, most young men and women are more concerned with what others think of them (vain-glory), and how to get ahead (avarice). Are societies that are no longer concerned about food lavished in riches? Today in the United States of America, one can find numerous food banks, and still there are families that go hungry. -- And that is the point of placing gluttony first on the list of eight principal faults: not only the gluttony of a person who feeds themselves too much, but also the gluttony that does not see the suffering need of others. Is a gluttony of riches then pride or avarice? It may be, but one should not covet the goods of another or take pride in ones’ own goods. However, it can be seen how gluttony can become a source of covetousness and pride. (See *Iron and Silk*, Mark Salzman, Publisher: Vintage; October 12, 1987, Paperback: 224 pages ; ISBN: 0394755111 Available from Amazon.com.)

And it can be proven that gluttony leads to a weak mind: As St. John Cassian said in the Institutes, which I will repeat again, “The belly when filled with all kinds of food gives birth to seeds of wantonness, nor can the mind, when choked with the weight of food, keep the guidance and government of the thoughts. For not only is drunkenness with wine tending to intoxicate the mind, but excess of all kinds of food makes it weak and uncertain, and robs it of all its power of pure and clear contemplation.” (According to Ezekial 16:49, eating an abundance of bread led to the fornication of Sodom.), from Book V Chapter VI of the Institutes of John Cassian.

Virtue: 1. Abstinence combats gluttony. Abstinence produces: spiritual joy, decency of body, purity of soul, silence till need (of speech), comprehension of wisdom, abundance of intelligence, application to the mysteries of God. Remedies for gluttony: moderate fasting, remorse of heart, rare meals, frequent self-questioning, watching, feasting the poor, solacing all the hungry, confinement at certain hours with a specified allowance, patience in regard to everything until it be considered. (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

Fornication.

2. From fornication filthy conversation, scurrility, buffoonery and foolish talking. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI) The term “fornication” refers to “sexuality” of any kind. Because nineteenth and early twentieth century translators did not “see fit” to translate this book of the Institutes of St. John Cassian, nor the Conferences which also pertain to this fault, it is necessary to purchase another English translation as well: “Cassian on Chastity: Institute 6, Conference 12, Conference 22, by John Cassian,” translated and with an introduction by

Terrence G. Kardong, O.S.B. (Richardton, N.D.: Assumption Abbey Press, 1993). [I am very grateful for the opportunity to see these lost chapters.] This subject was one to be avoided by 19th and 20th century translators usually, and now people think the opposite, that an overdose of sexuality, sexuality to sell products, and everything else, is healthy. We have some idea, in the case of sexual predators, that sexuality may be a dangerous addiction, but in the case of any person seeking calm meditation, study, or loyalty to their goals, a distracting sexuality must also be controlled.

In the discussion of the three kinds of monks, Anchorites (hermits), Coenobites (monks in a community) and Sarabaites (married) which St. Jerome calls Remoboti; the desert fathers do not see the point of the married at all, as said in the Conference of Abbot Piamun Chapter VII. Abbot Piamun blames the Sarabaites for gathering money in the spirit of avarice as in Ananias and Sapphira [Acts chapter 5], not being disciplined, not sharing with the whole community, etc. However, married monastics were common among the Cele De of Ireland before Henry II of England conquered them, and when the system of married monks worked, the point was to practice moderation in all things, the nurturing of children and community, and contemplation while remaining married. St. Gregory Nazianzus the Theologian was the son of a Bishop, and was conceived after his father became a Bishop. On the other hand, the point of chastity is purity of mind that allows clarity of meditation and continuous ecstatic communion with God. [Even those eastern religions that are reputed to promote a certain amount of sexuality do practice discipline, duty, and all have had some monastics who practice strict chastity: for example, the east Indian renunciate Manjushri. One of the marks of a person who has achieved perfect chastity of Word, Thought, and Deed is that they are often immune to fire and dangerous animals. For example, the companion of Manjushri was a tiger. For a person who has completely given up the politics of the world and the fires of selfishness, chastity is a reasonable practice that bears fruit a thousand-fold.]

In the translation of Brother Terrence G. Kardong, O.S.B. of the chapters on fornication, he gives some of the terms and their Latin and Greek originals. From Institute VI, chapter II, St. John Cassian says that this fault has both a physical and spiritual component, and that without other studies and meditation, if only practicing continence of the body but not the spirit, wholeness cannot be achieved, because the root cause of this fault is in the selfish avoidance of meditation and spiritual studies. In chapter IV, another word for a person who is continent is encratite. A person who is chaste in spirit and body in a state of “integrity” is called agnos. These included Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel and the Apostle John. On several points, St. John Cassian says, “We don’t expect everyone to agree with our opinion on this.” In chapter XIX he says, “The following severe saying is reported of St. Basil, the Bishop of Caesarea: ‘I know not woman and yet I am not a virgin.’ By this he means that bodily purity consists not so much in forswearing women but in integrity of heart. For it maintains a perpetual incorrupt holiness of heart whether from the fear of God or from love of purity.” In the Conference with Abbot Chaermon on Chastity, chapter XI, “And so perfect chastity is distinguished from the elemental struggles of continence by its abiding tranquility....This can be nothing else than sanctity. But this will come about when the flesh ceases lusting against the spirit, but consents to its desires and virtue, and the two begin to cooperate in a stable peace and live together like brothers, as the Psalmist says (Greek numbering 132:1). They will then possess that blessedness promised by the Lord when he said: ‘If two of you on earth agree to ask for anything, it will be given by my Father who is in heaven.’ (Mt. 18:19). Therefore, whoever surpasses the level represented by Jacob ‘the supplanter’ will rise from the struggles of continence and the eradication of vices (with the femoral nerve paralyzed) to the title of ‘Israel,’ which means that his heart is no longer

vagrant.”

Chastity cannot be achieved by the will of a person, but with the help of God. In the Second Conference of Abbot Chaeremon (on Chastity), Chapter IV, he states, “And let him mark well that he has not accomplished this by his own zeal or vigilance, but by the protection of God.” Likewise, sometimes a fall is caused by demons. In the Second Conference of Abbot Theonas (on Chastity), Chapter VI, a man is constantly being prevented from receiving weekly Communion by a nocturnal event, and the elder finds the cause is demons, so the man is given Communion anyway, and the problem stops. (While some people today see everything as internal, not counting the “bodiless powers” also called angels or demons, at least most people will admit that energies extend outside of a person; and if people believe in a greater good, greater divinity, or a greater community there should also be some idea that there are still connecting energies or angels, good or bad, that can throw a person off their mark. It is also true that a person might have a higher level of anxiety about something that has been a problem or habit in the past, and sometimes it is best to just move on. A musician learning a new piece of music often can play harder passages than those mistakes they have so carefully memorized in easier pieces; the mistakes are memorized in the spinal column, and after awhile the brain has little control over them. In the case of this young man, the key is that he went to an elder for consultation on this problem, and the elder determined that it was time to move on.)

In chapter III it is emphasized that anger may be overcome by placing ones self in situations that might provoke anger while practicing humility, but in the case of fornication, it is best to avoid the idea, seek quiet solitude and seek to meditate, avoiding confrontation with it.

Abbot Chaeremon in the Conference on Chastity, chapter III, he names those things that St. Paul lists [Col 3:5] as fornication, uncleanness (inmunditia) of mind, license (libido) meaning a person doing whatever they please, bad desire (concupiscentia mala) which includes all harmful desires in general or a corrupt will [Mt. 5:28], and finally avarice which is the next principal fault, and is the coveting not only of the goods of others but also of ones’ own goods, and is the service of idols.

[One point here: some think that life’s energies such as the “libido” are healthy, but an over-abundance of such energy can cause problems. For example, an over-production of reproductive hormones can lead to some hormone-caused diseases. I personally suffer from endometriosis, which is one of these, and it causes great pain. Another hormone-caused disease is prostate cancer. I would not wish the pain of endometriosis on the worst criminal or terrorist. While many modern people consider “involuntary” reactions such as hormone cycles and night-time dreams to be only natural, these natural occurrences can lead to greater disease. Gluttony certainly leads to fornication, because fat cells anywhere in the body produce reproductive hormones; also, alcohol occupies the liver so that the liver also cannot control these hormones. Pollution such as plastics melted by microwaves and organo-chlorines also cause the production of excessive reproductive hormones; again, trying to avoid gluttony helps. Although St. John Cassian may incorrectly name the bone marrow as the source of these, it is uncanny how close to medical accuracy he is. He also suggests drinking less water, which is probably not a good idea, but one of the treatments for pain associated with endometriosis is sometimes a diuretic, which does not reduce urination but reduces body fluids which cause swelling that adds to pain and pressure on the organs. One of the modern medical treatments for both endometriosis and prostate cancer is to fool the pituitary gland into not providing any “GnRH” that causes production of reproductive hormones; but, without such hormones and with the introduction of the artificial “GnRH agonist,” a person might be facing brain problems such as dangerous depression, memory loss, blurred vision, and dyslexia. My father and I have both taken this drug

(under a brand name), and it has affected both of our memories. Using the body's libido to overcome depression, however, is itself avoiding the root cause of both libido and depression, but, an overabundant libido can be overcome and transformed into something that helps you, a desire for a greater good.]

In chapter 5, Abbot Chaeremon says, "Besides, the desire for present things cannot be repressed or removed unless we replace the harmful things we want to remove with healthy ones. The soul cannot exist in any vital way without some feelings of desire or fear, or joy or sorrow. This must be turned to good account. If we chase carnal concupiscence from our hearts, we should immediately plant spiritual desires in their place so that our soul may always be occupied with them..." He also says, "Consider, if you will, those who are eunuchs, for this renders them slothful and tepid in the pursuit of virtues... For when ardent desire is enkindled, it pushes a person to endure hunger, thirst, vigils, nakedness and all sorts of bodily labors not only patiently but freely."

In chapter 6, Abbot Chaeremon says that if we replace anger with patience, that will also help to maintain chastity. "The gentle will possess the land and they will live on it for all ages" [Ps 36:11, 24 Greek numbering, or Ps 37 Hebrew numbering, and St. Matthew 5:4, the Beatitudes.] "'The patient person is better than the strong one, and one who controls anger is better than one who captures a city.'" (Prov 16:32). Until we are able to attain this firm and lasting peace we must suffer many assaults."

In chapter 10 Abbot Chaeremon reminds us that chastity is not achieved by vigilance and discipline alone, but by love and delight in purity itself. As long as adversity remains, you do not have chastity but continence. "But whatever is conquered through profound virtue, and not mixed with a trace of anxiety, will confer the continual firmness of peace on the victor." Even the eunuchs that are mutilated have carnal heat and the effect of lust, so even they must not relax from humility etc. It is also not by our own efforts, as said in chapter 15, "'Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.'" [Ps. 126 Greek numbering]. One no longer makes purity a matter of pride, because we understand that we have not achieved it by our own care but by the mercy of the Lord. And we no longer move against others with inexorable rigor, because we know that human strength is nothing if divine strength doesn't aid it."

Some question could be made on Psalm 50 Greek numbering (Psalm 51 Hebrew numbering), "In deficiencies did my mother conceive me." When considering the case of Christ Himself, Abbot Theonas in his Conference on Chastity, Chapter XII, says, "The one who was born of a virgin is separated by a great distance from all who are brought forth by the union of the sexes. This is because we bear not the likeness, but the truth, of sin in our flesh...Therefore, whoever claims to be without sin claims equality with the Savior in a matter that is his and only his. This is a criminal and blasphemous pride. For that person is claiming to have the likeness and not the truth of sin." [In the Gospel of St. John, chapter 8:7, Jesus says to those who are about to stone the adulterous woman, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her." This passage may not have been quoted because it was a passage that was rarely read during the early Medieval period, not being included in Lectionaries or even some manuscripts. Even the Gospels were censored.]

And in chapter XIII Abbot Theonas explains that just and holy people are not immune from sin, but they may still be called just and holy, just not sinless, quoting Proverbs 24:16, "'Seven times daily the just person falls and rises.' What else is falling but sinning? Yet when it says we fall seven times a day, it still says we are just and that the fall of human frailty does not equal the fall of justice. There is a big difference between the fall of a holy person and that of a sinner." He then lists seven sins that disturb a person who is more holy, perhaps less serious than

the eight principal faults, but serious for a person who is striving for continuous contemplation: “[1.] To be surprised by a thought, which is not without sin; [2.] To offend through error of ignorance or [3.] forgetfulness or [4.] easy but useless words; [5.] To hesitate to the point of infidelity in our inward belief; [6.] To be moved by some subtle ripple of vanity or [7.] to slide some little way from the pinnacle of perfection through the necessity of nature.” In Chapter VII, in a different order, Abbot Theonas calls these, “ignorance, negligence, surprise, design, impulse, or forgetfulness in sleep.” (Abbot Theonas leaves out hesitation in this list in Chapter VII, which is emphasized elsewhere in the Second Conference of Abbot Isaac on Prayer, Chapter X, the method of continual prayer, explaining why we ask God to assist us with “haste” or “speed.”) Abbot Theonas then gives some examples of Apostles who sinned but then repented.

(The translator, Terrence G. Kardong, O.S.B., notes, “We may be shocked alright, but it will not be because he is pandering to our lower instincts. What is ‘scandalous’ about Cassian is the towering level of his standards for Christian chastity.” However, when examining other writings, for example, the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, or the writings of St. John Climacus, and all the rest, this is the common standard all the monks used at that time. One of my favorite sayings of the desert fathers is the story of the monk who is asked a favor of a woman, and after assenting, it turns out that she asks him to go to bed with him. Not wanting to offend her or go back on his word, he offers to lie with her in his “bed” on top of the coals of the fire. She runs away in terror. Rather than ignore this standard or not attempt chastity at all, these writings may be used as guidelines to show how it is possible to practice moderation, control, and tranquility.)

[Some Scripture References Adultery and Lust: St. Matthew 5:27-28 You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.]

[The ninth century Irish Penitential used the term Luxury instead of Fornication. It is possible that something was missing, because part of that book was missing. However, the mention of ‘perseverance in chastity’ combating ‘luxury’ also appears in other places, and it might mean any kind of excess.] Luxury kills thought of learning or piety or wisdom. From luxury: filthiness of words, shameless scurrility, blindness of mind, fickleness of nature, rude discourse, relapse into ruin, multiplicity of counsels, promising without performance, promiscuous concupiscence, care for man, neglect of God.

In the Conference of Abbot John, Chapter XVI, the Abbot says that in the cases of anger, impatience, and annoyance it is a help to be around others, because then we must face our anger etc. “But against the spirit of fornication the system is different, and the method an altered one. For as we must deprive the body of opportunities of lust, and contact with flesh, so we must deprive the mind of the recollection of it. For it is sufficiently dangerous for the hearts of men that are still weak and infirm even to tolerate the slightest recollection of this passion, in such a way that sometimes at the remembrance of holy women, or in reading a story in Holy Scripture a stimulus of dangerous excitement is aroused. For which reason our Elders used deliberately to omit passages of this kind when any of the juniors were present.” (He is probably referring to the Gospel of St. John in the first part of Chapter 8, the woman taken in adultery, which is omitted in almost all Greek commentaries and Lectionaries, to the point where some Syriac versions of the Gospel omit the passage. For example, St. John Chrysostom who ordained St. John Cassian, does not discuss that passage in his homilies on the Gospels.)

Virtue: 2. Perseverance in chastity combats luxury. Perseverance in chastity produces: steadfastness of counsel, quiet discourse, steadfastness as opposed to fickleness, faithful promises, keeping of troth, meditation on God, modesty of nature, confirming of faith, hatred of this world, love of the world to come. Remedies against fleshly lust: subduing of gluttony,

moderate meals, moderation in drink, avoidance of drunkenness, hatred of conviviality, mastering of nature, heedfulness in solitude, cheerfulness in company, attendance on elders, avoidance of young folk, a fixed measure of labor or reading or prayer, hatred of the rabble with unclean words, a stable mind with purity of conversation, desire of rewards so as to win them, contemplation of penalties so as to avoid them. (From a ninth century Irish penitential. Notice that “lust” or “fornication” is considered “luxury” by the Irish penitential. In a Biblical quote, luxury is a result of gluttony, Eph. 5:18, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury; but be ye filled with the holy Spirit...”) See a description of Chastity in the Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI.

3. From covetousness, lying, deceit, theft, perjury, the desire of filthy lucre, false witness, violence, inhumanity, and greed. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI)

3. Avarice gives up nothing that is cast into it. “From this root grows all the vices, and on its account are most souls of the human race brought to Hell. For its sake the son kills his father and mother: for its sake men suffer red martyrdom and white martyrdom and green martyrdom, even slaying and burning and drowning. For its sake men go to Hell with its pains, and desert the kingdom of Heaven with its rewards.” From avarice: desire without measure, corruption with despair, raidings without ceasing, robbing without mercy, falsehood without control, perjury without restraint, derision of every good thing, pleasure in every evil thing, blindness of mind, denying of nature, oppression of the wretched, incitement of the strong, covetousness of earthly things, deceit concerning the soul. (From a ninth century Irish penitential.) [Notice that most relationships suffer from financial arguments? Covetousness is a truly dangerous fault.]

St. John Cassian, in the Institutes, Book VII, Chapter I, describes covetousness or the love of money as a “foreign warfare,” because it is outside of our nature and comes from a “corrupt and sluggish mind.” Even though it is outside of us, he quotes I Tim 6:10 that money is “a root of all evils.” Instead of going outside of ourselves towards God or charity towards other, money takes us outside of ourselves to become more selfish. It also develops from envy, Chapter IV: “the useless Cains of this world.” And from “free choice of a corrupt and evil will.” (Chapter V.) In Chapters VII through X St. John Cassian illustrates a monk who finds all sorts of reasons, even within a monastery where all his needs would be cared for, that he might covet a little store of ready cash. “For with the increase of wealth the mania of covetousness increases.” “With such strides then in a downward direction he goes from bad to worse, and at last cares not to retain I will not say the virtue but even the shadow of humility, charity, and obedience; and is displeased with everything, and murmurs and groans over every work; and now having cast off all reverence, like a bad-tempered horse, dashes off headlong and unbridled; and discontented with his daily food and usual clothing, announces that he will not put up with it any longer. He declares that God is not only in that place, and that his salvation is not confined to that place, where, if he does not take himself off pretty quickly from it, he deeply laments that he will soon die.” And in this way, money causes a greater and greater panic. Chapter XXIV, “For the madness of this avarice is not satisfied with any amount of riches.”

Chapter XIV: “And so this disease and unhealthy state is threefold... One feature is this, of which we described the taint above, which by deceiving wretched folk persuades them to hoard though they never had anything of their own when they lived in the world. Another, which forces men afterwards to resume and once more desire those things which in the early days of their renunciation of the world they gave up. A third, which springing from a faulty and hurtful beginning and making a bad start, does not suffer those whom it has once infected with this lukewarmness of mind to strip themselves of all their worldly goods, through fear of poverty and

want of faith; and those who keep back money and property which they certainly ought to have renounced and forsaken, it never allows to arrive at the perfection of the gospel.” (In handling money, these sought to possess it, return to it, and retain it.) Then St. John Cassian gives examples of these three states of Gehazi (Chapter 5 of IV Kings, or in Bibles that are arranged with books of Samuel and Kings, Chapter 5 of II Kings), Judas Iscariot (in all four Gospels, for example, Mt 26:14-16, 26:47-50, and 27:3-10), and Ananias and Saphira (Book of Acts chapter 5). [Judas Iscariot is called, in the Byzantine Rite, the “lover of money.”] In Chapter XXV St. John Cassian reminds us that Judas Iscariot, and Ananias and Saphira died because of this sin. Gehazi was given fatal leprosy and banished. It is no coincidence that St. Paul says, “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23); wages referring to money. (See the fault of Dejection: a deadly depression can also be caused by mentally dwelling on the state of finances. Gambling drains resources. Robbery also may lead to murder. In countries where a barter system has been replaced by loans and debt, people are forced to grow non-food crops while their families starve.)

In Chapter XV, St. James 1:8 is quoted, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”... “No man can serve God and Mammon.” [Mt 6:24] And “No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.” [Lk 9:62]. In Chapter XXVII he reminds the monks that they have been instructed to “Go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me.” [Mt. 19:21] Chapter XXX, “Above all, considering the state of our weak and shifty nature, let us beware lest the day of the Lord come upon us as a thief in the night and find our conscience defiled even by a single penny...” (from Mt. 24:42-44).

Virtue: 3.. Liberality [generosity] with charity combats avarice. Liberality with charity produces: mercy with forgiveness, rectitude with truthfulness, bounty with gentleness, without pride, without hatred, without malice; compassion with eagerness, without treachery, without deceit, without cunning; benevolence without loquacity, without falsehood, without perjury, without insolence. Remedies for avarice: service of Christ's strangers, feasts for the poor, laboring for one's food, a mind set on poverty, trust in a blessing, prevision of punishment, hope of reward, expectation of judgment in presence of the Creator on the Day of Judgment. (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

[Some Scripture References Against covetousness (Avarice): St. Matthew 6:19-21 Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.]

4. From anger, murders, clamor and indignation. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI)
Virtue: patience (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI)

5. Anger pierces the soul and causes its death. From anger: man-slaying without humanity, persecution of one's neighbors without mercy, conceit of mind without abasement, haughty speech without subordination, contentiousness without end, accusations without compassion, reproaches without reflection, contumely without restraint. (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

[Some Scripture References Against anger: St. Matthew 5:39 But I say to you not to resist evil: but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other. (Although it is easy to fight back, the pain inside caused by anger will not go away. It is best to look at faults within and find a way to cure them, than to fight back in a futile and escalating battle.)]

In the Conference of Abbot John, Chapter XIV, “When then anyone discovers by those

signs which we described above, that he is attacked by outbreaks of impatience or anger, he should always practice himself in the opposite and contrary things, and by setting before himself all sorts of injuries and wrongs, as if offered to him by somebody else, accustom his mind to submit with perfect humility to everything that wickedness can bring upon him; and by often representing to himself all kinds of rough and intolerable things, continually consider with all sorrow of heart with what gentleness he ought to meet them. And, by thus looking at the sufferings of all the saints, or indeed at those of the Lord Himself, he will admit that the various reproaches as well as punishments are less than he deserves, and prepare himself to endure all kinds of griefs... How is it that even a gentle breeze has shaken that house of yours which you fancied was built so strongly on the solid rock?... One then who carefully considers these and other injuries of the same kind, will readily endure and disregard not only all kinds of losses, but also whatever wrongs and punishments can be inflicted by the cruellest of men, as he will hold that there is nothing more damaging than anger, nor more valuable than peace of mind and unbroken purity of heart, for the sake of which we should think nothing of the advantages not merely of carnal matters but also of those things which appear to be spiritual, if they cannot be gained or done without some disturbance of this tranquility." Conference of Abbot Theodore, Chapter X, "Seize the armor of patience to practice himself in virtue."

Virtue: 4. Meekness and gentleness combats anger. Meekness and gentleness produce: soundness of heart, shunning of contention, gentle speech, repression of conceit, docility of nature, silence amid talkativeness, patience amid sufferings, hatred of reviling, zeal without chiding, benevolence without guile, munificence without malice. The remedy against anger, and all that springs from it is penance. (For serious crimes and offenses, this penance may take many years.) (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

5. From dejection, rancor, cowardice, bitterness, despair. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI)

5. Despair and lack of faith is not "The sadness which causes the soul's joy in Heaven... which comes of lamenting over sins, with faith in forgiveness, and that which comes of pitying every strong man and every miserable man and every neighbor of ours who is in the power of sin and vice so that he falls into vileness and misery, without faith, without penitence. For he who deplores his own sins and his neighbor's sins shall be joyful with God in Heaven." (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

But of worldly sadness there are three forms. The first is sadness and grief at parting with carnal friends for loss of their human affection, and for love and attachment to them; or because of parting with one's guilt and sins and fleshly lusts. Again, the second form of worldly sadness is the grief and despair that arise from every desire that a man desires, because he cannot satisfy it, save only the will of God. The third form of worldly sadness again is the grief and despair which arise from every good thing a man gets, through fear of its being taken away from him, and of its perishing, and through fear of parting with it, even later on, so that he is never free from grief and sadness while he lives, and he goes thereafter to find eternal grief, to everlasting torment without end." From worldly sadness: bitterness with malice, lovelessness with insolence, miserliness with gain-getting, much talking after silence, idle volatility without thrift, unsteadiness of nature, restlessness of body, wandering of mind towards everything base, readiness to engage in everything evil, sluggishness and slackness towards everything good, despair along with inattention to the commands of God, joy and vigor in doing the works of the Devil." (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

First Conference of Abbot Isaac, Chapter XXXII, a warning is given that despair,

hesitation, and lack of confidence can impede prayer. Book IX of the Institutes, Chapter I, "... we have to resist the pangs of gnawing dejection: for it this, through separate attacks made at random, and by haphazard and casual changes, has secured an opportunity of gaining possession of our mind, it keeps us back at all times from all insight in divine contemplation, and utterly ruins and depresses the mind that has fallen away from its complete state of purity. It does not allow it to say its prayers with its usual gladness of heart, nor permit it to rely on the comfort of reading the sacred writings, nor suffer it to be quiet and gentle with the brethren; it makes it impatient and rough in all the duties of work and devotion: and, as all wholesome counsel is lost, and steadfastness of heart destroyed, it makes the feelings almost mad and drunk, and crushes and overwhelms them with penal despair." In Chapter II he quotes Proverbs 25:20, "...as the moth injures the garment, and the worm the wood, so dejection the heart of man." Chapter IV, "Sometimes it is found to result from the fault of previous anger, or to spring from the desire of some gain which has not been realized, when a man has found that he has failed in his hope of securing those things which he had planned. But sometimes without any apparent reason for our being driven to fall into this misfortune, we are by the instigation of our crafty enemy suddenly depressed with so great a gloom that we cannot receive with ordinary civility the visits of those who are near and dear to us; and whatever subject of conversation is started by them, we regard it as ill-timed and out of place; and we can give them no civil answer, as the gall of bitterness is in possession of every corner of our heart." Chapter VI, "For no one is ever driven to sin by being provoked through another's fault, unless he has the fuel of evil stored up in his own heart. Nor should we imagine that a man has been deceived suddenly..."

In Chapter VII St. John Cassian recommends that for this fault, because it is in ourselves and not others, that we should not give up our interactions with our brethren, but instead try to be patient with others and pacify any ill will.

Then, in Chapters IX he discusses the danger of suicide. In Chapter X "And so we must see that dejection is only useful to us in one case, when we yield to it either in penitence for sin, or through being inflamed with the desire of perfection, or the contemplation of future blessedness... 'The sorrow which is according to God worketh repentance steadfast unto salvation: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.'" (II Cor 7:10). Chapter XI, "But that dejection and sorrow which worketh repentance steadfast unto salvation is obedient, civil, humble, kindly, gentle, and patient, as it springs from a love of God, and unweariedly extends itself from desire of perfection to every bodily grief and sorrow of spirit; and somehow or other rejoicing and feeding on hope of its own profit preserves all the gentleness of courtesy and forbearance, as it has in itself all the fruits of the Holy Spirit...: 'love, joy, peace, forbearance, goodness, benignity, faith, mildness, modesty'" (Gal. 5:22-23 See these below under virtues.) "But the other is rough, impatient, hard, full of rancor and useless grief and penal despair, and breaks down the man on whom it has fastened, and hinders him from energy and wholesome sorrow, as it is unreasonable, and not only hampers the efficacy of his prayers, but actually destroys all those fruits of the Spirit of which we spoke, which that other sorrow knows how to produce." [For this reason, a person suffering from depression should get help from both counseling and medicine immediately, because this fault can block God's help. Although, one man did cry, "...Lord: help my unbelief." and was helped. St. Mark 9:23 This is because despair often leads to blasphemy, and turns away from help. If a person had a terminal illness, no expense would be spared to try to save them, but many people do not realize how dangerous depression is: depression can be fatal.]

Chapter XII, "...all sorrow and dejection must equally be resisted, as belonging to this world, and being that which 'worketh death,' and must be entirely expelled from our hearts..." In

Chapter XIII St. John Cassian suggests spiritual meditation, hope of the future, contemplation of promised blessedness. "...if, ever joyful with an insight into things eternal and future, and continuing immovable, we are not depressed by present accidents, or over-elated by prosperity, but look on each condition as uncertain and likely soon to pass away."

Virtue: godly sorrow full of joy (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI) (From a ninth century Irish penitential:) 5. The remedies against despair are:

- a. Spiritual joy with serenity of heart and mind against worldly sadness;
- b. Fervency of prayer, with fasting and watching, against sluggishness and torpor;
- c. Liberality with openness of mind toward God against inattention;
- d. A fixed measure of labor and prayer against idle volatility;
- e. Faith with works, joy with gentleness, against despair and malice of mind.

(Notice that despair is combined with accidie-sloth by the ninth century.)

6. From accidie, laziness, sleepiness, rudeness, restlessness, wandering about, instability both of mind and body, chattering, inquisitiveness. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI)

Virtue: courage (which could also be interpreted hope) (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI) [Note: the Ninth Century Penitential did not list this sin at all.]

Accidie

Dejection and Accidie seem to be the same problem, but the sloth of the heart of Accidie often causes what is called today an "attention deficit disorder" or what we might call a mania; that is, doing anything and everything but what we should be doing, according to the description by Abbot Serapion. So, what we might call "Bi-Polar" today, would be called Dejection and Accidie in previous times. In the ninth century Irish Penitential, Sloth (or Accidie) is considered a result of all the others, and therefore they list seven deadly sins. But, they did not realize the destructive nature of Accidie by itself, which often causes a person to leave even their favorite pursuits with a kind of boredom or coldness, and can also result in being out of touch with others, or not valuing others. Both Dejection and Accidie seem to be mental health problems, and were recognized as such. Conference with Abbot Serapion, chapter IX, "Dejection and accidie generally arise without any external provocation, like those others of which we have been speaking: for we are well aware that they often harass solitaries, and those who have settled themselves in the desert without any contact with other men, and this in the most distressing way. And the truth of this any one who has lived in the desert and made trial of the conflicts of the inner man, can easily prove by experience."

From Book X chapters I and II, of the Institutes, Accidie is "weariness or distress of heart. This is akin to dejection, and is especially trying to solitaries, and a dangerous and frequent foe to dwellers in the desert; and especially disturbing to a monk about the sixth hour [noon], like some fever which seizes him at stated times, bringing the burning heat of its attacks on the sick man at usual and regular hours. Lastly, there are some of the elders who declare that this is the 'midday demon' spoken of in the ninetieth Psalm... it produces dislike of the place, disgust with the cell, and disdain and contempt of the brethren who dwell with him or at a little distance, as if they were careless or unspiritual. It also makes a man lazy and sluggish about all manner of work which has to be done within the enclosure of his dormitory. It does not suffer him to stay in his cell, or to take any pains about reading, and he often groans because he can do no good while he stays there, and complains and sighs because he can bear no spiritual fruit so long as he is joined to that society; and he complains that he is cut off from spiritual gain, and is of no use in the place, as if he were one who, though he could govern others and be useful to a great number of people, yet was edifying none, nor profiting any one by his teaching and doctrine..." The

description is both educational and entertaining, and shows how the monk is enticed to leave his cell, and stop the contemplation of God. The mention of this fault has been neglected in modern lists of “deadly sins.”

Virtue: 6. Courage is the opposite of Accidie, from Chapter XXIII of the Conference of Abbot Serapion.

In Book X of the Institutes, St. John Cassian quotes St. Paul concerning the fault and remedies for accidie: [I Thess. 4:9-13], “...And that you use your endeavor to be quiet, and that you do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you: and that you walk honestly towards them that are without; and that you want nothing of any man’s...” John Cassian explains: “‘And that you take pains to be quiet;’ i.e., that you stop in your cells, and be not disturbed by rumors, which generally spring from the wishes and gossip of idle persons, and so yourselves disturb others. And, ‘to do your own business,’ you should not want to inquire curiously of the world’s actions, or, examining the lives of others, want to spend your strength, not on bettering yourselves and aiming at virtue, but on depreciating your brethren. ‘And work with your own hands, as we charged you;’ to secure that which he had warned them above not to do; i.e., that they should not be restless and anxious about other people’s affairs, nor walk dishonestly towards those without, nor covet another man’s goods, he now adds and says, ‘and work with your own hands, as we charged you.’ For he has clearly shown that leisure is the reason why those things were done which he blamed above. For no one can be restless or anxious about other people’s affairs, but one who is not satisfied to apply himself to the work of his own hands. He adds also a fourth evil, which springs also from this leisure, i.e., that they should not walk dishonestly: when he says: ‘And that ye walk honestly towards those without.’ He cannot possibly walk honestly, even among those who are men of this world, who is not content to cling to the seclusion of his cell and the work of his own hands; but he is sure to be dishonest, while he seeks his needful food, and to take pains to flatter, to follow up news and gossip, to seek for opportunities for chattering and stories by means of which he may gain a footing and obtain an entrance into the houses of others...” St. John Cassian emphasizes that this is considered a very grave fault by St. Paul [2 Thess. 3:6], “And we charge you... that you withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly, and not according to the tradition which they have received of us.”

Seen in the Irish Penitential not as a deadly sin, but as a result of each of the sins. Do we seek to rest, or to work out our problems? St. Luke 6:9 Then Jesus said to them: I ask you, if it be lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy? St. John 5:17 My Father worketh until now; and I work. Psalm 121 Hebrew, or Psalm 120 Greek, verse 4-5, “Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.”] Chapter V of the First Conference of Abbot Isaac, the Abbot warns against spiritual drunkenness.

7. From vainglory, contention, heresies, boasting and confidence in novelties. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI)

7. Vain glory, “whatever we do for the sake of pomp or praise from men.” From vain glory: disobedience with contumacy, pride with arrogance, readiness for strife, a guise of simulation, upholding of heresy unlawfully, boasting of one's good deeds, pompousness of speech, disguising of appearance, exaltation of the body, debasing of the soul. (From a ninth century Irish penitential, which did not divide vain glory from pride. Note that earlier Abbot Serapion and John Cassian divided vain glory and pride, because of the sins of Adam: gluttony, vain glory, and pride and the same temptations of the devil of Christ.)

Vainglory and Pride are two different faults, although they seem to have similar symptoms. Vainglory is seeking a good opinion of ones' self from ones' self or from others, while pride is thinking that ones' self is the center and author of the universe. In the Conference of John Cassian with Abbot Serapion, Chapter VI, Abbot Serapion explains why three particular faults were used as a temptation for both Adam and Christ: "For it was right that He who was in possession of the perfect image and likeness of God should be Himself tempted through those passions, through which Adam also was tempted while he still retained the image of God unbroken, that is, through gluttony, vainglory, pride; and not through those in which he was by his own fault entangled and involved after the transgression of the commandment, when the image and likeness of God was marred. For it was gluttony through which he took the fruit of the forbidden tree, vainglory through which it was said "Your eyes shall be opened," and pride through which it was said "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." With these three sins then we read that the Lord our Saviour was also tempted; with gluttony when the devil said to Him: 'Command these stones that they be made bread;' with vainglory: 'If Thou art the Son of God cast Thyself down:' with pride, when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said; 'All this will I give to Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me' in order that He might by His example teach us how we ought to vanquish the tempter when we are attacked on the same lines of temptation as He was..." "...Nor could He who had vanquished gluttony be tempted by fornication, which springs from superfluity and gluttony as its root, with which even the first Adam would not have been destroyed unless before its birth he had been deceived by the wiles of the devil and fallen a victim to passion." "Yet according to Luke, who places last that temptation in which he uses the words 'If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down,' we can understand this of the feeling of pride, so that the earlier one, which Matthew places third, in which, as Luke the evangelist says, the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and promised them to Him, may be taken of the feeling of covetousness, because after His victory over gluttony, he did not venture to tempt Him to fornication, but passed on to covetousness, which he knew to be the root of all evils, and when again vanquished in this, he did not dare attack Him with any of those sins which follow, which, as he new full well, spring from this as a root and source; and so he passed on to the last passion: that is, pride, by which he knew that those who are perfect and have overcome all other sins, can be affected, and owing to which he remembered that he himself in his character of Lucifer, and many others too, had fallen from their heavenly estate, without temptation from any of the preceding passions..." "For to the one he said, 'Your eyes shall be opened;' to the other 'he showed all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.' In the one case he said 'Ye shall be as gods;' in the other, 'If Thou art the Son of God.'"

In Chapter VII, Abbot Serapion reminds John Cassian how vainglory and pride "can be consummated even with the slightest assistance from the body. For in what way do those passions need any action of the flesh, which bring ample destruction on the soul they take captive simply by its assent and wish to gain praise and glory from men? Or what act on the part of the body was there in that pride of old in the case of the above mentioned Lucifer; as he only conceived it in his heart and mind, as the prophet tells us: [Is 14:13-14] 'Who saidst in thine heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will set my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High.'..."

Conference of Abbot Abraham, Chapter XVI, "...you must recognize that the rational part of your mind and soul is corrupt, that part namely from which the faults of presumption and vainglory for the most part spring. Further this first member, so to speak, of your soul must be healed by the judgment of a right discretion and the virtue of humility, as when it is injured,

while you fancy that you can not only still scale the heights of perfection but actually teach others, and hold that you are capable and sufficient to instruct others, through the pride of vainglory you are carried away by these vain rovings, which your confession discloses. And these you will then be able to get rid of without difficulty, if you are established as I said in the humility of true discretion and learn with sorrow of heart how hard and difficult a thing it is for each of us to save his soul, and admit with the inmost feelings of your heart that you are not only far removed from that pride of teaching, but that you are actually still in need of the help of a teacher.”

Virtues: 7. The remedies against vain glory are: obedience without contumacy, humility with quietness, shunning of strife, smoothness without simulation, learning from the venerable, steadfastness of nature, a lowly mind, respect for God. (From a ninth century Irish penitential. Notice that vain glory and pride are combined at this time.)

8. From pride, contempt, envy, disobedience, blasphemy, murmuring, backbiting. (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI) (From a ninth century Irish penitential, which added Envy as a Principal Fault. Earlier, envy was one of the sins under Pride. Although describing Vain-glory, the later writers dropped most of the parts of Pride as a Fault.: 4. Envy caused Cain to kill Abel son of Adam, and Christ to be killed. "Anyone in whom is the nature of envy and malice, there is no dwelling for God in his heart, and so there will be no dwelling for him with God in Heaven." From envy: hate of one's neighbor, murmuring at every good thing, thanksgiving for every evil thing, backbiting of friends, chagrin at their winning honor, joy over their loss of esteem.)

There is a great danger in judgmental attitude, although it allows for discernment. Sometimes judgmental attitude leads to its opposite: adherence to a false prophet that appears to be disciplined, but who allows other prideful faults to enter in. For example, St. Vincent of Lerins says, in *The Commonitory for the Antiquity and Universality of the Catholic Faith against the Profane Novelities of all Heresies*, Chapter XVIII on Tertullian, “For as Origen holds by far the first place among the Greeks, so does Tertullian among the Latins. For who more learned than he, who more versed in knowledge whether divine or human? With marvellous capacity of mind he comprehended all philosophy, and had a knowledge of all schools of philosophers, and of the founders and upholders of schools, and was acquainted with all their rules and observances, and with their various histories and studies. Was not his genius of such unrivalled strength and vehemence that there was scarcely any obstacle which he proposed to himself to overcome, that he did not penetrate by acuteness, or crush by weight? As to his style who can sufficiently set forth its praise? It was knit together with so much cogency of argument that it compelled assent, even where it failed to persuade. Every word almost was a sentence; every sentence a victory... Yet this man also, notwithstanding all that I have mentioned, this Tertullian, I say, too little tenacious of Catholic doctrine, that is, of the universal and ancient faith, more eloquent by far than faithful, changed his belief, and justified what the blessed Confessor, Hilary [of Poitiers], writes of him, namely, that ‘by his subsequent error he detracted from the authority of his approved writings.’ He also was a great trial in the Church. But of Tertullian I am unwilling to say more. This only I will add, that, contrary to the injunction of Moses, by asserting the novel furies of Montanus which arose in the Church, and those mad dreams of new doctrine dreamed by mad women, to be true prophecies, he deservedly made both himself and his writings obnoxious to the words, ‘If there arise a prophet in the midst of thee,’... ‘thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet.’ For why? ‘Because the Lord your God doth make trial of you, whether you love Him or not.’”

[The editor of this edition, The Rev. C. A. Heurtley, D.D., says, “Montanus with his two

prophetesses, professed that he was intrusted with a new dispensation, - a dispensation in advance of the Gospel, as the Gospel was in advance of the Law. His system was a protest against the laxity which had grown up in the Church, as has repeatedly been the case after revivals of religious fervor, verifying Tertullian's apophthegm, 'Christiani fiunt, non nascuntur' (men become Christians, they are not born such). Its characteristics were extreme ascetism, rigorous fasting, the exaltation of celibacy, the absolute prohibition of second marriage, the expectation of our Lord's second advent as near at hand, the disparagement of the clergy in comparison with its own Paraclete-inspired teachers. It had its rise in Phrygia, and from thence spread throughout Asia Minor, thence it found its way to Southern Gaul, to Rome, to North Western Africa, in which last for a time it had many followers." i.e., Augustine also was a Montanist a bit later than Tertullian. Some churches are called "ultra-montane" who are fanatically strict in their lesser laws, while not holding to the doctrines of the Councils concerning the nature of God, i.e., they have left contemplation of God for lesser agendas.]

Virtue: humility (Conference of Abbot Serapion, chapter XVI) Where several of the Abbots do not try to match lesser virtues against faults, several of them list humility against pride, so humility is the greatest of the lesser virtues; the greatest virtue being contemplation of God. (From a ninth century Irish penitential: 4. Kindliness of heart without malice combats envy. Kindliness of heart without malice produces: brotherly love, helpfulness to our neighbor, speaking well of everyone, hatred of reviling, rejection of murmuring, magnifying of everything good, rebuking of everything evil, kindly words, a mind compassionate to all men, save for aught that involves sin. The remedies for envy are: penance on bread and water for as long a time as there had been hatred in his heart. If evil has resulted from his envy, let him replace as much as was lost by his fault, if he have the wherewithal: if not, let him ask pardon tearfully and penitently... If it becomes a fixed habit with him, so that he does not remember to restrain himself, he is to be expelled from the church to a place of penance until he shall have given up that vice... Anyone who loves to hear [envious gossip], let him do penance.)

There are, however, four cases in which it is right to find fault with the evil that is in a man who will not accept his cure by means of entreaty and kindness: either to prevent someone else from abetting him in this evil; or to correct the evil itself; or to confirm the good; for out of compassion for him who does the evil. But anyone who does not do it for one of these four reasons is a fault-finder, and does penance four days, or recites the hundred and fifty psalms for it. (From a ninth century Irish penitential.)

Be careful: replacing faults with virtues is not simple, and may be another delusion.

A list was given by St. John Cassian in his Institutes, Book V chapter IV, of the virtues of the elders from Antony the Great. "knowledge, discretion, dignity of patience, humility, continence, grace of simplicity, magnanimity, pity, vigils, silence, earnestness of work."... "For it is said of Him, "Who was made of God to you wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." [I Cor 1:30] While then in one there is found wisdom, in another righteousness, in another sanctification, in another kindness, in another chastity, in another humility, in another patience, Christ is at the present time divided, member by member, among all of the saints..." Other lists of virtues may be found, such as the list of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the practice of all virtues are encouraged, but with the understanding that all of them are less than the virtues within the contemplation of divinity.

It is not so simple to stop a fault with its opposing virtue; sometimes these must be examined together with other faults, reasons for faults examined, a step-by-step plan made, because often faults are habits of the mind, holding people in "chains of sin" that need many

kinds of help to overcome. St. John Cassian lists the faults more than the virtues. Abbot Theonas does list virtues, but with a warning that these are much less than the virtue of contemplation of divinity. Chapter II in the Third Conference of Abbot Theonas, “For chastity is good, continence is praise-worthy, prudence is to be admired, kindness is liberal, sobriety is careful, temperance is modest, pity is kind, justice is holy: all of which we cannot doubt existed fully and in perfection in the Apostle Paul and his companions, so that they taught religion by the lesson of their virtues rather than their words. ...And so all those virtues which we say that he possessed, though they are like most splendid and precious gems, yet when they are compared with that most beautiful and unique pearl which the merchant in the gospel sought and wanted to acquire by selling all that he possessed [Mt. 13:46], so does their value seem poor and trifling, so that if they are without hesitation got rid of, the possession of one good thing alone will enrich the man who sells countless good things.” And chapter III, “...Contemplation then, i.e., meditation on God, is the one thing, the value of which all the merits of our righteous acts, all our aims at virtue, come short of..”

There is No Person who is Righteous, and therefore one-pointed contemplation is the only cure for sin.

Some people accused John Cassian of “Semi-Pelagianism,” or trying to get to heaven through works, but he always said that help is needed. A person who thinks that they have the power, by themselves, without help, to just replace a fault with a virtue, is denying a great deal of guidance that is needed in this effort. Human virtues are not strong enough to combat some of the principal faults, but the virtues of a higher power are strong enough, and therefore instead of simply replacing faults with virtues, the monks preferred to learn to “pray without ceasing,” described in the Second Conference of Abbot Isaac Chapter X on continual prayer. (See the Second Conference of Abbot Chaeremon on Chastity, Chapter IV, “...rejoice that it did not come about through its own effort nor vigilance. But let us see that it was achieved by the protection of the Lord.” Institute VI, chapter V: “...placing our confidence not in our own forces but on the help of God. Human effort will never be able to win through here. For the soul will be attacked by this vice as long as it does not recognize that it is in a war beyond its powers and that it cannot obtain victory by its own effort unless it is shored up by the help and protection of the Lord.”)

The path is more difficult to find than a narrow path, because often the stepping-stones do not clearly show the way the stones of the Jordan did when Joshua crossed [Joshua chapters 1 through 4]. “Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in many waters: and thy footsteps shall not be known.” [Psalm 76 (Greek numbering), verse 20. In the Luxeiu lectionary of St. Columbanus, in the Third Sunday after Pentecost, one runs into the teachings about the narrow path: Romans 3:21-4:3 and St. Matthew 7:7-11.] In chapter IX of the Third Conference of Abbot Theonas he compares the narrow path to a “rope dancer” ‘funambuli’ i.e., a tightrope-walker. He also mentions “cords of his sins,” quoting Proverbs 5:22, which is also quoted in the Lorrha-Stowe Missal as the “chains of sins.”

In chapter V of the Third Conference of Abbot Theonas, he quotes Ecclesiastes 7:21, “...‘that there is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not,’ i.e., no one ever could or ever will be found on this earth so holy, so diligent, so earnest as to be able continually to cling to that true and unique good, and not day after day to feel that he is drawn aside from it and fails. But still though he maintains that he cannot be free from wrong doing, yet nonetheless we must not deny that he is righteous.” (See Abbot Theonas in his Second Conference on Chastity, Chapter XIII.) In Genesis 18:32, the presence of ten righteous men in a city such as Sodom or Gomorrah could save it: “I beseech thee, saith he, be not angry, Lord, if I

speak yet once more: What if ten should be found there? And he said: I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.” Chapter IV of the Third Conference of Abbot Theonas, he quotes Isaiah 64:6 from the original Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, “All your righteousness is considered like a menstruous cloth.” “...So then the merits of all the virtues, which I enumerated above, though in themselves they are good and precious, yet become dim in comparison of the brightness of contemplation. For they greatly hinder and retard the saints who are taken up with earthly aims even at good works, from the contemplation of that sublime good.” (And Chapters XVII and XVIII of the Third Conference of Abbot Theonas, on “how all the saints have confessed with truth that they were unclean and sinful,” and “that even good and holy men are not without sin.”) “What, I ask, could be clearer than this saying, in which the prophet includes not one only but all our righteousnesses and, looking round on all things that are considered unclean and disgusting, because he could find nothing in the life of men fouler or more unclean, chose to compare them to filthy rags...” The same passage from Isaiah 64:6 is quoted by St. Ambrose of Milan, and that prayer is used in the Lorrha-Stowe Missal (an Irish Missal). In Isaiah 64:7, “There is none that calleth upon thy name: that riseth up, and taketh hold of thee: thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast crushed us in the hand of our iniquity.”

Abbot Theonas also quotes, ““forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors’ If then this is offered as a true prayer and by saints, as we ought without the shadow of a doubt to believe, who can be found so obstinate and impudent, so puffed up with the pride of the devils own rage, as to maintain that he is without sin...” Abbot Theonas gives many more quotes on the same subject, although he does add that we should not feel too sinful to approach God in prayer or Communion, because it is forgiveness and healing which we seek then, and which is freely offered to us (in Chapter XXI).

Abbot Abraham in Chapter VI of his Conference uses the image of an arch which must be built by using a compass, not an uneven guess work that could end up distorting and falling. The center point of this compass, according to Abbot Abraham, is God. No other virtue is nearly good enough, and will cause an uneven arch. “Wherefore a monk’s whole attention should thus be fixed on one point, and the rise and circle of all his thoughts be vigorously restricted to it: that is, to the recollection of God, as when a man, who is anxious to raise on high a vault of a round arch, must constantly draw a line round from its exact center, and in accordance with the sure standard it gives discover by the laws of building all the evenness and roundness required. But if anyone tries to finish it without ascertaining its center - though with the utmost confidence in his art and ability, it is impossible for him to keep the circumference even, without any error, or to find out simply by looking at it how much he has taken off by his mistake from the beauty of real roundness, unless he always has recourse to that test of truth and by its decision corrects the inner and outer edge of his work, and so finishes the large and lofty pile to the exact point. So also our mind, unless by working round the love of the Lord alone as an immovably fixed center, through all the circumstances of our works and contrivances, it either fits or rejects the character of all our thoughts by the excellent compasses, if I may so say, of love, will never by excellent skill build up the structure...”

Abbot Abraham also uses a unique list of faults that was picked up by later writers, in three major groups of faults caused by reason (logixon), faults caused by irascibility (thumixon), and faults caused by desire (epithumytixon). Under those caused by reason he lists: vainglory, conceit, envy, pride, presumption, strife, heresy. Under those caused by irascibility he lists: rage, impatience, sulkiness, accidie, pusillanimity, cruelty. Under those caused by desire he lists: gluttony, fornication, covetousness, avarice, noxious and earthly desires. His order is closer to later writers, although he lists many more than seven. Also, although he lists humility as a

remedy for pride, he does not list other remedies or try to replace contemplation with lesser virtues.

Therefore, it was not until a later era when some lesser virtues were considered to be able to offset the faults, as though through personal striving the faults could be offset. It is interesting to note that those who rejected St. John Cassian the most and called him a “Semi-Pelagian” for trying to work towards heaven, even though he never said that, were the same people who put together simple lists of faults and lesser virtues which a person by their own work and little help could somehow accomplish. But St. John Cassian and the Abbots he quotes do not do this. It is also interesting that those who were from places and times that opposed the Byzantine view of the Holy Spirit (the “Filioque” controversy) were the most likely to place a list of virtues next to the list of faults, and say that a person could simply oppose a fault with a virtue, rather than relying on the Holy Spirit for help. To see sin as only reflective of the will, as in the case of Augustine, is to say that by the will alone it might be possible to oppose the sins, and that is certainly Pelagianism. [Examples of those who opposed the sins with virtues in their writings: Martin of Braga (570–79) “Formula vitae honestae,” Alcuin who wrote many Carolingian reforms including a Lectionary that put all the Psalms out of order (around 800) “Liber de virtutibus et vitiis.” emphasizing ethica (virtue leading to correct living): Conrad of Hirsau (c. 1070–c. 1150) “Liber de fructu carnis et spiritus,” Alan of Lille “(c. 1170–80) De virtutibus et de vitiis et de donis spiritus sancti,” Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris (early 13th cent.) on its facade, has virtues and sins in statue images.] Peter Abelard (1079-1142) looked at intention and conscience, which is closer to the writings of St. John Cassian. Any writer that listed virtues became popular in the late Medieval period, but previously the desert fathers hated the “virtues” of Aristotle and his followers, because Aristotle’s writings were used to try to deny the power and divinity of God (again, Arianism or Pelagianism, or, we might say atheism or egotism). In the Second Conference of Abbot Nestoros, Chapter III, concerning the attitude towards Aristotle and others like him who tried to solve problems with lesser virtues: “As also we remember that a dead man was raised to life by Abbot Macarius who was the first to find a home in the desert of Scete. For when a certain heretic who followed the error of Eunomius was trying by dialectic subtlety to destroy the simplicity of the Catholic faith, and had already deceived a large number of men, the blessed Macarius was asked by some Catholics, who were terribly disturbed by the horror of such an upset, to set free the simple folk of all Egypt from the peril of infidelity, and came for this purpose. And when the heretic had approached him with his dialectic art, and wanted to drag him away in his ignorance to the thorns of Aristotle, the blessed Macarius put a stop to his chatter with apostolic brevity, saying: ‘the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.’ [I Cor. 4:20] Let us go therefore to the tombs, and let us invoke the name of the Lord over the first dead man we find...” [Note from Edgar C. S. Gibson, “This was the ‘Egyptian,’ not the ‘Alexandrian’ Macarius. The story is also given by Rufinus, History of the Monks, c. xxviii.; as well as Sozomen, H.E. III. xiv, and by both of these writers is expressly ascribed to the Egyptian Macarius.” Another note about Macarius is in the Institutes, V xli.] Virtues are not faults, but it is easy to fall into Vain-glory and Pride rather than actually replace a fault with a virtue. Certainly virtue should be attempted (with help and guidance), but the roots of the faults should still be examined.

Use and danger of relaxation: Virtues are listed by Abbot Pinufius and Abbot Abraham. Abbot Abraham also says in Chapter XXI to relax sometimes, just as one would not allow a bow to be continually taut, quoting something the Apostle John had said in his missions. This means to relax sometimes from the most concentrated meditation. On the other hand, in Chapter V Abbot Abraham says that restlessness is not cured by relaxation, because the thoughts will

become aroused to greater agitation. "...just as men fancy that they can check the violence of an inward fever by a draught of the coldest water, though it is a fact that by it its fire is inflamed rather than quenched, as a far worse attack follows after the momentary alleviation."

On fasting as a virtue: First Conference of Abbot Theonas, Chapter XIII, "Wherefore we must now inquire what we ought to hold about the state of fasting, whether we meant that it was good in the same sort of way as justice, prudence, fortitude and temperance, which cannot possibly be made anything else, or whether it is something indifferent which sometimes is useful when done, and may be sometimes omitted without condemnation; and which sometimes it is wrong to do, and sometimes laudable to omit. For if we hold fasting to be included in that list of virtues, so that abstinence from food is placed among those things which are good in themselves, then certainly the partaking of food will be bad and wrong. For whatever is the opposite of that which is in its own nature good, must certainly be held to be in its own nature bad. But this the authority of Holy Scripture does not allow to us to lay down. For if we fast with such thoughts and intentions, so as to think that we fall into sin by taking food, we shall not only gain no advantage by our abstinence but shall actually contract grievous guilt and fall into the sin of impiety, as the Apostle says: [I Tim 4:3-4; Rom. 14:14] 'Abstaining from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful and those who know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it is partaken of with thanksgiving.' For 'if a man thinks that a thing is common, to him it is common.' And therefore we never read that anyone is condemned simply for taking food, but only when something was joined with it or followed afterwards, for which he deserved condemnation."

There are twelve spiritual virtues or acts of penitence, but not all will be used by all people. Abbot Pinufius's list of penitence or of remedies for faults in chapter VIII is long, so I will not give all his explanations that go with each item in the list: [1] Baptism; [2] martyrdom; [3] fasting and repentance; [4] charity covering a multitude of sins; [5] shedding of tears; [6] confession of sins; [7] affliction of the heart and body or humility and labor; [8] amendment of life; [9] asking the intercession of Saints and being anointed with oil; [10] compassion and faith and love; [11] the warning and preaching to others; [12] when we forgive others we are forgiven ourselves. "Even if we have done all these things, they will not be able to expiate our offences, unless they are blotted out by the goodness and mercy of the Lord... [when He] supports our small and puny efforts with the utmost bounty." (Is. 43:25). Pinufius recommends that if one is nearly perfect, as long as it will not cause a fall from pride or sloth, one should not always dwell on past sins, but also look to God's mercy.

Some Scripture References Learn to trust; if you give good gifts towards others, it is easier to trust that you will receive also. St. Matthew 7:11 If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? St. Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick; raise the dead; cleanse the lepers; cast out devils: freely have you received; freely give. (These virtues are impossible without divine help, but the point here is, that if you have received a great gift, give it freely to others.)

Divine Gifts may be seen as virtues, or as guidelines to hope for. Second Conference of Abbot Nesteros, On Divine Gifts, Chapter I, quoting Mt 10:8, "The first indeed is for the sake of healing... 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.' The second when for the edification of the church or on account of the faith of those who bring their sick, or of those who are to be cured, the virtue of health proceeds even from sinners and men unworthy of it. [Mt 7:22-23] ...Chapter VI, how the merits of each man should not be judged by his miracles. Chapter VII, how the excellence of gifts consists not in miracles but in humility. Chapter VIII it is more wonderful to cast out one's faults from ones'

self than devils from another. Chapter IX how uprightnes of life is of more importance than the working of miracles. Chapter X the trial of perfect chastity: if the heart is quiet and peaceful and the carnal heat is still when holding a beautiful virgin, then the flames of a visible flame will pass over you gently and not burn as it did over the three children of Babylon [from Daniel]. “Since it is a greater virtue and a grander grace to extinguish the inward lust of the flesh, than by the sign of the Lord [the cross] and the power of the might of the Most High to subdue the wicked demons which rush upon one from without, or to drive them by invoking the Divine name from the bodies which they have possessed.”

Lists of gifts of the Holy Spirit and a random list of faults from Isaiah and Galatians:

Isaiah 11:1-6, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge according to the sight of the eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing of the ears. But he shall judge the poor with justice, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. And justice shall be the girdle of his loins: and faith the girdle of his reins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb: and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: the calf and the lion, and the sheep shall abide together, and a little child shall lead them. (Verse 9:) They shall not hurt, nor shall they kill in all my holy mountain, for the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea.” [Principal faults can be represented by animal-demons, according to First Conference of Abbot Serenus, Chapter XXXII. The Irish also mention that birds may be good or bad, as St. Victor appeared to St. Patrick as a bird, but St. Brendan met some birds who had not taken sides in the war in heaven and therefore were condemned.]

Galatians 5:18-26, “But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be made desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

The Virtues of “faith, hope, and charity” are examined in the First Conference with Abbot Chaeremon, Chapter VI. “There are three things which enable men to control their faults: either the fear of hell or of laws even now imposed; or the hope and desire of the kingdom of heaven; or a liking for goodness itself and the love of virtue. For then we read that the fear of evil loathes contamination: [Prov 8:13] ‘The fear of the Lord hateth evil.’ Hope also shuts out the assaults of all faults: for [Ps 33 (Greek) or 34 (Hebrew) verse 23] ‘all who hope in Him shall not fail.’ Love also fears no destruction from sins, for [I Cor 13:8] ‘love never faileth;’ and again [I Pet. 4:8] ‘love covers a multitude of sins.’ And therefore the blessed Apostle confines the whole sum of salvation in the attainment of those three virtues, saying [I Cor. 13:13] ‘Now abideth faith, hope, love these three.’ For faith is what makes us shun the stains of sin from fear of future judgment and punishment; hope is what withdraws our mind from present things, and despises all bodily pleasures from its expectation of heavenly rewards; love is what inflames us with keenness of heart for the love of Christ and the fruit of spiritual goodness, and makes us hate with a perfect

hatred whatever is opposed to these [within the soul]. And these three things although they all seem to aim at one and the same end (for they incite us to abstain from things unlawful) yet they differ from each other greatly in the degrees of their excellence. For the two former belong properly to those men who in their aim at goodness have not yet acquired the love of virtue, and the third belongs specially to God and to those who have received into themselves the image and likeness of God. For He alone does the things that are good, with no fear and no thanks or reward to stir Him up, but simply from the love of goodness. For, as Solomon says, [Prov 16:4] ‘The Lord hath made all things for Himself.’ For under cover of His own goodness He bestows all the fulness of good things on the worthy and the unworthy because He cannot be wearied by wrongs, nor be moved by passions at the sins of men, as He ever remains perfect goodness and unchangeable in His nature.” In the same way, the pre-Christian Irish used these three virtues as the ideals for a soldier: courage, honor or chivalry, sacrifice. (By honor is meant nobility, which includes wisdom, charity and honor all together.) According to the assignments of Abbot Chaeremon, courage would be fear of the Lord rather than fear of an enemy; honor would be hope for the Lord rather than for ones’ pleasure; and sacrifice would be charity, the giving of love rather than protecting ones’ self. The Irish were so attached to these three ideals that, when they became Christian, they took to these three virtues of faith, hope, and charity and emphasized them in their catechisms. One could go through Scripture and find other combinations of virtues, but these three work together as one.

The Second Conference of Abbot Isaac on Prayer, Chapter X, the method of continual prayer. Byzantines use the “Jesus Prayer” which is from the Greek letters of the older Greek word for fish (I Ch Th U S) and is “Jesus Christ God’s Son Savior, have mercy on me a sinner.” But the earlier Egyptian monks used a different prayer: the beginning of Psalm 69 Greek numbering, or 70 Hebrew numbering. “O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me.” (Or, “O God, make speed to save me: O Lord, make haste to help me.”) This verse is also used between Psalms or as an Antiphon in many older “Offices” of prayer of the Hours, including in the Irish “Antiphony of Bangor,” Benedictine prayers, etc. Abbot Isaac says about this prayer, “For it embraces all the feelings which can be implanted in human nature, and can be fitly and satisfactorily adapted to every condition, and all assaults... For one who is constantly calling on his protector, is certain that He is always at hand.” Abbot Isaac says about this prayer, that it “contains the glow of love and charity,” “a view of plots,” confession that one cannot be free without help, “impregnable wall,” “impenetrable coat of mail,” “strong shield,” relieves depression, sadness, moroseness, anxiety of mind, thoughts of despair, and reminds us that God is not far off. At the same time it reminds us that we should not be puffed up with pride. “This verse, I say, will be found helpful and useful to every one of us in whatever condition we may be. For one who always and in all matters wants to be helped, shows that he needs the assistance of God not only in sorrowful or hard matters but also equally in prosperous and happy ones, that he may be delivered from the one and also made to continue in the other, as he knows that in both of them human weakness is unable to endure without His assistance...” Abbot Isaac then shows how this verse may be used against every attack of the eight principal faults, and also so that good experiences may linger longer: “Again, I feel that by the visitation of the Holy Spirit I have gained purpose of soul, steadfastness of thought, keenness of heart, together with an ineffable joy and transport of mind, and in the exuberance of spiritual feelings I have perceived by a sudden illumination from the Lord an abounding revelation of most holy ideas which were formerly altogether hidden from me: In order that it may be granted to me to linger for a longer time in them I must often and anxiously exclaim: ‘O God, make speed to save me: O Lord, make haste to help me.’” “...We must then ceaselessly and continually pour forth the prayer of this verse, in

adversity that we may be delivered, in prosperity that we may be preserved and not puffed up.”

“...Let sleep come upon you still considering this verse... When you wake let it be the first thing to come into your mind... let it follow you all day long. ...This you should write on the threshold and door of your mouth, this you should place on the walls of your house and in the recess of your heart...” [Deuteronomy 6:7 mentions prayer without ceasing. There are two ideas which sum up all the Law and Prophets, St. Matthew 22:40, and can also be prayed without ceasing: Deuteronomy 6:4-5, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength.” And, Leviticus 19:18, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”] Abbot Isaac warns against wandering through Scripture rather than using a steady prayer in Chapter XII, “From this too [the mind] is transferred to some other, by the entrance of some fresh consideration, and the soul always turns about from Psalm to Psalm and jumps from a passage in the Gospels to read one in the Epistles, and from this passes on to the Prophetic writings, and thence is carried to some spiritual history, and so it wanders about vaguely and uncertainly through the whole body of the Scriptures, unable, as it may choose, either to reject or keep hold of anything, or to finish anything by fully considering and examining it, and so becomes only a toucher or taster of spiritual meanings, not an author and possessor of them.” (Notice that this wandering is the fault of “Accidie?”) Abbot Isaac suggests in Chapter XIV the use of watchings, meditation, prayer, which produce steadfast firmness of mind. The point of the “speed” is that, of course, divinity is faster than we are, but also in our own hesitation, doubt and turning away from help often happen. In the First Conference of Abbot Isaac, Chapter XXXII, “When, while we are praying, no hesitation intervenes and breaks down the confidence of our petition by a sort of despair, but we feel that by pouring forth our prayer we have obtained what we are asking for, we have no doubt that our prayers have effectually reached God. For so far will one be heard and obtain an answer, as he believes that he is regarded by God, and that God can grant it. For this saying of our Lord cannot be retracted: ‘Whatsoever ye ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you.’” [Mk 11:24]

(Biblical quotes: it does pay to work on overcoming faults. James 2:14-26, “What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him? And if a brother or sister be naked, and want daily food: And one of you say to them: Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it profit? So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself. But some will say: Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without works; and I will show thee, by works, my faith. Thou believest that there is one God. Thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, offering up Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou, that faith did co-operate with his works; and by works faith was made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled, saying: Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him to justice, and he was called the friend of God. Do you see that by works a man is justified; and not by faith only? And in like manner also Rahab the harlot, was not she justified by works, receiving the messengers, and sending them out another way? For even as the body without the spirit is dead; so also faith without works is dead.” James 4:8-11, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners: and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep [for your sins]: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow. Be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you. Detract not one another, my brethren. He that detracteth his brother, or he that judgeth his brother, detracteth the law, and judgeth the law. But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.” Eph. 5:9-11, “For the fruit of

the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth; proving what is well pleasing to God; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” I Thess 5:14-23, “And we beseech you, brethren, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men. See that none render evil for evil to any man; but ever follow that which is good towards each other, and towards all men. Always rejoice. Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all. Extinguish not the spirit. Despise not prophecies. But prove all things; hold fast that which is good. From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves. And may the God of peace himself sanctify you in all things; that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless...” Mt 5:15, Mk 4:21, Lk 11:33, “No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it in a hidden place, nor under a bushel; but upon a candlestick, that they that come in, may see the light.” Jn 5:17 “...My Father worketh until now; and I work.”)

The Arch over the Heavens of the Virtues that Combat the Eight Deadly Sins:

Divinity is the center of the sins and virtues, described as the center of a compass point that is used to draw an archway. If a compass is not used, with the center point, the arch will fall.

To draw a picture of the sins and virtues might be a mistake, because, as emphasized again and again, different people have different problems as their most difficult ones to conquer. Also, while later writers listed particular virtues that might combat particular sins, the earlier writers matched all virtue, that is, contemplation of Divinity together with the practice of many virtues together, as combating any and every sin.

The Psalms of the Hours of Prayer recorded by St. Brendan the Navigator and the Antiphony of Bangor (translated © Maelruain Dowling, www.CelticChristianity.org) apply to specifically to combating these sins: Gluttony - Fornication - Covetousness - Anger - Dejection - Accidie - Vainglory - Pride If drawing sins these occur day and night, corresponding to the eight times a day when prayer is done (traditionally seven times plus Matins).

If drawing virtues: In the same way, in the Lorrha-Stowe Missal, the picture of an arch is used to associate the twelve Apostles with the twelve hours of the daytime when the sun is up. In the Collect before the Epistle, in the Mass of Apostles, Martyrs, and Holy Virgins: “We give Thee thanks O our Lord and God Jesus Christ, splendor of the Father’s glory, and day of eternal clarity, for being pleased to illumine Thy twelve Apostles by the Fire of the Holy Spirit as the twelve hours of the day are illuminated by the light of the Sun; unto whom Thou didst say ‘ye are the light of the world’ and again, ‘Are there not twelve hours of the daylight? If one walks in the light of day, he shall not stumble.’ Descend on us, O our Lord and God Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness; in Whose wings is well-being for those that fear Thee, that we may walk in the Light. Therefore we have the Light, that we may be sons of the Light. O Thou Who didst illumine the Apostles as Thy proxies and the other Saints as their proxies like lamps unto this world: endowed with the Grace of the Holy Spirit and the Doctrines, dispel the darkness of ignorance and send forth the light of Thy righteousness through the patronage of those -N- whose festivities we honor today. That we may remain always in Thee and through Thee, Who reignest with Thine unoriginate Father and the Holy Spirit throughout all ages of ages, Amen.”

On the Feast day of Ss. Peter and Paul (June 29th, or Old Calendar July 12th), according to the

Lectionary of Luxeuil and Bobbio arranged by St. Columbanus, the reading for the day is the Beatitudes, associated closely with all the Apostles; and again, proper prayers for the Apostles include the twelve hours of the day prayer. Therefore, one may picture the Beatitudes as a list of virtues, also in this arch of the heavens. These may also be matched with Psalms. According to the Bobbio Missal (of St. Columbanus), one form of the Apostles' Creed assigned the different articles of faith to each different Apostle. These may also be matched with Gradual Psalms, not starting with Psalm 119 in Greek numbering, but with Psalm 122. (The verses of the Greek numbering Psalms 118, 119, 120, and 121 add to 200 verses, and seem to have a relationship with each other, or at least are useful for prostrations at every other verse at vigils. Psalms 119 through 121 are important as Psalms of completion and of contemplation of God, who helps in distress, does not slumber nor sleep, and gives peace to Jerusalem. After that, the rest of the fifteen Gradual Psalms seem to apply to the insights of the twelve.)

It might also be possible to match the twelve virtues of Abbot Pinufius in this group, although the order of the virtues will be opposite. (I include Abbot Pinufius's order by numbering these virtues.) As Abbot Pinufius says, "Even if we have done all these things, they will not be able to expiate our offences, unless they are blotted out by the goodness and mercy of the Lord... [when He] supports our small and puny efforts with the utmost bounty." (Is. 43:25).

And, what hours are the virtues assigned? According to the prayer about the Apostles, to daylight. There are twelve such Hours in the day. These correspond to daytime Psalms. The sins at night (that is, anger, fornication, and covetousness.) are combated directly by God alone. Although the Hours of the day and night might be coordinated, there is no direct correlation between a particular sin and only one virtue; all virtues work together to overcome any problem.

Putting everything together:

First Hour [7:00 A.M. at the cock crow.] Peter: 'I believe in God the Father Almighty.' Psalm 122 "To Thee have I lifted up my eyes; Who dwellest in heaven..." [Looking up to God in faith.]
Virtue: [12] when we forgive others we are forgiven ourselves. [Although St. Peter is remembered as saying that charity covers a multitude of sins, he needed forgiveness first of all for his own sin of denial.]

Second Hour [8:00 A.M.] John: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, God and our Lord.' Psalm 123 "...If it had not been that the Lord was with us, When men rose up against us; perhaps they had swallowed us up alive..." [St. John is the only Apostle who did not die a Martyr, but was put into boiling oil and survived it. He is also known as "O Theo Logos," because of his direct perception about God the Word; only a very few Saints are considered "Theologians" by the Byzantines. Also, the concept of the Divine and human natures of Christ, neither one "swallowing us up alive," nor swallowing the other, is an important insight that is discussed again and again in the Gospel of St. John.]
Virtue: [11] the warning and preaching to others.

Vainglory could be on waking just after dawn. According to Greek numbering, Psalms 50, 62, and 89 apply: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy... In deficiencies did my mother conceive me...” “For thy mercy is better than lives... Thus will I bless Thee all my life long...” “Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: from generation to generation... From eternity and to eternity Thou art God.... In the morning man shall grow up like grass; in the morning He shall flourish and pass away: in the evening He shall fall, grow dry and wither... The days of our years in them are threescore and ten years. But if in the strong they be fourscore years: and what is more of them is labor and sorrow. For mildness is come upon us: and we shall be corrected...”

Third Hour [9:00 A.M.] James: ‘He was born of Mary, the Virgin, through the Holy Spirit.’ Psalm 124 “They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Sion...” [Readings for Feasts of the Virgin Mary concerning Mount Sion. She is seen as the “burning bush” at St. Catherine’s monastery, because the power of the universe did not burn her alive.] Virtue: [10] compassion and faith and love.

Despondency is fought at the Third Hour, the Hour of the descent of the Holy Spirit (Greek numbering, Psalms 46, 53, and 114). This could also be the Hour of Pride, which is an offense of the Holy Spirit, but some quotes show the overcoming of despondency: “O clap your hands, all ye nations: shout unto God with the voice of joy...” [The nations represent the principal faults.] “Sing praises to our God, sing ye: sing praises to our King, sing ye. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye wisely.” “Save me, O God, by Thy Name, and judge me in Thy strength...” “For Thou hast delivered me out of all trouble: and my eye hath looked down upon my enemies.” [One would not encourage a person who suffers from pride to “look down” on spiritual enemies, but it might help one who is despondent.] “I have loved, because the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer... The sorrows of death have compassed me: and the perils of hell have found me. I met with trouble and sorrow: and I called upon the Name of the Lord... The Lord is the keeper of little ones: I was humbled, and He delivered me... I will please the Lord in the land of the living.” These quotes are both a description and a prescription for despondency.

Fourth Hour [10:00 A.M.] Andrew: ‘He suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified and buried.’ Psalm 125 “...Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves.” [Weeping, Death, and the promise of Resurrection. St. Andrew is the “first called,” and primarily the “first called” in the Resurrection were called in Hades at the time of the Crucifixion.] Virtue: [9] asking the intercession of Saints and being anointed with oil [meaning asking living and departed Saints for help, as curing sickness].

Fifth Hour [11:00 A.M.] Philip said, ‘He descended into hell.’ Psalm 126 “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it...” [Hell was overthrown, because it was not kept by the Lord. Notice the commentary to St. Philip in St. John 14 verse 8 through chapters 15, 16, and 17, to St. Philip’s question, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Chapter 14 begins, “In my Father’s house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you...”] Virtue: [8] amendment of life. [which is only one of the virtues, not a replacement for all of them. Certainly a virtue suggested to St. Philip.]

Sixth Hour [12:00 noon.] Thomas said, 'He arose on the third day.' Psalm 127 "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: that walk in His ways..." [St. Thomas went the farthest in distance in missions. Notice the commentary in St. John 14:5-7, to St. Thomas's question, "how can we know the way?" The connection of St. Thomas to the Resurrection is obvious, in St. John 20:24-29, where St. Thomas recognized the significance of the Resurrection.] Virtue: [7] affliction of the heart and body, or in other words, humility and labor.

Accidie is often associated with the noonday demon (at the Sixth Hour).

Gluttony is guarded against at the Ninth Hour (after 3:00 P.M.) of the traditional meal, according to Irish, Roman, and Byzantine prayers of the Hours. The Psalms in Greek numbering for noon are Psalms 66, 69, and 115. "May God have mercy on us, and bless us: may He cause the light of His countenance to shine upon us; and may He have mercy on us. That we may know Thy way upon earth: Thy salvation in all nations..." "O God, come to my assistance, O Lord make haste to help me. Let them be confounded and ashamed that seek my soul. Let them be turned backward, and blush for shame that desire evils to me. Let them be presently turned away blushing for shame that say to me: Tis well, tis well..." "I have believed, therefore have I spoken: but I have been humbled exceedingly. I said in my excess: Every man is a liar."

Although not mentioned in the Hours listed by St. Brendan the Navigator (of Clonfert), there are two Psalms that directly mention noon, and also the wandering away from contemplation of Accidie: Greek numbering 36 and 90, or the opposite of Accidie as perseverance and courage and not wandering away. Psalm 36: "Be not emulous of evildoers: nor envy them that work iniquity... Trust in the Lord, and do good: and dwell in the land; and thou shalt be fed with its riches. Delight in the Lord: and He will give thee the requests of thy heart. Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him: and he will do it. And He will bring forth thy justice as the light: and thy judgment as the noonday: be subject to the Lord and pray to Him. Envy not the man who prospereth in his way: the man who doth unjust things. Cease from anger, and leave rage: have no emulation to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but they that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the land. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: and thou shalt seek his place, and shalt not find it. But the meek shall inherit the land; and shall delight in abundance of peace. The sinner shall watch the just man: and shall gnash upon him with his teeth. But the Lord shall laugh at him: for he foreseeth that his day shall come... Decline from evil and do good: and dwell for ever and ever. For the Lord loveth judgment and will not forsake his saints: they shall be preserved for ever... But the just shall inherit the land: and shall dwell therein for evermore. The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom: and his tongue shall speak judgment. The law of his God is in his heart: and his steps shall not be supplanted... Expect the Lord and keep His way: and He will exalt thee to inherit the land: when the sinners shall perish thou shalt see. I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus. And I passed by, and lo, he was not: and I sought him and his place was not found. Keep innocence, and behold justice: for there are remnants for the peaceable man..." Also, Psalm 90: "He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob. He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector and my refuge: my God, in Him will I trust. For He hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters: and from the sharp word. He will overshadow thee with His shoulders: and under His wings thou shalt trust. His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night. Of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the busines that walketh about in the dark: of invasion, or of the noonday devil. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee... ...For He hath given His angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall

bear thee up: lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon...”

Seventh Hour [1:00 P.M.] Bartholomew: ‘He ascended into heaven.’ Psalm 128 “Often they have fought against me from my youth...” [Bartholomew was called “the active” and his name means “son of Him Who suspends the waters” from notes on June 13th in Oengus the Cele De. Also, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven as an active man while contemplating heaven.] Virtue: [6] confession of sins.

Eighth Hour [2:00 P.M.] Matthew: ‘From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.’ Psalm 129 “Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice...” [For the departed. The Lord as Judge, but merciful to St. Matthew.] Virtue: [5] shedding of tears.

Ninth Hour [3:00 P.M.] James, the son of Alpheus: ‘I believe in the Holy Spirit.’ Psalm 130 “Lord, my heart is not exalted: nor are my eyes lofty...” [Remembering St. James, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Isaiah 11:2 and also Galatians 5:22, which include humility.] Virtue: [4] charity covering a multitude of sins.

Gluttony is discussed at the traditional time for meals, the Ninth Hour (3:00 P.M.). The Psalms for the Ninth Hour are, in Greek numbering, Psalm 129, Psalm 132, and Psalm 147. This Hour also remembers the Crucifixion, so Psalm 129 “Our of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice...” is appropriate to that, remembering that Egypt represents the nation of gluttony, and the Crucifixion was seen as the new Passover. Food is also a gift, and not always seen as negative, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity...” “Who hath placed peace in Thy borders: and filleth Thee with the fat of corn...”

Tenth Hour [4:00 P.M.] Simon Zelotes: ‘I believe in the Holy Church.’ Psalm 131 “...If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house... This is my rest for ever and ever: here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.. Blessing I will bless her widow: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall rejoice with exceeding great joy...” [A Psalm about the Church.] Virtue: [3] fasting and repentance. [Penitents sought admission to a community, or re-admission to the church in case of a major sin such as apostasy under duress.]

Eleventh Hour [5:00 P.M.] Judas, the brother of James: ‘Through Holy Baptism [there is] remission of sins.’ Psalm 132 “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: Like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron...” [Dwelling in the Church, and the anointing of Baptism. This is the Judas people ask intercessions for lost causes, not the Iscariot. Baptism is into the Lord’s death.] Virtue: [2] martyrdom.

Twelfth Hour, Vespers [6:00 P.M.] Matthias: ‘The resurrection of the flesh and eternal life. Amen.’ Psalm 133 “Behold, now bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord: Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God...” [Completing the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life in the age to come in the “courts of the house of our God.” Matthias was the last called of the Twelve Apostles, in Acts 1:16-26, replacing Judas Iscariot.] Virtue: [1] Baptism [in this case membership into the Church and taking responsibility as in the foot-washing, called the “Mandatum” or “Command” in the Lorrha-Stowe Missal].

Pride is combatted at Vespers. Vespers (at sunset) uses Greek numbering Psalms 64, 103, and 12 with special Antiphons for the Gloria. It is the traditional beginning of the Liturgical day (from Genesis, the evening and the morning were the first day, Gen. 1:5). “A Hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Sion: and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem. O hear my prayer: all flesh shall come to Thee...” “Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, Thou art exceedingly great. Thou hast put on praise and beauty: and art clothed with light as with a garment: Who stretchest out the heaven like a pavilion: Who coverest the higher rooms thereof with water. Who makest the clouds Thy chariot: Who walkest upon the wings of the winds. Who makest Thy angels spirits: and Thy ministers a burning fire...” “Praise the Lord, ye children: praise ye the Name of the Lord. Blessed be the Name of the Lord: from henceforth now and for ever... The Lord is high above all nations: and His glory above the heavens. Who is as the Lord our God, Who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and earth?... Who maketh a barren woman to dwell in a house; the joyful mother of children.” All of these quotes show the glory of God, and that only God should be considered to be great; emphasizing again and again that nobody and nothing is as great as God, and that we should not be proud. Instead, our joy should be to dwell in a house with children, rather than be compared to God. In the same way, the good angels could be compared with the angels who fell from heaven out of pride.

The Hours of the night do not have the virtues of the Apostles, and can be summed up as impatience, desire, and acquisitiveness. However, the first three of the Gradual Psalms, in Greek numbering Psalms 119, 120, and 121, offer contemplation of direct intervention of God for these faults. In the cycle of evening and midnight Psalms, the 150 Psalms take six days to complete, and one day a week the Cross Vigil seems appropriate. The Psalms in Greek numbering 118, 119, 120, and 121 add to two hundred verses, and the Cross Vigil has one hundred prostrations (or bows) traditionally. Also in the Cross Vigil is the Antiphony of Bangor Hymn 2 by St. Hilary of Poitiers (“The congregation of the Brethren”), a thirty-seven verse Hymn. Then “Unitas” for the Trinity, a hymn to Mary, and the “Shrine of Piety” which is a set of prayers in directions using the Lord’s prayer. (The arrangement of prayers from the Antiphony of Bangor is partially described by St. Maelruain of Tallaght or Tamllactu, along with other commentary.)

Anger could be assigned to the Hour in the middle of the evening. At the “Beginning of Night” (an Irish name for the Hour at 9:00 P.M.), there is a Psalm cycle through the week, and readings from Acts and the Gospel of St. John, but there is an Antiphon read every night for peace. “...Abundant peace is for those who are attentive to Thy Law, O Lord, and there is no scandal in them.” [From Psalm 118 Greek numbering or 119 Hebrew numbering, verse 165.] “May Thy peace, O Lord, King of Heaven, always pervade our vitals, so that we may not fear the terror by night...” The first Gradual Psalm, in Greek numbering 119, asks to overcome distress. “In my trouble I cried to the Lord: and He heard me.... With them that hate peace I was peaceable: when I spoke to them they fought against me without cause.”

Fornication is spoken of at the Hour of Midnight, in the Hymn of the Bridegroom and the ten virgins with their lamps, which appears instead of specific Psalms, which are in a cycle through the week. (A shorter version of this Hymn only appears in Holy Week in the Byzantine Rite). “This hour holds terror, thereon the destroying angel brought death to Egypt slaying the first-born.” “The Bridegroom comes: the maker of the heavenly Kingdom. Then Holy virgins hasten to attend the arrival bearing bright lamps.” “Therefore let us watch soberly, bearing gleaming

minds” “And at the time of Midnight both Paul and Silas, chained in prison praising Christ, were set free of bonds... Break the chains of our sins...” The second Gradual Psalm, in Greek numbering 120, reminds us that God does not slumber or sleep, and that we must remain vigilant. “I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me. My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. May He not suffer thy foot to be moved: neither let Him slumber that keepeth thee. Behold He shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel... May the Lord keep thy going in and they going out; from henceforth now and for ever.”

Covetousness applies to Matins (after Midnight and before Dawn) , a treasure of prayers, the most important Hour of the Resurrection. (Lay up not your treasure on earth, but in heaven. Mt 6:19-20) The daytime Hours may be completed in five to fifteen minutes, but Matins may take all night, with its many Psalms, Canticles, the Psalms of Praise (Psalms 148 through 150), Resurrection Gospels or Lenten readings, Hymns. This Hour compares life with death, the riches of heaven with the bankruptcy of earth, etc. If a person keeps riches for themselves, they do not gather together as the good shepherd or steward, but scatter as the thief and hireling of the sheep. Covetousness causes death. The third Gradual Psalm, in Greek numbering 121, reminds us that God gives peace to Jerusalem as a city, or a gathering together the tribes (or, the Apostles as the virtues or treasures of heaven, or community of people). “For thither did the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord: the testimony of Israel, to praise the Name of the Lord.”

Some selections from the Rule of St. Maelruain of Tallaght, of the ninth century, (not the complete Rule), Counseling, Repentance and Obedience, Watchfulness, Charity, Fasting, etc.
III. Confess to one another: the help of a “soul friend”(or “counselor” or “therapist”) .

A. "It is the duty of any one in Orders who undertakes the charge of a church to hear the confessions of that church's tenants, men, boys, women and girls. If any one will not accept the yoke of a confessor, so that his is not under the authority of God or of man, he has not claim to be given Communion, nor to have intercession made for him, nor to be buried in God's church because he has refused to be under God's authority in the churches in the land or Erin [or any Land]. For it is right to show reverence to an ordained Priest, and to fulfill their behests, just as if they were God's angels among men; seeing that it is through them that the kingdom of Heaven is to be won, by means of Baptism and Communion and intercession, and by the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, and by preaching of the Gospel and by building up the Church of God, and by unity of law and rule; and this is what is pleasing to God on earth."

1. "Irkesome, truly, is the matter of soul-friendship, because if the proper remedy is prescribed, it is more often violated than fulfilled: while if the soul-friend does not prescribe it, liability falls upon him; for there are many who deem it sufficient to make confession without doing penance. So it is better for the soul-friend, a father confessor to admonish them of what is profitable for them, even though he does not demand confessions.

2. "It is proper to refuse the confession of one who does not perform the penance imposed by his soul-friend. If any one does not happen to find nearby a soul-friend whom he considers sufficient, and if the precepts he brings from the learned soul-friend whom he first met are observed, and if there be moreover some one to whom he may make confessions on each point, and if penance be done thereafter according to the rules of minor confession, it is no matter to whom his confession is made, even though it be to a student or to a young cleric." [Notice that a “soul-friend” might be anybody, including a therapist. However, once discovered and discussed, for the Absolution which is part of major confession, one must confess to a Priest or Bishop. It was very common, until the time of the Reformation, to confess often to a “soul-friend,” and in

this way mental health was maintained.]

C. Restoration from sin requires repentance and obedience. All Céli Dé are obedient to their Superiors whether Abbot or Abbess. Each Céle Dé is to find a soul-friend approved by his Superior in the Order and to obey his direction. The word "repentance" means to make repair or restoration, not just to have sorrow. As none lives that does not sin, all Christians must go to the Sacrament of Confession often.

1. "Recourse may be had, if necessary, to another soul-friend, on obtaining leave from the original soul-friend."

2. "He that makes confession to a soul-friend, if he does penance as he directs, need not confess to another soul-friend, excepting such sins as he may subsequently commit."

3. The Soul Friend may inquire concerning specific sins based on knowledge of the person and their profession.

As our Father Saint Maelrúain said: "It is usual to lay additional penance on cooks and milkers and scullions on account of spilling the produce, both milk and corn."

4. "Further, it is not necessary to put off minor confessions of evil thoughts and faults of idleness and bitter words and anger and so forth until Sunday, but they should be confessed immediately as they are committed."

5. "Frequent confession, however, does not profit, if the transgression be also frequent."

6. [Castigation was only for abuse of authority, i.e., only given to those of higher rank, and although this was practiced in Medieval times, it is not practiced at present or recommended. In the ninth century it was recommended only for those who had severely oppressed others.]

7. It is suggested that penitents, those under long-term penance and excommunication for severe sins, retire to a community or live near a community, so that they might fast and pray under constant supervision during their prolonged struggle so that they may be eventually restored to the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. "He approves of penitents making a firm resolution to do no sin, and turning their back on it squarely, without thinking of child or wife or worldly wealth, so long as they are doing penance, for fear they should put" the world before their salvation. [They should retreat from the world during the time of penance. Beware lest spiritual pride tempt a person to retreat from responsibilities and call it penance. Penance is assigned by an Abbot, Abbess, or Confessor. "Excommunication" is not a permanent condition, but a period of penance when a person does not receive Communion, and after they have completed the penance and been absolved, they are restored as Communicants. Even so, most people are not excommunicated during penance. Some Scripture References Cannot divide between sin and good. This is not only referring to material goods, but also holding on to faults. St. Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. St. Matthew 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. St. Matthew 12:35 A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.]

D. "There are four things for which no penance can be done in the land of Erin [or one's native land], namely, lying with a dead person; transgressing with a kinswoman (i. e.: sister or daughter) [or a child or an unwilling person]; falling into sin while holding higher Orders (i. e.: that of Bishop or Priest); and divulging a confession by saying 'this is what this man did.'" These require banishment from the land in which the sin was committed (from the country or continent) for at least twelve years, living the life of a penitent monastic. In addition, a pilgrimage from the land in which the sin was committed by water and foot to the Tomb of the Lord and immersion in the Jordan at the site of the Lord's Baptism are advisable as a sign of one's repentance.

[Throughout the Medieval period to modern times, some people, whether or not they have committed one of these sins, travel to the Jordan river and dip in the water as a re-dedication of Baptism. After this, persons of Greek nationality are allowed to add “Hatzi” to their last name, and their children may inherit the part of the name “Hatzi” which means “holy” as in Hassid. For example, if the family name had been “Demetriu,” after this pilgrimage the family would be named “Hatzidemetriu.”]

On how to build a fasting discipline: “Now if a man should desire to practice abstinence, and if it has not been his habit to subtract from his rations, let him subtract one eighth for a period of six months. What he can bear then throughout that period in point of abstinence or in foregoing part of his sleep will abide with him till his death. If he desires further abstinence, let him subtract another eighth of his rations in the same way, up to three, four or five eighths. He can bear all that amount, provided he does it gradually; also, what he subtracts by degrees from his sleep will not be harmful to him. A man however who disciplines himself severely, and whom sickness or disease distresses through his abstinence, must impose upon himself only a little additional, like a child. If he endures for six months, he will be able to bear the further imposition until death.”

Take small steps. St. Maelruain suggests moderation; not too much fasting, sleep deprivation, kneeling, or you will become too weak, not be able to go without sleep ever, and wear out your knees in old age so that you cannot kneel at all. [A lack of kneecaps has been found in modern excavations in monasteries of the Middle East, and may be why the later Byzantines stood almost all the time, while in the West kneeling was only for short periods. St. Matthew 6:34 Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow; for the tomorrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.]

A. Do not eat till thou be hungry: do not sleep till thou be ready for it: speak to none till there be cause.

B. Even in a community, labor is to be performed. “Three profitable things in the day: prayer, labor and study: or it may be teaching or writing or sewing clothes, or any other profitable work that he can do; so that none be idle, as the Lord has said: ‘Thou shalt not appear in my sight empty.’”

1. No Céle Dé shall accept payment for inferior or incomplete work.

2. In cases of teaching, which is a sacred office due to its responsibility for the future of the student, failure of the student is considered incomplete labor. [Teachers must learn teaching methods which work for different kinds of students. Teaching is the most highly recommended labor. Most monks who were not anchorites had work that included teaching, but they would not be able to be paid unless their students had learned. Since payment was food, teachers worked very hard to help a student to learn.]

3. Labor includes charity. A tithe must come from the substance, not only the abundance. [The substance is the actual work of the individual, not only part of the monetary payment for work. The substance does not include lands or equipment needed to do the work. Four hours of work for God would be required of every person if one worked forty hours for worldly concerns.]

a. Charity is a sign of the Holy Spirit. [Biblical quotes: Gal.5:22-24, “But the fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.” Isaias 11:2, “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness.”]

b. Charity is a Christian duty. [Biblical quotes: The Beatitudes, Mt 5:3-12. Also, 2 Pet

1:5-7, “And you, employing all care, minister in your faith, virtue; and in virtue, knowledge; and in knowledge, abstinence; and in abstinence, patience; and in patience, godliness; and in godliness, love of brotherhood; and in love of brotherhood, charity.” 1Pet 4:8, “But, before all things, have a constant mutual charity among yourselves; for charity covereth a multitude of sins.”]

c. Charity is not boastful or ambitious. [Biblical quote: 1Cor 14:4-8, “Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away, whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease or knowledge shall be destroyed.”]

d. Correct action produces virtues and combat sin. [This is not the Pelagian heresy that says that works replace grace, but that, without works, there is no possibility that the grace could come. Notice that the Irish and the Romans practiced replacing sin with virtues, but earlier the saints of the deserts of Egypt, and those who read the works of St. John Cassian preferred to pray without ceasing: see the note about virtues replacing faults before the details on the eight principal faults.]

C. “Food that is brought from a distance on a Sunday as an offering to anyone, it is not lawful for him to eat, but he should distribute it among the poor.” [Charity must be maintained, but especially on a Sunday. Therefore, the later practice of bringing an “Easter basket” to be blessed of things that would break the Lenten fast, would mean that all the things in the “Easter basket” must at least be shared, and better yet, be distributed to the poor. The modern turning of holidays into times of greater greed instead of charity creates dangerous habits; at least something should be done by each person for alms.]

D. “It is forbidden to bathe in polluted water, and it is a defilement for every one who pours such water upon his head. Persons in Orders whose head it touches must take care to anoint and cross themselves thereafter.” [Note that this goes counter to the Biblical admonition that what goes out of a person defiles them, not what goes into a person. However, St. Maelruain tends to tell his monks to have common sense, and not to expose themselves to things that could make them sick.]

E. “Tonsure is maintained once a month, on the last Thursday.” Those in a Community shave all hair in front of an imaginary line from ear to ear, thus shaving the hair of the front of the head. [A monastic tonsure is not required of everybody, but if a person does this particular tonsure, even an eighth or quarter of an inch or half a centimeter around the front of the face at the hairline, it tends to relieve tension headaches caused by weight of hair. These muscles at the front of the scalp, if tense, also lead to migraines. Headaches can also add to depression and other problems. This tonsure is not the “crown of thorns” circlet of hair around the temple from a later period in Europe, but closer to an oriental tonsure as pictured in Byzantine icons of St. Basil and St. Nicholas, or in the Book of Kells, or some far eastern cultures. St. Maelruain also said that nuns are to let their hair grow back after the initial tonsure which would look like bangs, and that men are to grow beards.]

Life of St. John Cassian, abbreviated from the “Prolegomena” (biography) from Edgar C. S. Gibson, and other notes.

(The Celtic calendar, that is, the glossator in St. Oengus’s “Speckled Book,” on November 25th, confuses St. John Chrysostom with St. John Cassian, probably because St. John Cassian was Ordained by St. John Chrysostom in Constantinople, and also because John Cassian fought for the cause of St. John Chrysostom, who had been persecuted, banished, and in a forced march into exile, died a Confessor if not a Martyr. St. John Cassian wrote against the heretics who caused the death of St. John Chrysostom. The only possible “Bishop of Constantinople”

would be St. John Chrysostom, because St. John Cassian was only Ordained to the Deaconate in Constantinople, and Ordained only to the Priesthood in Rome, and did not hold a higher rank.)

Although St. John Cassian was called Cassianus in his early years, the monks in Egypt called him John. The names have traditionally been put together as “John Cassian.” He was called “John” in Egypt before he was Ordained a Deacon by St. John Chrysostom, and John Cassian supported John Chrysostom against persecutions by the Byzantine Emperor of the time. John Cassian influenced the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus through his book *On the Incarnation against Nestorius*. He lived his later years in southern Gaul (southern France). In southern Gaul, he was one of the great teachers of monasticism, which he had learned directly at the feet of the Desert Fathers in Egypt. He was a friend of Patriarchs and Popes, and relied upon for both theological understanding and also a practical understanding of the Christian life. St. John Cassian was a very prolific writer, whose works survive today. In modern typeset, in small print, his works are almost five hundred pages long, but many of these are the words he remembered of the Desert Fathers. They cover a wide variety of subjects, from Rules for monastics, eight deadly sins, and many others. St. John Cassian is considered one of the great Fathers of the Church. In his own words, he set down a monastic Rule, derived from experience among the monks who were the successors of the earliest monastic communities of Egypt that had been founded by St. Mark the Evangelist. Later monastic orders would reduce this Rule, but this complete ascetic Rule was inherited by the Irish Fathers, together with monks who had lived in Lerins and lived by this Rule, including St. Patrick the Apostle of Ireland (March 17th), and St. Secundinus. Indeed, St. John Cassian could have been one of the teachers of St. Patrick before St. Patrick was Consecrated Bishop. (The Germanus who accompanied St. John Cassian was not the same person as St. Germanus of Auxerre the teacher of St. Patrick, see May 28th, even though they lived around the same time. St. John Cassian traveled to Palestine, Egypt, Constantinople, and then lived in Marseilles in southern France. However, St. Patrick lived for a while in southern France. Also, see St. Vincent of Lerins, May 24th. As with others in southern Gaul, St. John Cassian was accused of Semi-Pelagianism, but he probably only inherited monastic views from his stay in Egypt among the desert fathers. See below: the Desert Fathers tended to reject extreme views, such as those of Augustine of Hippo.)

John Cassian was born around 360 A.D. to a pious and well-to-do family. As a child, he was educated in classical poetry, which often vexed him when trying to pray, because much later in life he would remember poetry and battles he had studied as a child. (Many Gallican people, not only the Irish, in whatever country they lived, believed in the education of children through memorization of poetry.) *Butler's Lives of the Saints* says that he may have been born in the Dobruja (Rumania), although no references are given, and it says that no complete life exists. It also says he may have fought against the Goths at the battle of Adrianople, but St. John Cassian says his memory of his childhood lessons vexed him, not his experiences as a soldier. Also, St. John Cassian was in Bethlehem in the service of God when still a child, not enlisted as a soldier. Although John Cassian spent many years in Egypt, some said he was born a Scythian. If he brought a form of Scythian knotwork iconography with him to southern France, and later Patrick's followers learned this knotwork art, making it Irish, there might be some distant possibility. Some others have thought that “Scythian” really means he was from the desert in Scetis. John Cassian said that he grew up in a wooded area with plenty of food, although he complained that in his country it was impossible to find any person who had adopted the monastic life, but Scetis had many monasteries, so this was not the place of his childhood. The area around Marseilles in southern Gaul where John Cassian spent his later years had many monastic communities after St. Hilary of Poitiers and St. Martin of Tours brought their missions, but this area was not yet populated with monastic communities when John Cassian was a child, so some have speculated that he returned to the place he had lived as a child. (On the other hand, when asking Abbot Abraham in the last Conference if he should return to his own country and kinsfolk, the Abbot said that being in the neighborhood of kinsfolk might interfere with meditations. St. John Cassian likely went to the area around Marseilles because it reminded him of his childhood home, but was not necessarily that home.) There may have been some monasticism in the area of Gaul near Marseilles, due to efforts of St. Irenaeus of Lyons, unless it had been wiped out by persecutions. In a Preface to his book, the *Institutes*, St. John Cassian mentions that the diocese of Apta Julia in Gallia Narbonensis still had no monasteries, so this may be the area he had lived in before. In his later years he had no trouble communicating with native speakers in southern Gaul, but various forms of Gaelic were common in many places, as far west as Ireland and Brittany, and as far east as Galatia, speaking variants of the “P” Brythonic language.

As a boy John Cassian rejected the world, moved to Bethlehem and was tonsured and accepted into a monastery in Bethlehem with his friend Germanus. They also became familiar with the monasteries in Syria during their stay in Bethlehem. John Cassian had much of his education at Bethlehem, stayed long in the East, and spoke Greek fluently. (Although today it might seem strange that a boy should travel so far, Marseilles and other seaports on the Mediterranean Sea would have given them access by sea to the land of Palestine, and then they could easily travel to the famous city of Christ's birth. Rome also ruled the entire Mediterranean Sea, and travel was relatively safe, perhaps safer for a child then than it is today.) John Cassian and his friend Germanus decided to visit the

famous desert fathers in Egypt, where monastic life originated, the first Christian school anywhere being founded by St. Mark. (See St. Mark, April 25th.) They received permission to depart from their monastery, if they would promise to return soon. They did not return soon: the visits to Egypt occurred for several years, after 380 and before 400 A.D. John Cassian much later wrote the details of his journey and the instruction of the Desert Fathers in his book, the *Conferences*.

They sailed to Thennesus, at the mouth of the Tanitic branch of the Nile, near Lake Menzaleh. They met an Anchorite, Bishop Archebius, Bishop of Panephrisis, the town nearby. Bishop Archebius was in Thennesus because of the election of a Bishop, and business he had there. He offered John Cassian and Germanus to see some of the famous Anchorites who lived near him. They agreed to travel with him. He took them to the salt marshes dotted with islands, flooded by the waters of the Nile. The islands were retreats for the monks. The villages in that area were in ruins because of abnormal high flooding. They met Chaeremon, Nesteros, and Joseph. Chaeremon was over a hundred years old, and was so bent with age and prayer that he crawled. He instructed them in Perfection, Chastity, and Protection of God. Next, they visited Abbot Nesteros, who instructed them on Spiritual Knowledge, and Divine Gifts. Then they visited Joseph who had been from a noble family, and before he left the world was “primarius” of Thmuis. He was educated in Greek, and did not need an interpreter. He questioned them about their relationship, and asked if they were brothers. They said their brotherhood was spiritual and not carnal. He instructed them in Friendship, and on the Obligation of Promises. John Cassian and Germanus were finding it difficult to keep their promise to return quickly to Bethlehem, because they found so much to learn in Egypt. They asked Joseph about their promise to return to Bethlehem, and they were convinced to break the letter of the promise to stay longer, which turned out to be for seven years. Cassian says that the displeasure of the brethren in Bethlehem was not removed by frequent letters home. Cassian and Germanus also visited and stayed with an Abbot whom they had known in Bethlehem. The Abbot had disguised himself in Bethlehem and pretended to be a novice, staying with Cassian and Germanus in their cell. When discovered, this Abbot, Pinufius, who was also a Priest over a large monastery, was taken back to Egypt. He returned the hospitality that Cassian and Germanus had given him in Bethlehem. He gave them instruction “on the end of penitence and the marks of satisfaction.”

John Cassian and Germanus continued traveling, crossing the river to Diolcos, by the Sebennytic mouth of the Nile. Between the river and the sea, the salty and sandy soil was not fit for cultivation, and the land was barren. Monks came here in great numbers, even though they had to go three miles to the river for water. They met Abbot Piamun, an Anchorite, who explained the three types of monks: the Coenobites (who lived in communities), the Anchorites (who lived as hermits), and the Sarabaites (married monks, which the monks at Scetis frowned upon). John Cassian and Germanus longed for the life of the Anchorite more than the Coenobite. They also visited a large monastery of more than two hundred monks, governed by Abbot Paul. At the time a very large number of visiting monks were celebrating the “depositio” of the late Abbot. They met an Abbot John, who had given up the life of an Anchorite out of humility, and was now a Coenobite, so that he could practice obedience and subjection. He spoke to them about the aims of the Anchorite and Coenobite life. Another Abbot, Theonas was an almoner (who distributed the alms to the poor). He spoke to them on the relaxation of the fast during Paschaltide and Pentecost. He also spoke on Nocturnal Illusions, and another time on Sinlessness.

Because of all the wonderful teachings of the Anchorites, John Cassian and Germanus desired the life of Anchorites, not back in Bethlehem, but returning to their home in Gaul, where they would not be hindered from the practice of austerities. They asked Abbot Abraham, who disagreed with them, and gave them instruction on Mortification. Because of this, they stayed in Egypt years longer. They stayed with Abbot Archebius in the area of Diolcos. Abbot Archebius pretended that he was about to go on a journey, and they could stay at his cell. After going away for a few days, he returned, collected some materials and built a new cell for himself. Some more brethren came, and again Abbot Archebius gave up his new cell and built another for himself.

At some point, they returned to Bethlehem, but they came back to Scetis, farther into Egypt, in the southern part of the Nitrian Valley, where the Syrian manuscripts were found. It was “to the northwest of Cairo, three days’ journey in the Libyan desert.” It was named for the nitre found in the salt lakes, which was taken from that area for at least two thousand years. It was said to be the oldest center of monasticism, perhaps a colony of Therapeutae settling in the early days. (See St. Mark, April 25th.) St. Frontonius stayed there with seventy brethren in the middle of the second century. St. Ammon, who lived at the same time as St. Anthony in the fourth century, “filled the same place in lower Egypt as Antony in the Thebaid.” At the end of the fourth century it was crowded with cells and monasteries. Rufinus and Sozomen separately visited Scetis in 372 A.D., and mentions fifty monasteries, both as communities and solitaries. Twenty years later, Palladius reported five thousand monks and ascetics living there. (This Palladius later became a Bishop. Before that, he traveled to several of the same Desert Fathers visited by St. John Cassian and St. Germanus.) St. Jerome also visited Scetis, and wrote about the monks in his Epistles. As late as the early part of the nineteenth century, monks still remained at Scetis. When St. John Cassian and Germanus arrived in Scetis, visited the Abbot Moses, who had previously lived in the Thebaid near St. Antony, and now lived

in the desert of Scete in a place called Calamus. Abbot Moses was known for goodness, practicality, and also contemplation. He instructed them “on the goal or aim of a monk,” and the next day, on Discretion. They visited next the Abbot Paphnutius, called the Buffalo for his love of solitude, who left his cell only to go to church on Saturday and Sunday, which was five miles distant. When he returned from church, Abbot Paphnutius carried a large bucket of water on his shoulders that would last him a week. He taught them “three kinds of renunciation” necessary for a monk. They visited the disciple of Paphnutius named Daniel, who had been Ordained a Priest, but would not perform his Priestly functions in the presence of his master. He spoke to them about “the lust of the flesh and the spirit.”

They went next to Serapion, who told them about the “eight principal faults” to which a monk is exposed (which today have been reduced to seven, as the “seven deadly sins”). These are gluttony, fornication, covetousness, anger, dejection, “accidie,” vain glory, and pride. (From Book X chapters I and II, of the Institutes, Accidie is “weariness or distress of heart. This is akin to dejection, and is especially trying to solitaries, and a dangerous and frequent foe to dwellers in the desert; and especially disturbing to a monk about the sixth hour, like some fever which seizes him at stated times, bringing the burning heat of its attacks on the sick man at usual and regular hours. Lastly, there are some of the elders who declare that this is the ‘midday demon’ spoken of in the ninetieth Psalm... it produces dislike of the place, disgust with the cell, and disdain and contempt of the brethren who dwell with him or at a little distance, as if they were careless or unspiritual. It also makes a man lazy and sluggish about all manner of work which has to be done within the enclosure of his dormitory. It does not suffer him to stay in his cell, or to take any pains about reading, and he often groans because he can do no good while he stays there, and complains and sighs because he can bear no spiritual fruit so long as he is joined to that society; and he complains that he is cut off from spiritual gain, and is of no use in the place, as if he were one who, though he could govern others and be useful to a great number of people, yet was edifying none, nor profiting any one by his teaching and doctrine...” The description is both educational and entertaining, and shows how the monk is enticed to leave his cell, and stop the contemplation of God. The mention of this fault has been neglected in modern lists of “deadly sins.” Serapion says that the opposite of accidie is courage, in Chapter XXIII of the Conference of Abbot Serapion.) Abbot Serapion himself tells Germanus why there are eight, not seven faults, and these are related symbolically to the nations that Moses overthrew. From Chapter XVIII and XIX, Book V, the Conference of the Abbot Serapion. “Everybody is perfectly agreed that there are eight principal faults which affect a monk. And all of them are not included in the figure of the nations for this reason, because in Deuteronomy Moses, or rather the Lord through him, was speaking to those who had already gone forth from Egypt and been set free from one most powerful nation, I mean that of the Egyptians.” [Who better to contemplate this than a monk in Egypt?] “And we find that this figure holds good also in our case, as when we have got clear of the snares of this world we are found to be free from gluttony, i.e., the sin of the belly and palate; and like them we have a conflict against these seven remaining nations, without taking account at all of the one which has been already overcome. And the land of this nation was not given to Israel for a possession, but the command of the Lord ordained that they should at once forsake it and go forth from it. And for this cause our fasts ought to be made moderate, that there may be no need for us through excessive abstinence, which results from weakness of the flesh and infirmity, to return again to the land of Egypt, i.e., to our former greed and carnal lust which we forsook when we made our renunciation of this world. And this has happened in a figure, in those who after having gone forth into the desert of virtue again hanker after the flesh pots over which they sat in Egypt... But the reason why that nation in which the children of Israel were born, was bidden not to be utterly destroyed but only to have its land forsaken, while it was commanded that these seven nations were to be completely destroyed, is this: because however great may be the ardor of spirit, inspired by which we have entered on the desert of virtues, yet we cannot possibly free ourselves entirely from the neighborhood of gluttony or from its service... While then we still retain the feeling for this care, which we are bidden not altogether to cut off, but to keep without its desires, it is clear that we do not destroy the Egyptian nation but separate ourselves in a sort of way from it, not thinking anything about luxuries and delicate feasts, but, as the Apostle says, being ‘content with our daily food and clothing’. And this is commanded in a figure in the law, in this way: ‘Thou shalt not abhor the Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land.’ [Deut. 23:7] For necessary food is not refused to the body without danger to it and sinfulness in the soul. But of those seven troublesome faults we must in every possible way root out the affections from the inmost recesses of our souls...” In Chapter XXII, Abbot Serapion quotes Genesis 15:18-21, where Abraham is promised not seven nations, but ten, whose land was part of the promise. Abbot Serapion then adds the sins of idolatry and blasphemy, “to whose dominion, before the knowledge of God and the grace of Baptism, both the irreligious hosts of the Gentiles and blasphemous ones of the Jews were subject, while they dwelt in a spiritual Egypt. But when a man has made his renunciation and come forth from thence, and having by God’s grace conquered gluttony, has come into the spiritual wilderness, then he is free from the attacks of these three, and will only have to wage war against those seven” [deadly sins within ourselves] “which Moses enumerates.” (The Irish Penitential, much later included this information about seven deadly sins, but the list is similar to these eight,

dropping acidie perhaps because of not understanding it.)

After John Cassian and Germanus left Abbot Serapion, they traveled eighty miles to Cellae, between the desert of Scete and the Nitrian Valley, to see Abbot Theodore. A number of monks in Palestine had been slain by Saracens. They asked Abbot Theodore why was it that men of such illustrious merits and so great virtues should be slain by robbers, and why should God permit so great a crime to be committed? Abbot Theodore then instructed them about “the death of Saints.” They also visited Abbot Serenus, who instructed them on “Inconstancy of mind, and Spiritual wickedness” and also the nature of evil spirits in a conference on “Principalities.”

Abbot Isaac gave them two discourses on “Prayer.” Before the second one, the messenger who yearly gave the date that Pascha would fall on, who arrived just after Epiphany, also brought news of a heresy. This caused great conflict among the brethren. This occurred in 399 A.D. The Bishop who sent the letter (the Patriarch of Alexandria, in this case said that we should not view God as looking like a man (meaning God the heavenly Father in His heavenly form), because although man is made in God’s image, God is not made in man’s image. The people who held the error of thinking of God as the image of a man were called “Anthropomorphites” from the Greek words “Anthropos” - man, and “morph” - shape. (In modern terms, to “Anthropomorphize” something means to see human characteristics in something that in fact does not have them.) This caused immediate controversy, because most of the monks at Scetis believed that God looks like a man, perhaps thinking about our Lord Jesus Christ Who indeed is both completely God and completely man. The Abbot that John Cassian and Germanus were staying with, Abbot Paphnutius, however, was the only Abbot or Priest in Scetis who accepted the words of the Bishop, and understood. The other monks not only rejected the letter from the Bishop, but were ready to create a schism. However, a very well educated Deacon named Photinus explained how all the churches in the East interpreted Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man after our image and likeness.” He explained that the image and likeness was spiritual, and stressed the infinite, incomprehensible, and invisible glory of God, and supported this with Scripture to the satisfaction of all the brethren. Photinus was from Cappadocia (the country where the “Three Hierarchs: St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, and St. Gregory Nazianzus the Theologian came from). One of the elders was very disturbed by this teaching, and cried that he needed an image of God to pray to. (In later centuries, the icon controversy was resolved: we may meditate on an Image of the Lord, because He has revealed Himself to us in the flesh. However, we also must never forget that we do not pray to the Image, but to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. See the writings of St. John of Damascus. The Father in heaven is not pictured in human form in traditional icons, although there are some unorthodox icons of the Father in some churches. The only exception is the Icon of the Three Persons of the Trinity eating at Abraham’s table, from Genesis Chapter 18. Abraham calls them “Lord,” not “Lords,” indicating the Oneness of our God.)

Abbot Isaac then continues to describe prayer as going up with Jesus in the “mount of virtues,” with the Apostles Peter, James, and John, in other words, at the Transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor. Abbot Isaac said that neither Jesus nor we are soiled in crowds, and it is possible to meet Jesus in any village and through any labor, but even so, by the example of Jesus in the Transfiguration, we learn to go to a place alone to pray. This helps us to approach God with “a pure and spotless affection of heart.” [Many eastern Saints who practiced mystical prayer, silence and iconography focused on the Transfiguration as a meditation. Icons of the Transfiguration were especially emphasized at St. Catherine’s monastery at Mt. Sinai for two reasons: because Mt. Sinai is a holy mountain, and because St. Catherine’s monastery was a center of iconography that did not recognize the schism between Rome and Byzantium until quite late... the monastery trained many iconographers from all places, through the Crusades.]

John Cassian speaks of others, such as the monks of the Thebaid and their monasteries, but he may have heard this from others. He intended to visit these monasteries, but around that time, both John Cassian and Germanus traveled to Constantinople, and were Ordained by St. John Chrysostom. Both John Cassian and Germanus were put in charge of the treasury, which was the only part of the Cathedral to escape fire in 404 A.D. St. John Cassian witnessed the terrible persecution of St. John Chrysostom, and took his side in the controversy. Germanus was Ordained a Priest at Constantinople, but John Cassian was still a Deacon, when they traveled to Rome to petition Pope Innocent I on behalf of St. John Chrysostom. (Rome sent some Bishops to Constantinople in support of St. John Chrysostom, but they were imprisoned. St. John Chrysostom himself was banished, and died on a forced march.) During his stay in Rome, St. John Cassian was Ordained a Priest by Pope Innocent I. They also met Leo, then Archdeacon of Rome (much later Pope Leo the Great). At the request of Leo, John Cassian later wrote his book, *On the Incarnation against Nestorius*. Nestorius, then Bishop of Constantinople, believed that Christ’s two natures: God and man, were radically divided. Also, that the Mother of God was only the mother of Christ’s human nature after His birth. (See also St. Vincent of Lerins, May 24th; and also the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 29th.)

After John Cassian left Rome, he went to Gaul, settling in southern France in Marseilles, and his teachings immediately influenced many of the new monasteries in the area.. In his long absence from Gaul, when he lived in

Bethlehem and Egypt, monasticism had arrived in Gaul, due to the work of St. Hilary of Poitiers and St. Martin of Tours, and others such as St. Victricius, who also founded a monastery. These Abbot-Bishops were in the Loire valley area. Liguge was founded after 360 A.D., and Marmoutier after 371 A.D., and other monasteries were forming in Provence. St. Honoratus founded his monastery in 410 A.D. on the island of Lerins. (See May 24th.) Lerins became a school of theology and Christian philosophy, and also other subjects of education, and produced many Saints and Bishops who spread Christianity to Gaul and beyond. The island of Lerins was also inaccessible to invasion by “barbarians” of various nations. (See St. Patrick, March 17th, who stayed at Lerins for a while. Many Irish monasteries were modeled after Lerins.)

St. John Cassian founded two monasteries at Marseilles, one for men and one for women, around this time. The monastery for men was built over the tomb of St. Victor, who was a Martyr who had died under Diocletian. At Marseilles St. John Cassian wrote three books, the *Institutes*, the *Conferences*, and *On the Incarnation against Nestorius*. St. John Cassian called the *Institutes*, “Twelve books on the institutes of the monasteries and the remedies for the eight principal faults.” His monasteries in Marseilles, organized around his “Institutes” (the Rule), were looked up to by others, and his fame increased. The *Conferences* were written from his memory of the details of instructions from the Abbots in Scetis he had visited years before. (Later, St. Benedict of Nursia told his monks to read the *Conferences* of St. John Cassian daily. Many libraries throughout Europe copied these books, and read them throughout the Medieval period.) The *Institutes* were written at the request of Bishop Castor of Apta Julia, forty miles north of Marseilles, which still did not have monasteries. Bishop Castor wished to introduce monastic life into his diocese. The book was dedicated to Castor, who died in 426 A.D., and is thought to have been written some time between 419 A.D. and 426 A.D. Bishop Castor also requested the *Conferences* to be written, but he died before the first part was ready for publication. St. John Cassian was sorrowful that he could not dedicate the book to Bishop Castor, so St. John Cassian dedicated the book to Leontius Bishop of Frejus, and Helladius who was called “brother.” Part II, with *Conferences* XI to XVII was dedicated to Honoratus and Eucherius, who he called brothers. Eucherius became Bishop of Lyons in 434, but Honoratus was made Bishop of Arles in 426, so all of these *Conferences* must have been published soon after the death of Bishop Castor, but before the Consecration of Bishop Honoratus, in 426 A.D. By the preface to *Conference* XVIII, Helladius had been raised to Bishop. Honoratus was described as living, so it was composed before the end of 428. Honoratus died in January, 429. *Conferences* XVIII to XXIV are dedicated to Jovinian, Minervius, Leontius, and Theodore, all called “fratres” (brothers). (This must be a different Leontius than the one referred to in *Conferences* I - X). The others are not known, but Theodore was Consecrated Bishop, and succeeded Leontius at Frejus in 432.

The seven books, *On the Incarnation against Nestorius* were published in haste before 430 A.D., before the Council of Ephesus. John Cassian speaks of Nestorius as still Bishop (Patriarch) of Constantinople, and speaks of Augustine as though he were also still alive. (Blessed Augustine died in 430 A.D.) “Nestorianism” was a heresy which started at Constantinople, beginning with a sermon by the Bishop’s chaplain Anastasius. Nestorius himself supported his chaplain, giving more sermons against the use of the term “Theotokos” or Birthgiver to describe the Blessed Virgin Mary. The heresy also attacked the unity of the natures of Jesus Christ as God and man. News of the controversy came to Egypt, and the then Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria, later St. Cyril of Alexandria, who at the time was caught up in the dispute over which Patriarchate should have the second place: Alexandria or Constantinople, added to the difficulties of St. John Chrysostom, in fact visiting Constantinople and causing more trouble with the emperor of Constantinople. Although St. Cyril was against the Nestorians and in favor of the use of the term “Theotokos” or “Birthgiver” to describe the Blessed Virgin Mary, otherwise he opposed St. John Chrysostom because of the political controversy between Alexandria and Constantinople. (Treatises of St. Cyril were also used later to support the doctrines of the Monophysites, which said that Christ only had one nature: Divine, and that His human nature was completely swallowed up; which led many away from the understanding of His great Offering: His suffering and death on the Cross as a man, leading to our salvation. At first the treatises of St. Cyril were not considered extreme.) Other Patriarchates became involved, taking a stand against Nestorius, and the Roman Pope Celestine’s Archdeacon Leo (later Pope St. Leo the Great) asked John Cassian, who was familiar with Greek and the East, to help write a book refuting the Nestorian heresy. They supported the use of the term “Theotokos” or “Birthgiver of God,” in Latin “Deigenitrix,” and that she is truly the Mother of God (in Greek: Mater Theou) from the time of the conception of Christ at the Annunciation. John Cassian refers to Scripture, showing the unity of our Lord’s Divinity and Person. He connects this new Nestorian heresy with the heresy of Pelagius, through the errors of Leporius of Treves, who had erroneously suggested that the Pelagian views of man’s “sufficiency and strength” could be applied to our Lord, as if Christ were a mere man who used his free will to live without sin, and then at His Baptism He had been made Christ, as though after that time there were two Christs. St. John Cassian points to the connection between Pelagianism and Nestorianism, and underlines it in this work; the first writer to make this connection. He made this connection, and rejected both Nestorianism and Pelagianism, within the lifetime of Nestorius. The rejection of Nestorianism at the Council of Ephesus therefore also firmly rejected Pelagianism.

In spite of his absolute rejection of Pelagianism, John Cassian was accused of “Semi-Pelagianism” because of his rejection of the excesses of Blessed Augustine. (As noted under Lerins, May 24th, the Orthodox Church does not use the title “Saint” for Augustine; and to this day his works are considered controversial. See the book, *Dogmatic Theology of the Orthodox Church*, by Pomazansky.) Augustine had struggled against Pelagianism, but between the years 410 and 420 A.D. his views had hardened into a belief in absolute predestination of our soul “irrespective of foreseen character.” (Description from Rev. Edgar C. S. Gibson). He wrote in a letter to a Priest Sixtus in 418 stating that God’s grace must be irresistible, and therefore also not capable of being overcome, and therefore God would decide ahead of time who would be saved and who would not. Today such theories such as “eternal security” and “Calvinist predestination” come from the extremes of Augustine: the idea that one is not capable of sin following Baptism, or in some cases one is not capable of sin following a profession of Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. However, this view is extreme, and leaves out the fact that in Paradise Adam was at first also without sin and in a close, loving, and obedient relationship to God, but through his own free will still Adam disobeyed God; and we too, even those of us who are Baptized and Confirmed Christians, are capable of disobedience. John Cassian, who had been trained as a monk in Bethlehem and Egypt, would have known that disobedience is possible, and must be struggled against. One of the sayings of the Desert Fathers is that we fall again and again, but with God’s grace we get up again and again and follow the narrow road to heaven. (The Church, both East and West, holds that Confession of sins with Absolution is one of the Mysteries or Sacraments of the Church. Without the Sacrament of Confession, the spiritual life can become weakened through distractions, which lead to greater sins that lead a person away from salvation. Confession is more than a listing of sins; it is an examination of problems more similar to the modern concept of “counseling,” with guidance on how to remedy the problems.)

The letter Augustine had written to the Priest Sixtus in 418 later fell into the hands of the monks of Adrumetum, who were puzzled; and because they argued amongst themselves over it, wrote to Augustine himself asking for an explanation. To further explain himself, Augustine wrote the treatise, “De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio” in 426 A.D. The monks were still puzzled, so Augustine wrote another work, “De Correptione et Gratia” also in 426 A.D. Although the monks at Adrumetum made no further comment, a great controversy was stirred in southern Gaul. John Cassian felt that Augustine had a serious error: that is, a denial of the need of effort on man’s part. (Orthodox Christians today cite the Epistles of the Apostle James, who emphasizes that faith without works is dead. Also, that St. Paul, who defended Faith above the letter of the Law, still upheld Charity as greater, and Charity is both the grace of God and at the same time works of man in giving. St. Paul also said that faith without works is dead. See the short sermon of Succat, that is, St. Patrick, below, who summarizes the danger and also the importance of works.) Augustine seemed to “treat predestination as respective of foreseen conduct, and to limit the Divine good-will to a fixed number of persons thus selected, who, as such, are assured of perseverance.” This denied not only earlier teachings, but also the earlier teachings of Augustine of Hippo himself. Augustine also seems to say that some people deserve heaven from birth, while others do not, which itself stands in the way of Christ’s Redemption of all humans on the Cross. Christ came “not for the righteous, but for sinners.” Those in southern Gaul said that the door of salvation was open to all, because the Savior died for all. Those from southern Gaul did believe in the doctrine of the Fall, original sin, and the necessity of the Grace of God to salvation, and that this grace must be present in order for a Christian to do good works. The view called “Semi-Pelagian” on the part of the monks of southern Gaul was that, human nature could take the first step in desiring to be healed through faith in Christ. If all such good were strictly a divine act, then any sermons would be vain, and any correction of criminals would be unjust, because it could be said that they could not help their actions, and would not or could not understand anything of God or good, including morality, logic, and especially the desire for salvation. (As all people are made in the image of God, all have a small “mustard seed” of faith which could grow, in spite of original sin.)

John Cassian wrote no works against Augustine or in support of the “Semi-Pelagians,” but many said that he was the head of those who disagreed with Augustine. His thirteenth Conference with Abbot Chaeremon on the Protection of God is thought to be a rebuttal to the Augustinians. (The monks in Scetis were actually aware of a controversy, although not yet embodied in the words of Augustine, between non-possessor monks and those who had possessions. In the third part of the Conferences, the first monk met is Abbot Piamun. In speaking of three kinds of monks, Abbot Piamun names coenobites who live in communities, anchorites who live as solitaries, and Sarabaites who hold personal possessions and who are considered to be descendants of Arians with no holiness whatsoever. The problem with the Sarabaites is the same problem found in Augustinians or Calvinists: since they do not share possessions, they acquire a false doctrine glorifying their acquisition of personal possessions and unwillingness to share them; or that they were blessed or not blessed based upon the evidence of their possessions instead of their good works of sharing both their physical possessions and their spiritual understanding. The coenobites and anchorites did not water down the faith to reach more people, but they never withheld the truth from others either; instead they shared the truth with those who asked them for a “word.” The only exception to their sharing was that they would not tolerate sin and allow it hospitality, as Abbot Serapion says in his conference on the eight principal

faults, the seven nations which must be taken over (I Corinthians 10:6, Deuteronomy 7:1-2) which represent the multitude of sins such as “murders, strifes, heresies, thefts, false witness, blasphemy, surfeiting, drunkenness, backbiting, buffoonery, filthy conversation, lies, perjury, foolish talking, scurrility, restlessness, greediness, bitterness, clamor, wrath, contempt, murmuring, temptation, despair, and many other faults, which it would take too long to describe.”)

Augustine learned of the controversy in southern Gaul, and wrote further works on his position. Although Augustine acknowledged the difference between his opponents and the Pelagians, he still kept his extreme views. Prosper of Aquitaine wrote a poem of a thousand lines in support of Augustine, called “De Ingratis,” where he accuses both Pelagians and those he calls “Semi-Pelagians.” This poem was written before the death of Augustine (August 28th, 430 A.D.) (See note May 24th: the calendar of Oengus includes both Augustine of Hippo on August 28th, and Augustine of Canterbury May 24th and November 16th; but although the calendar of Oengus seems to exclude St. Vincent of Lerins on May 24th, it includes St. John Cassian November 25th, who opposed the extreme teachings of Augustine. There are many St. Vincents on the Celtic calendar, and one of these may be St. Vincent of Lerins.)

At the writing of Prosper of Aquitaine and also a layman named Hilary - not the Bishop of Arles, Pope Celestine wrote a letter in support of Augustine to the Gallican Bishops: Venerius of Marseilles, Leontius of Frejus, Marinus, Auxonius, Arcadius, Filtanius, and the rest. The Pope said that “Priests ought not to teach so as to invade the Episcopal prerogative.” This referred to the fact that St. John Cassian was a Priest, and not a Bishop. (Bishops may be concerned with large issues, but the works of St. John Cassian were concerned with individual souls. His authority was the tradition in Scetis rather than politics.) Although a Patriarch or Pope could claim primacy in his See, he had no right to declare doctrine valid or invalid without a meeting of the entire Christian Church, called an “Ecumenical Council,” a meeting of the entire “Body of Christ.” Pope Celestine was old, and may have been responding to other pressures; he did write this edict without the consent of the entire Church, East and West. (A few centuries later, St. Gregory the Dialogist called “the Great” in Europe, also a Pope of Rome, declared that no Pope or Patriarch should declare themselves “infallible,” in reference to the Patriarch of Constantinople calling himself the “Ecumenical Patriarch.” Pope Celestine was not entirely against those who had trained in southern Gaul such as St. Patrick: just prior to his death he participated in the Consecration of St. Patrick.) Bishop Venerius of Marseilles was at the top of the list of admonished Bishops to indicate that the Priest John Cassian was from Marseilles. In spite of Pope Celestine’s reproach, such Saints as St. Vincent of Lerins and St. John Cassian, even though respecting the Pope, remained in disagreement with the teachings of Augustine. This led to Prosper of Aquitaine making a direct criticism of the *Conferences* by St. John Cassian, in “Contra Collatorem,” an attack on the Conference of Abbot Chaeremon. Prosper’s attack occurred after Pope Celestine died in April of 432 A.D., because Prosper says that he hoped Pope Sixtus would condemn the doctrine that had been condemned by Celestine and his predecessors (even though Augustine’s doctrine had not existed before Celestine). However, St. Benedict of Nursia told his monks to read the *Conferences* of Cassian daily, and this work was not condemned by most others. The use of “seven deadly sins” has many parallels, especially in the Irish list, to St. John Cassian’s eight deadly sins. Although the Desert Fathers themselves often said that their views were simple and not always with the deepest theological training, their understanding of monasticism and salvation has always been held as a standard of Christian truth. The monks of Scetis had the greater antiquity and longer Christian tradition inherited from St. Mark the Evangelist, a tradition that, before the time of St. John Cassian, was the same in all Patriarchates, including Rome. The fact that the East Canonized St. John Cassian indicates that an Ecumenical Council probably would have found in his favor, but this controversy was not examined in such a Council. St. John Cassian’s treatise, *On the Incarnation Against Nestorius*, was used at the Ecumenical Council at Ephesus, attended and ratified by all the Patriarchates including Rome, which means that Rome did accept St. John Cassian at least as a doctor of the church.

St. John Cassian died soon after this, and before he died he had made no reply to Prosper. His answers to Prosper were already written in his *Conferences*, for example, the Conference of Abbot Theodore *On the Death of the Saints*, which addresses questions of virtue and sin, good and evil, whether actions are good or evil, and how God allows the death of His Saints. Instead, St. John Cassian concerned himself in his work *On the Incarnation against Nestorius*, and died shortly after completing that. The last chapter of his seven books against Nestorius seems to be a plea from St. John Cassian to those in Constantinople that he considers Constantinople as his own country in the unity of the faith, “absent in body yet I am still there in heart,” and St. John Chrysostom as his teacher. It also suggests that he grieves with them over this heresy (Nestorianism), and pleads with them to touch not, and taste not anything which leads to (soul) death, and touch not the unclean thing. He tells them to remember their ancient teachers, Gregory [Nazianzus, who wrote against Arianism], Nectarius, John [Chrysostom]. It seems as though St. John Cassian himself is remembering them, and comparing them to all the reduction of doctrine that seemed to be present at the time.

A century later, a more moderate view of Augustine entered the church’s thinking in Europe. To counter

Pelagianism, in a local council, the ideas of Augustine were read into the Council. This was not ratified in the entire Christian Church, but with the last remnant of Pelagianism at an end, most Christians were not as inclined to follow the extremes of Augustine either. However, by that time, much laxity and a return of Arianism had crept into many churches in France, and the inheritors of the monasticism of St. John Cassian: the Irish monks, re-entered France with the practices and faith of the earlier monks of Egypt, giving back to Gaul the gift of faith they had been generously given. (See St. Columbanus of Luxeuil and Bobbio, November 23rd.)

The Augustinians said that any human response or activity in salvation is not possible in a radical predestination, that a person is born without grace but later might be given grace, setting limitations on Divine activity; whereas those who were Pelagian heretics thought that only human effort was needed for salvation, that man is the arbiter of his own existence, that we don't need grace from heaven. (In a way, Augustinianism and Pelagianism are the two sides of one coin: both create a distance between humans and God, cutting the individual off from Divine Energies and Divine Presence; and both tend to deny God's imminence. And, starting with the later concepts of Augustine, many in the Medieval period did try to distance themselves from God, with more and more complex theological theories; which is the opposite from the monastic ideal of becoming closer to God in a very personal relationship. Their view of God was also changed by distancing themselves from God, because the nature of God and man in Jesus Christ Himself was viewed as the two natures not communicating with each other, as in Nestorianism. But St. John Cassian and other Orthodox Christians believe that Jesus Christ, of two natures, both God and man, still is unified in His Person. Human effort works in "synergy" with God, not apart from God's grace, because God still allows us free will. Otherwise, salvation would not set us free, but would enslave us. Although the Irish monks referred to themselves as "slaves of God," they also believed they were free in Christ. They had loosened the "chains of sin" and joined with other Christians in a "chain of charity." (From the Lorrha-Stowe Mass, after the Epistle just before the Gradual, "Almighty, eternal God, Who didst redeem Thy people by the blood of Thine Only-Begotten Son, destroy the works of the devil, break the chains of sin, that those who have attained to eternal life in the confession of Thy Name may be bound by no thing to the author of death, through..." and also from the Lorrha Stowe Missal, in the Litany of Supplication by Saint Martin of Tours, "...And the divine influence to remain with us, a holy chain of Charity: we ask the Lord: Grant it, O Lord, grant it...")

To understand the difference between the view of grace of the Eastern and Western Patriarchates, and why the controversy between Cassian and Augustine sometimes continues, especially in those with Calvinist views, it is also necessary to understand the differences in the teachings on the Holy Spirit. This is part of the "Filoque" controversy about the changes to the Creed made by the Roman Patriarchate, and which led to the split between East and West. Grace originates with God. The Holy Spirit confers Grace. Each Person of the Holy Trinity is indeed a Person, with Intelligence, etc., and although Almighty, is not a "force" alone. Nor are they three Gods, but one God. In Augustine's views, the Holy Spirit would seem to be in some people, but not others. Yet, St. Paul said, in the Book of Acts Chapter 17, that we are all His offspring (through Adam), in Whom "we live, and move, and have our being." This being so, all of us are predestined to salvation, not just some people, but we must "live and move" within this grace. We can attain nothing without the Holy Spirit, but with Him, we can receive Holy Baptism, the Anointing of the Holy Spirit in Chrismation, the love and Presence of Christ in Holy Communion, and all else. This can only be achieved with God, and this must be achieved through free will. An infant may approach these Mysteries, and yet they are required through their childhood years to be taught to understand the faith. Therefore, their continued participation through their life is still with free will, together with their knowledge and experience. See St. Gregory Nazianzus, who wrote against the Arians (March 29th), St. Basil the Great (one of the Three Hierarchs) who wrote on the Holy Spirit, and St. Photius, who also wrote on the Holy Spirit.

St. John Cassian was Canonized a Saint by the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchates, but at that time the Roman Patriarchate did not Canonize him, only calling him "Blessed." In the same way, the East only calls Augustine "Blessed." "St. Cassian" is celebrated on the Byzantine calendar February 29th, a date that seems to be an after thought, although it acknowledges a man whose writing led to a decision against Nestorianism in the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus. Note that on the Irish calendar, in spite of the fact that many people knew that St. John Cassian was only Ordained to the Priesthood, Oengus calls him a "Bishop of Constantinople," probably confusing him with St. John Chrysostom, whose feast day according to the Byzantine Rite is November 13th. Without using the term "Saint" which might have been controversial, this indicates the respect the Irish had for St. John Cassian. According to *Butler's Lives of the Saints* he is listed July 23rd and referred to as "Saint." No mention of why he is now listed as "Saint" within the modern Roman church is made, or when he was elevated from "Blessed" to the status of "Saint" according to their understanding. (Perhaps the Benedictines, who read St. John Cassian in chapter, helped to exonerate him in the eyes of others in Europe.)

There is a connection of St. Germanus of Auxerre with Lerins (see St. Germanus of Auxerre, May 28th, and St. Vincent of Lerins, May 24th). Another book, *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, edited by F. E. Warren, 1881, page 79, quotes an anonymous author from the 8th century who traces the lineage of teaching and Succession

in the early churches of the Gauls and Irish. He says that Saints Germanus of Auxerre and St. Lupus were trained in two lineages, one of which was at Lerins which could trace its teachings back to St. Mark the Evangelist. The other lineage was as monks from Gaul, through Irenaeus of Lyons, who was the disciple of St. Polycarp, who was the disciple of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. This lineage does not explain whether the companion of St. Cassian: St. Germanus of Constantinople may have changed his name to Honorius, or if St. Germanus of Constantinople stayed there, and another monk helped St. John Cassian found Lerins. St. Germanus of Auxerre was a different person than St. Germanus of Constantinople. Translation from the Latin is by Bishop Maelruain. “And here is another course [line of teachings and practices including Liturgics] which is held at the present time among the Scots and which is passed down. That Blessed (St.) Mark the Evangelist [see April 25th], as referred to by Josephus and Eusebius in the fourth volume, diligently preached through all of Egypt and Italy so that one Church so that all of the Saints whether in glory unto God in the highest or by the Lord’s Prayer and Amen would sing universally. This was his prediction of unity, and afterwards he made the Gospel from the mouth of St. Peter the Apostle. Blessed Jerome affirms this course which is said at the present time among the Scots, that Blessed Mark sang, and after him, St. Gregory Nazianzus whom Jerome said was a Magistrate, and Blessed Basil and his brother St. Gregory [of Nyssa], and Saints Anthony, Paul, Macarius, or John, and Malchus, as sung in the order of the Fathers. [This is to say that many important Saints, such as St. Gregory Nazianzus, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, etc. studied for a while in the Egyptian deserts with those who were trained in the lineage of St. Mark, such as the desert Saints Anthony, Paul, Macarius or John, and Malchus. St. John Cassian also studied under the same Egyptian desert fathers very soon after that time, and studied with some of the same desert Fathers.] And afterwards, most Blessed Cassian had a companion named Blessed Honorius, and they lived at the monastery of Lerins [founding it], and after him Blessed Honoratus was the first Abbot, and St. Caesarius was the Bishop in Arles, and Blessed Procharius was the Abbot who was at that monastery, whom they sing of in this Succession, who Blessed Lupus and Blessed Germanus dwelled as monks in this monastery, and they sang according to the norms of the Rules of this Succession. And afterwards, they attained the Episcopal throne of the highest honor with reverence and sanctity of them. And afterwards, they preached among the Britons and the Scots (Irish), as stated in the life of Bishop Germanus of Auxerre and the life of Blessed Lupus confirms, who taught Patrick spiritually the holy letters, and nurtured him in the faith, and predicted that he would become the Archbishop among the Scots and the Britons.”