



## DOCTOR OPTIME

HOMILY ON THE FEAST OF SAINT AMBROSE,  
BISHOP, CONFESSOR, AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

On December 7, the Divine Liturgy commemorates the anniversary of the Episcopal Consecration of Saint Ambrose, Patron of Milan, Confessor of the Faith, Doctor and Father of the Church. In the year 374 of the era of Christ, one thousand six hundred and fifty years ago, the son of an important senatorial family, who had been educated in the best schools of Rome and become the highest imperial magistrate of Northern Italy; a friend of other Saints including Augustine of Hippo, who was then a teacher of Rhetoric in Milan and later would be converted by Ambrose himself from paganism, received the Sacred Unction of Holy Orders. The events that brought this eminent political figure to the Chair of Milan certainly leave us amazed, given today's mentality. He was acclaimed Bishop by the people while in his position as *consularis* he was trying to impose a truce in the struggle between Catholics and Arians, speaking to the assembled faithful. Still being a pagan and not intending to accept the appointment, he tried in vain to escape several times, but eventually he accepted the will of God. In the space of a few days, he received Baptism, Confirmation and all Holy Orders. We could say that none of the qualities required to hold a civil office were lost in the transition to the ecclesiastical state; on the contrary, we see in his temper and combative nature in the fight against heretics the imprint of an honest, virtuous, and upright Roman magistrate.

His commitment to providing for the needs of the Church of Milan and especially of the poor did not prevent him from playing an important role in the political scene: it is thanks to the influence of Saint Ambrose on Emperor Theodosius I that in 380 Christianity was proclaimed as the State Religion of the Empire. Forty-seven years earlier, Constantine, with the Edict of Milan, had made it a *religio licita*, but with the Edict of Thessalonica issued by Theodosius the earthly authority recognized itself as the vicar of the Kingship

of Christ. It took one thousand four hundred years for the Revolution to break the unity between State and Church; and one thousand five hundred years for a Hierarchy subservient to the enemy to introduce the blasphemous secularity of the State into the Church, using an Ecumenical Council as a subversive instrument to impose on the faithful the errors of which we see the terrible consequences today.

A great promoter of divine worship, Saint Ambrose codified the Liturgy that takes his name, composing at least eighteen hymns – including *Nunc sancte nobis Spiritus; Rector potens verax Deus; Jesu corona virginum; Aeterne rerum conditor* – that the traditional Rite has preserved throughout the centuries. An implacable enemy of paganism and Arianism, Ambrose was a supporter of the Petrine Primacy against those heretics – for example Palladius – who considered the Bishop of Rome on a par with other Bishops. His preaching was articulated in apologetic, dogmatic, moral, and ascetic works of such erudition as to include Ambrose in the list of Doctors and Fathers of the Church. It was precisely by listening to Saint Ambrose preach that Augustine of Hippo, then a teacher of Rhetoric in Milan and still a catechumen, was persuaded to receive Baptism, which the Bishop personally imparted to him. He did not fail to impose a severe public penance on the Emperor, who in 390 had ordered the massacre of thousands of inhabitants of Thessalonica: Theodosius accepted Ambrose's punishment and was reconciled on Christmas Day of the same year.

A figure like that of Saint Ambrose today would be condemned by the conciliar and synodal clergy as “divisive,” and he would probably deserve the grotesque excommunications of those he would certainly fight against. Imagine, dear brothers, if the Archbishop of Milan – who also appears in the same *Chronotaxis* [list] of Saint Ambrose – would ever dare to make incursions into the churches of heretics to occupy them and return them to Catholic worship. Imagine him imposing a public penance, I would not say on the President of the Republic but on the Mayor of Milan, Giuseppe Sala. Imagine him defending the Roman Papacy against Bergoglio, who wants to reformulate it in a synodal and ecumenical key. Imagine him preaching to heretics, speaking as equals with the powerful, dedicating himself to the poor and needy without neglecting prayer and study. In reality, none of us can even imagine in our imagination the strength, the ardor, the virility, and the conviction of a Saint Ambrose, a Saint Augustine, a Saint Irenaeus, just to name a few. Yet, in their time, these witnesses of the Faith were not so

different from each other, and it has been like this for centuries, let us think of Saint Charles Borromeo, Blessed Ildefonso Schuster... and let's stop there. From Montini onwards, even if at a slower pace, the Ambrosian Church has undergone the same mutation as the Roman Church, transforming itself into what all the Bishops of Milan and of every part of the world had previously universally condemned.

But if a Saint Ambrose, a Saint Charles Borromeo, or a Blessed Ildefonso Schuster could consider themselves sons of the same Church under the same Holy Keys, what happened from a certain point onwards, to make it unthinkable and even deplorable to destroy pagan *simulacra* and idol statues, or to drive out heretics with blows of the whip and the scourge? Some will think: *Here goes Monsignor Viganò starting again with Vatican II...* and in reality we all know that the point of no return of the Revolution was the Council. This assembly was able to have its revolutionary value because for some time the Catholic Hierarchy had been infiltrated and progressively occupied – with the usual methods used by Freemasonry – by fifth columns that were to carry out the destruction of the Church from within, usurping authority by means of fraud. In this subversive action of the Lodges one sees the diabolical mind of the Adversary.

But there is a deeper, simpler, and at the same time more serious reason that explains the crisis afflicting the Catholic Church: the loss of Faith, Hope, and Charity on the part of the Clergy and in particular of the Bishops and the Conciliar Popes themselves. The rock of Faith has progressively changed into a swamp of errors, because the objective Truth of God, the Divine Revelation that is expressed in the Dogmas of Faith has been replaced by *personal experience*, making anthropocentric what should be ontologically theocentric and Christocentric. Without knowing and embracing God in His Truth, as He is and as He has revealed Himself to us, it is not possible to love Him: those who fall into this diabolical deception end up loving and preferring the *idea* they have of God, losing all supernatural inspiration.

Some of you, dear brothers, are preparing to serve the Lord in Holy Orders. Others are already clerics and priests. The Lord will speak to others in His time, to spur them to respond to their Vocation. Doctrinal and moral formation is certainly important, because it constitutes the foundation on which to erect the building of your personal sanctification. But the heart, the soul of holiness – and this applies to both lay people and clerics – is the love

of God, God himself, who is infinite Charity. Learn to love Our Lord, and your neighbor in Him. Learn to live of God, to feed on Him, to seek only His glory by conforming yourselves to His holy Will. Learn to love Him for how He has revealed Himself, and as the Holy Church teaches us. Charity is in fact founded on the truth of Faith, and those who do not possess the integrity of Faith are not capable of loving supernaturally. Learn to love the Cross, the highest compendium of Divine Charity. Learn to love your enemies, because by desiring their true good you will know how to find the way to attract them to God and tear them away from the slavery of the devil. Learn to love the Lord as Saint Ambrose loved Him, and the virtues of Saint Ambrose will shine in you too, since their source is the same: Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Most Holy Nativity we will celebrate in a few weeks.

+ Carlo Maria Viganò, *Archbishop*

December 7, 2024

*Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi, Confessoris,  
Ecclesiae Doctoris et Mediolanensis Patroni*