

Confessionum VIII 11 (27)

Sed iam tepidissime hoc dicebat.
aperiebatur enim ab ea parte,
qua intenderam faciem
et quo transire trepidam,
casta dignitas continentiae,
serena et non dissolute hilaris,
honeste blandiens,
ut venire neque dubitatem,
et extendens ad me suscipiendum
et amplectendum pias manus
plenas gregibus bonorum exemplorum.
ibi tot pueri et puellae,
ibi iuventus multa et omnis aetas
et graves viduae et virgines anus,
et in ómnibus ipsa continentia
nequaquam sterilis,
sed fecunda mater filiorum
gaudiorum de marito te, domine.
et inridebat me inrisione hortatoria,
quasi diceret: „tu non poteris,
quod isti et istae?
an vero isti et istae in se ipsis
possunt ac non in domino deo suo?
dominus deus eorum me dedit eis.
quid in te stas et non stas?
proice te in eum, noli metuere;
non se subtrahet, ut cadas:
proice te securus,
excipient et sanabit te.”
et erubesceram nimis,

But now she said this with a very weak voice.
for she appeared from that side
to which I had turned my face
and to which I shuddered to pass,
the chaste dignity of continence.
serene and not depravedly joyous,
virtuously flattering
so that I would come and not doubt,
and she extended so as to take me and
embrace me her pious hands
full of varied good examples.
there many boys and girls,
there many youths and all ages,
both grave widows and old virgins,
and in all of them the same continence
in no way sterile,
but fecund mother of children
of joys born of you her spouse, Lord.
and she laughed at me with hortatory laughter
as if to say: “couldn’t you,
what these (masc.) and these (fem.)?
or is it that these and these in themselves
are able, and not in the Lord their God?
the Lord their God gave them to me.
why do you stand in yourself and don’t stand?
throw yourself to him, do not fear;
he will not draw back so that you fall:
throw yourself to him tranquilly,
he will receive you and heal you.”
and I blushed exceedingly,

quia illarum nugarum
murmura adhuc audiebam,
et cunctabundus pendebam.
et rursus illa, quasi diceret:
„obsurdesce adversus
inmunda illa membra tua
super terram,
ut mortificentur.
narrant tibi delectationes,
sed non sicut lex domini dei tui.”
ista controversia in corde meo
non nisi de me ipso adversus me ipsum.
at Alypius affixus lateri meo
inuitati motus mei exitum
tacitus opperiebatur.

for of those trifles
the murmurs I still heard,
and I hung in suspense.
and again she, as if saying:
“turn a deaf ear against
those unclean members of yours
upon the earth,
that they be mortified.
they tell you of delights,
but not like the law of the Lord your God.”
this debate in my heart
was nothing but of myself against myself.
and Alypius fixed by my side
the issue of this my unusual agitation
awaited silently.
trans. Emilio G. Chávez