

QUESTION 187

Things that are Suitable for Religious

Next we have to consider the things that are suitable for religious. And on this topic there are six questions: (1) Are religious permitted to teach, preach, and do other things of this sort? (2) Are they permitted to insert themselves into secular affairs? (3) Are they obligated to do manual labor? (4) Are they permitted to live off of alms? (5) Are they permitted to beg? (6) Are they permitted to wear cheaper clothing than others?

Article 1

Are religious permitted to teach, preach, and do other things of this sort?

It seems that religious are not permitted to teach, preach, and do other things of this sort:

Objection 1: *Decretals* 7, q. 1, in a statute of a synod in Constantinople, says, “The life of monks has the nature of subjection and discipleship, not of teaching others, or of governing others, or of providing pastoral care for others.” Likewise, in *Ad Riparium et Desiderium* Jerome says, “A monk’s role is not that of a teacher but of one who beats his breast.” Again, in *Decretals*, q. 1, Pope Leo says, “Except for the priests of the Lord, let no one dare to preach, whether monk or layman, who might glory in the name of whatever sort of knowledge.” Now an individual is not permitted to overstep either his proper role or a statute of the Church. Therefore, it seems that religious are not permitted to teach, to preach, or to do other things of this sort.

Objection 2: In a statute of the Council of Nicea, found in *Decretals* 16, q. 1, it says, “We command firmly and indissolubly that (a) monks may not give a penance to anyone except to one another, as is just, that (b) they may not bury the dead except for those dwelling with them in the monastery (or perhaps a visiting brother who happens to die at the monastery).” But just as these things pertain to role of clerics, so, too, do preaching and teaching. Therefore, since, as Jerome says in *Ad Heliodorum*, “The case of a monk is different from that of a cleric,” it seems that religious are not permitted to preach, teach, or do other things of this sort.

Objection 3: As Gregory says in his *Registrum Epistolarum* (cf. *Decretals*, q. 1), “No one can both fulfill ecclesiastical duties and persist in a monastic rule with good order.” But monks are obligated to persist in a monastic rule with good order. Therefore, it seems that they cannot fulfill ecclesiastical duties. But teaching and preaching involve ecclesiastical duties. Therefore, it seems that they are not permitted to preach or teach or do anything of this sort.

But contrary to this: Gregory says (and this is found in the same case and question), “By authority of this decree, which we have set forth by our apostolic governance and by a duty of piety, monks who are priests are permitted to preach, baptize, give communion, pray for sinners, impose penances, and give absolution for sins.”

I respond: There are two ways in which someone is said not to be permitted to do something:

(a) In one way, because he has *within himself something that is contrary to what is said not to be permitted to him*, in the way that no man is permitted to sin because every man has within himself reason and an obligation to obey God’s law, both of which are such that sin is contrary to them. And on this score someone is said not to be permitted to preach or teach or do something of this sort because he has within himself something that conflicts with these acts, either (i) by reason of a *precept*, in the way that those who are irregular are, by a statute of the Church, not permitted to ascend to holy orders, or (ii) by reason of some sin—this according to Psalm 49:16 (“To the sinner God has said, ‘What right have you to recite my statutes?’”).

Now on this score it is not illicit for religious to preach, teach, and do other things of this sort—both because (i) they are not obligated by any vow or precept to refrain from these things, and also

because (ii) they are not rendered less fit for these things by any sin they have committed, but instead they are rendered more fit for them because of the practices of holiness that they have taken on.

Moreover, it is ridiculous to claim that by the fact that someone is making progress in holiness, he is rendered less fit to exercise spiritual offices. And so the opinion of certain individuals who claim that the religious state brings with it an impediment to executing such offices is ridiculous. Pope Boniface ruled out their error by the arguments mentioned above when he said, as found in *Decretals* 16, q. 1, “There are some who, not supported by any dogma and inflamed with a breathtakingly audacious zeal that stems from bitterness rather than love, assert that because monks are dead to the world and alive in God, they are unworthy of the power of the priestly office ... But they are completely mistaken.” He proves this, first, by the fact that [the priestly office] is not contrary to the [monastic] rule; for he adds, “Neither did St. Benedict, the saintly teacher of monks, forbid this sort of thing in any way.” Similarly, it is not prohibited in the other [religious] rules. Second, he disproves the error in question from the fitness of the monks; for at the end of the chapter he adds, “The more excellent an individual is, the more powerful he is in these things”—i.e., in spiritual works.

(b) In the second way, someone is said not to be permitted to do something not because of something contrary which he has [within himself], but because he *lacks something that would enable him to do the thing in question*—in the way that a deacon is not permitted to celebrate Mass because he does not have priestly orders, and in the way that a priest is not permitted to impose a sentence because he does not have episcopal authority.

However, in such matters we must draw a distinction. For things that belong to a holy order cannot be entrusted to someone unless he has that order, in the way that a deacon cannot be entrusted with celebrating Mass unless he becomes a priest. By contrast, things that have to do with jurisdiction can indeed be entrusted to those who do not have *ordinary* jurisdiction, in the way that the pronouncement of a sentence can be entrusted to a simple priest by his bishop. This is the way in which it is said that monks and other religious are not permitted to preach, teach, and do other things of this sort. For the *religious state* does not give them the power to do these things. Still, they can do them if they receive the relevant order or ordinary jurisdiction, or, again, if they are entrusted with the things that involve jurisdiction.

Reply to objection 1: These words show that monks do not, *by the fact that they are monks*, receive the power to do such things, but not that they have [within themselves], *by the fact that they are monks*, something contrary to the execution of such acts.

Reply to objection 2: Likewise, the statute of the Council of Nicea prescribes that monks may not usurp for themselves, by the fact that they are monks, the power of exercising the acts in question. But it does not say that these acts cannot be entrusted to them.

Reply to objection 3: These two things are not compatible with one another, viz., that (a) an individual has the ordinary care of ecclesiastical duties and that (b) he observes a monastic rule in a monastery. However, this does not prevent monks and other religious from being able to be occupied at times with ecclesiastical duties by being entrusted with them by prelates who have the ordinary care of ecclesiastical duties—and mainly, as will be explained below (q. 188, a. 4) those whose religious orders have been specifically instituted for this.

Article 2

Are religious permitted to manage secular business affairs?

It seems that religious are not permitted to manage secular business affairs (*religiosis non liceat secularia negotia tractare*):

Objection 1: In the aforementioned decree of Pope Boniface it says, “St. Benedict decreed that

they would have no part in secular business affairs (*eos saecularium negotiorum edixit expertes fore*); and the same thing is prescribed by the apostolic documents and by the teaching of all the saintly Fathers, not only for monks, but also for all the canonical clergy (*non solum monachis, sed etiam canonicis omnibus imperatur*)—this in keeping with 2 Timothy 2:4 (“Let no one who is fighting for Christ entangle himself in secular affairs”). But it is incumbent on all religious to fight for Christ. Therefore, they are not permitted to engage in secular business affairs.

Objection 2: In 1 Thessalonians 4:11 the Apostle says, “... to aspire to live quietly, to take care of your own affairs .” An interlinear Gloss comments, “... by putting aside the affairs of others, which is useful to you in amending your own life.” But religious, especially, are eager to amend their own lives. Therefore, they should not engage in secular business affairs.

Objection 3: In commenting on Matthew 1:8 (“Behold, those who dress in soft garments live in the houses of kings”), Jerome says, “He thereby shows that a strict life and austere preaching should avoid the palaces of kings and the mansions of soft men.” The demands of secular business affairs press a man to frequent the palaces of kings. Therefore, religious are not permitted to occupy themselves with any secular business affairs.

But contrary to this: In Romans 16:1 the Apostle says, “I commend to you Phoebe, our sister,” and later he adds, “Help her in any business affair where she might have need of you.”

I respond: As was explained above (q. 186, aa. 1 and 7), the religious state is ordered toward acquiring the perfection of charity. This principally involves the love of God, whereas it secondarily involves the love of neighbor. And so religious should principally, and for its own sake, tend toward freeing up time for God.

However, if their neighbors have an immediate need (*si necessitas proximis immineat*), they should attend to their affairs out of charity—this according to Galatians 6:2 (“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”). For by the very fact that serve their neighbors for God’s sake, they are complying with the love of God. Hence, James 1:27 says, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their tribulation”—where a Gloss adds, “that is, to help those who lack protection in their time of need.”

Therefore, one should reply that neither monks nor clerics are permitted to engage in secular business affairs out of an excessive desire for wealth (*causa cupiditatis*). However, out of charity (*causa caritatis*) they can, given the permission of a superior, engage in secular business affairs with due moderation, both as administrators and as directors. Hence, in *Decretals*, dist. 88, it says, “The holy synod decreed that from now on no cleric shall buy property or occupy himself with secular business affairs, except for the care of the fatherless, orphans, or widows, or when the bishop of the city orders him to take charge of matters connected with the Church .” Now the same line of reasoning holds for both religious and clerics, since, as has been said, both are barred from secular business affairs in similar ways.

Reply to objection 1: Monks are forbidden to engage in secular business affairs out of an excessive desire for money, but not out of charity.

Reply to objection 2: It is not curiosity, but charity, if an individual involves himself in business affairs out of necessity.

Reply to objection 3: It does not befit religious to frequent the palaces of kings for the sake of pleasure or glory or an excessive desire for money, but it does befit them to enter them for pious reasons. Hence, 4 Kings 4:13 says that Elisha asked the woman, “Do you have any business, and do you want me to speak with the king or the general of the army?” Similarly, it is fitting for religious to enter the palaces of kings to rebuke them or direct them, in the way that, as Matthew 14:4 reports, John the Baptist rebuked Herod.

Article 3

Are religious required to work with their hands?

It seems that religious are required to work with their hands (*religiosi manibus operari teneantur*):

Objection 1: Religious are not excused from observing precepts. But working with one's hands is contained in a precept—this according to 1 Thessalonians 4:11 (“Work with your hands, as we have commanded you”). Hence, in *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “But who can bear those insolent men”—that is, religious who do not work, of whom he is speaking here—“who resist the Apostle's salutary warnings, not so much to be tolerated as weaker [than the others], but to be praised as more holy [than the others]?” Therefore, it seems that religious are required to work with their hands.

Objection 2: A Gloss on 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (“If anyone does not want to work, then let him not eat”) says, “Some claim that the Apostle is saying this about spiritual work and not about bodily work of the sort that farmers and craftsmen do,” and later, “In vain do they try to draw down a cloud over themselves and others, with the result that not only do they not wish to *do* what charity so usefully advises, they do not even wish to *understand* it,” and later, “[The Apostle] wants the servants of God to make their living by doing bodily work.” But it is especially *religious* who are called ‘servants of God’, because they give themselves over entirely to God's service, as is clear from Dionysius in *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chap. 6. Therefore, it seems that religious are required to work with their hands.

Objection 3: In *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “I want to know what those who are unwilling to work with their bodies are doing instead. ‘Prayers,’ they say, ‘and Psalms, and reading, and the word of God.’” But he shows one by one that they are not excused by these things. For, first, he says this about prayer: “A single prayer from someone obedient is heard more quickly than ten thousand prayers from someone contemptuous”—where by the contemptuous and unworthy of being heard he means those who do not work with their hands. Second, he goes on to say this concerning the divine praises: “Even those working with their hands can easily sing the divine hymns.” Third, he says this about reading: “Those who claim that they free up time for reading, do they not find there what the Apostle commanded? What sort of perversity is this: not wanting to comply with the reading even while wanting to free up time to read it?” Fourth, he says this about preaching: “If a sermon is to be assigned to someone and he is so busy with it that he cannot free up time to work with his hands, is it the case that everyone in the monastery can do this? Therefore, when not everyone can do it, why does everyone want to free up time under this pretext? And even if everyone could do it, they should do it by turns, not only in order that the others might be occupied with other works, but also because it suffices for a single individual to speak while the many listen.” Therefore, it seems that religious ought not to withdraw from manual labor in order to make time for spiritual works of this sort (*non debent cessare ab opere manuali propter huiusmodi opera spiritualia quibus vacant*).

Objection 4: An ordinary Gloss on Luke 12:33 (“Sell what you possess, etc.”) says, “Don't just give your food to the poor, but also sell your possessions, in order that, having spurned everything altogether that is yours, you might afterwards work with your hands for what you live off of or give alms from.” But it belongs properly to religious to leave all their belongings behind. Therefore, it seems that it likewise belongs to them to live off of, and to give alms from, the work of their hands.

Objection 5: Religious seem especially obligated to imitate the lives of the apostles, since they are making progress in the state of perfection. But the apostles worked with their hands—this according to 1 Corinthians 4:12 (“We labor by working with our hands”). Therefore, it seems that religious are required to work with their hands.

But contrary to this: Religious and seculars are obligated in the same way to observe the precepts that are promulgated for everyone in general. But a precept concerning manual labor is promulgated for

everyone in general; this is clear from 2 Thessalonians 3:6, “Remove from yourselves every brother who is walking in a disordered way” (and here he is calling *every* Christian a brother, as in 1 Corinthians 7:12 “If any of your brothers has an unfaithful wife ...”). And in the same place it says, “If anyone does not want to work, then let him not eat.” Therefore, it is not the case that religious are more required to work with their hands than seculars are.

I respond: There are four things toward which manual labor is ordered:

First, and principally, toward *procuring the necessities of life* (*ad vitum quaerendum*). Hence, it was said to the first man, “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat your bread” (Genesis 3:19). And in Psalm 127:2 it says, “You shall eat the works of your hands, etc.”

Second, manual labor is ordered toward *removing idleness* (*ad tollendum otium*), from which many evils arise. Hence, Ecclesiasticus 33:28-29 says, “Send your servant to work, that he not be idle, since idleness has taught much evil.”

Third, insofar as the body is weakened by it, manual labor is ordered toward *holding back excessive sentient desire* (*ad conupiscentiae refrenationem*). Hence, 2 Corinthians 6:5-6 says, “... in labors, in fasts, in vigils, in chastity.”

Fourth, manual labor is ordered toward *giving alms or doing acts of mercy* (*ad eleemosynas faciendas*). Hence, Ephesians 4:28 says, “The one who stole should no longer steal, but should instead labor, doing with his hands what is good, in order that he might have the wherewithal to contribute to the one who is suffering need.”

Thus, to the extent that manual labor is ordered toward *procuring the necessities of life*, it falls under the necessity of a precept insofar as it is required for that end; for what is ordered toward an end has necessity from its end—specifically, in the sense that it is necessary to the extent that without it the end cannot be had. And so an individual who has no other source of the wherewithal by which he can live is required to engage in manual labor, no matter what his situation is (*cuiscumque sit conditionis*). And this is signified by the Apostle saying, “If anyone does not want to work, then let him not eat”—as if to say, “An individual is required to work with his hands by the same necessity by which he is required to eat.” Thus, if an individual could go through his life without eating, he would not be required to work with his hands. And the same line of reasoning holds for those who have other ways by which they can live *licitly*. For we do not mean to be saying that someone ‘can do’ something that he cannot do *licitly*. Hence, the Apostle likewise required manual work only in order to exclude the sin of those who were acquiring the necessities of life illicitly. For as is clear from Ephesians 4:28 (“The one who stole should no longer steal, but should instead labor, [working] with his hands”), the Apostle required manual work, first of all, in order to *forestall theft*. Second, he required it in order to *avoid excessive desire for the goods of others*; hence, in 1 Thessalonians 4:11 he says, “Work with your hands, as we have commanded you, in order that you might walk honestly toward those who are outside.” Third, he required it in order to *avoid the shady business dealings* by which some acquire the necessities of life; hence, in 2 Thessalonians 3:10ff. he says, “When we were with you, we gave you this command: If any one will not work, let him not eat. For we have heard that some among you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work”—a Gloss explains: ‘They provide necessities for themselves by shady business dealings (*cura foeda*)’—“Such persons we command and exhort ... to do their work in quiet and to eat their own bread.” Hence, in *Super Epistolam ad Galatas* Jerome asserts that the Apostle said this “not so much in his role as a teacher as because of the vices of the people.” Notice, however, that by manual work we mean all human occupations by which men licitly earn the necessities of life, whether they do it with their hands or their feet or their tongues; for guardsmen and couriers and others of this sort who are living by their own labor are understood to be living ‘by the work of their hands’. For since the hand is “the organ of organs,” ‘the work of the hands’ refers to an operation by which an individual can licitly acquire the necessities of life.

Now insofar as manual work is ordered toward *removing idleness* or toward *weakening the body*, it

does not in its own right fall under the necessity of a precept, since there are many other ways in which the flesh can be weakened or idleness removed than through manual work. For instance, the flesh is weakened by fasts and vigils, and idleness is removed through meditating on Sacred Scripture and through the divine praises. Hence, an ordinary Gloss on Psalm 118:82 (“My eyes have failed watching for Your word”) says, “An individual who only studies the word of God is not idle; nor is he who works in the outdoors any better than he who acts on his eagerness to have cognition of the truth.” And so it is not for these reasons that religious, or seculars for that matter, are required to do manual labor, unless, perhaps, they are bound to manual labor by the statutes of their [religious] order—in the way that in *Epistola ad Rusticum Monachum* Jerome reports, “The monasteries of the Egyptians have the custom of not admitting anyone who does not work or labor, not so much because of the necessities of life as for the health of the soul, lest they be led astray by dangerous thoughts.”

On the other hand, insofar as manual labor is ordered toward *giving alms or doing acts of mercy (ad eleemosynas faciendas)*, it does not fall under the necessity of a precept, except perhaps in a case in which someone is obligated by an emergency to do an act of mercy and he could not obtain the wherewithal to help the poor in any other way. In such a case religious and seculars would be similarly obligated to engage in manual labor.

Reply to objection 1: The precept that the Apostle is proposing is from the natural law. Hence, an interlinear Gloss on 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (“Remove from yourselves every brother who is walking in a disordered way”) says, “That is, walking otherwise than the order of nature demands.” Now he is talking here about those who stopped doing manual labor. Hence, nature gave man hands instead of the means of defense and protection (*arma et tegumenta*) that it gave to the other animals, in order that through his hands he might procure these and all necessary things. From this it is clear that both religious and seculars are in general bound by this precept, just as by all the other precepts of the natural law.

However, not everyone who does not work with his hands commits a sin. For it is not the case that each individual is bound by those precepts of the law of nature which involve the good of many; instead, it is sufficient that one individual make time for this duty and another for another duty, e.g., that some should be craftsmen and some farmers and some judges and some teachers, and so on for the others—this according to the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 12:17 (“If the whole body were an eye, then where would the hearing be? And if the whole were an instance of hearing, where would the smelling be?”).

Reply to objection 2: The Gloss in question is taken from Augustine in *De Operibus Monachorum*, where he is speaking in opposition to certain monks who claimed that servants of God are not permitted to work with their hands because of what our Lord says in Matthew 6:25 (“Do not be concerned about your life, what you are going to eat”). However, Augustine’s words do not imply that it is *necessary* for religious to work with their hands if they have other means by which they can live. This is clear from what he adds, viz., “[The Apostle] wants the servants of God to make their living by doing bodily work”—which does not pertain more to religious than to seculars. This is clear from two things. First, from the very mode of speaking that the Apostle uses when he says, “Remove from yourselves every brother who is walking in a disordered way.” For he is calling *all* Christians brothers, since religious institutes had not yet been founded at that time. Second, it is only because of the profession of their rule that religious are bound to things that are different from what seculars are bound to. And so if nothing about manual work is contained in the statutes of their rule, then religious are not bound to work with their hands in any way that differs from secular individuals.

Reply to objection 3: There are two ways in which one can make time for the spiritual works that Augustine touches upon here: (a) in one way, as *serving the common good* and (b) in a second way, as *pursuing his own private advantage*.

Thus, those who make time in a public way for the aforementioned spiritual goods are excused by spiritual works of this sort from manual labor, and this for two reasons. First, because they have to be occupied completely with works of this sort. Second, because those who exercise works of this sort are

owed the provision of the necessities of life by those whose good they serve.

By contrast, in the case of those who make time not for *public* works of the sort in question, but instead for *private* works, it is not necessary for them to be taken away from manual labor by works of this sort and, again, it is not owed to them that they should live off of the stipends of the faithful. And it is such as these that Augustine is talking about. For when he says that they can chant divine canticles while working with their hands, like craftsmen who give tongue to tales even while not withdrawing their hands from their work, it is manifest that he cannot be thought of as talking about those who chant the canonical hours in church; instead, he means those who give mouth to the Psalms or hymns as private prayers.

Similarly, when he is talking about reading and praying, this should be taken to refer to private prayers and readings, which even laymen do sometimes, and not to those who lead public prayers in church or give public lectures in the schools. Thus, he does not say, “those who say that they are making time for teaching and instructing ...,” but “those who say that they are making time for reading.”

He talks in the same way about preaching—not preaching which is done in public for the people, but preaching that is specially aimed at one individual or a few individuals in the manner of a private admonition. Hence, it is significant that he says, “If a *sermon* is to be assigned to someone ...”—just as a Gloss on 1 Corinthians 2:4 says, “A *sermon* is what is done in private, *preaching* is what is done in public.”

Reply to objection 4: Those who spurn all belongings for God’s sake are required to work with their hands when they do not have any other means to live off of, or when they do not have any other means with which to give alms in a case in which giving alms falls under a precept—but not otherwise, as has been explained. And the cited Gloss speaks in agreement with this.

Reply to objection 5: The fact that the apostles worked with their hands was sometimes a matter of necessity and sometimes a matter of supererogation. It was a matter of necessity when they could not obtain the necessities of life from others. Hence, a Gloss on 1 Corinthians 4:12 (“We labor by working with our hands”) says, “Because no one is providing for us.”

But it was sometimes a matter of supererogation, as is clear from what we see in 1 Corinthians 9:12, where the Apostle says that he was not exercising the power he had to live off of the Gospel. Now there were three reasons why the Apostle made use of this sort of supererogation:

First, in order to eliminate an occasion for preaching from the false apostles, who preached solely for temporal gain. Hence, in 2 Corinthians 11:12 he says, “I do it and will continue to do it, in order to cut off an occasion for them ...”

Second, to avoid burdening those to whom he was preaching. Hence, in 2 Corinthians 12:13 he says, “What did you have less of than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you?”

Third, in order to give to the idle an example of working. Hence, in 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9 he says, “We were working night and day in order to give you a pattern for imitating us.” Yet as Augustine points out in *De Operibus Monachorum*, this was not something that the Apostle did in those places, such as Athens (Acts 17:17), where he had the opportunity to preach every day.

However, religious are not thereby bound to imitate the Apostle in this, since they are not bound to all acts of supererogation; and neither is it the case that the other apostles all worked with their hands.

Article 4

Are religious permitted to live off of alms?

It seems that religious are not permitted to live off of alms (*religiosis non liceat de eleemosynis vivere*):

Objection 1: In 1 Timothy 5:16 the Apostle prescribes that widows who can be sustained in other ways should not live off of the alms of the Church, “so that the Church might have sufficient means for those who are truly widows.” And to Pope Damasus Jerome says, “If those who can be sustained by the goods and riches of their parents and by their own possessions take what belongs to the poor, they most assuredly commit a sacrilege, and by the misuse of such things they eat and drink judgment upon themselves.” But religious can be sustained by the work of their hands. Therefore, it seems that they sin by consuming the alms that belong to the poor.

Objection 2: To live off of the donations of the faithful is the wage assigned for labor or work to those who preach the Gospel—this according to Matthew 10:10 (“The worker is worth his food”). But preaching the Gospel does not pertain to religious, but instead pertains especially to prelates who are pastors and teachers. Therefore, religious cannot licitly live off of alms contributed by the faithful.

Objection 3: Religious are in the state of perfection. But it is more perfect to give alms than to receive them; for Acts 20:35 says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Therefore, they should not live off of alms, but should instead give alms that come from the work of their hands.

Objection 4: Being a religious involves avoiding impediments to virtue and occasions of sin. But receiving alms presents an occasion for sin. Hence, a Gloss on 2 Thessalonians 3:9 (“... that we ourselves might give you a pattern”) says, “An individual who, given to idleness, eats often at the table of another has to flatter the one who feeds him.” Again, Exodus 23:8 says, “Do not take gifts, which blind the prudent and pervert the words of the just.” And Proverbs 22:7 says, “The borrower is a servant to the lender.” This is contrary to religion; hence, the same Gloss on 2 Thessalonians 3:9 says, “Our religion calls men to freedom.” Therefore, it seems that religious should not live off of alms.

Objection 5: Religious are especially bound to imitate the perfection of the apostles; hence, in Philippians 3:15 the Apostle says, “Let whoever among us is perfect think this same way.” But as he himself explains in 2 Corinthians 11:12, the Apostle did not want to live off of the donations of the faithful, because he wanted to take away an occasion for preaching from the false apostles, and because, as is clear from 1 Corinthians 9:12, he did not want to give scandal to the weak. Therefore, it seems that for these same reasons religious should refrain from living off of alms. Hence, in *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “Cut off the occasion for shameful marketing whereby your reputation is damaged and whereby you give offense to the weak, and, instead, show men that you are not seeking an easy livelihood in idleness, but that you are seeking the kingdom of God by a strait and narrow path.”

But contrary to this: As Gregory explains in *Dialogi*, St. Benedict, after he had left his home and his parents, stayed for three years in a cave and ate from what was supplied to him by a Roman monk. And despite the fact that he was able-bodied, we do not read that he sought the necessities of life by the work of his hands. Therefore, religious can licitly live off of alms.

I respond: Each individual is permitted to live off of *what is his own* or off of *what is owed to him*.

Now something becomes *one's own* because of the generosity of a donor. And so religious and clerics whose monasteries or churches have received the resources by which they are sustained from the munificence of rulers or of any of the faithful can licitly live off of those resources without doing any manual labor. And yet it is certain that they are living off of alms. Similarly, if moveable goods are given to religious by the faithful, they can licitly live off of them, since it is foolish to claim that an individual can receive great holdings as alms and yet not bread or a small sum of money. However, since gifts of this sort are given to religious in order for them to be able to have more freedom to perform their religious acts—which those who supply them with the temporal gifts want to participate in—the use of those gifts would be rendered illicit if they stopped doing the religious acts. For in that case, they would, as far as they themselves are concerned, be undermining through fraud the intention of those who had donated the gifts.

Again, there are two ways in which something *is owed to someone*:

(a) In one way, *because of some difficulty* that makes all things communal (*propter necessitatem*

quae facit omnia communia), as Ambrose puts it. And so if religious are suffering from some difficulty, they can licitly live off of alms.

This sort of difficulty can occur, first of all, because of some bodily illness in light of which it happens that they cannot provide the necessities of life for themselves by manual labor.

It can occur, secondly, if what they acquire by manual labor is not sufficient for their livelihood. Hence, in *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “The good works of the faithful should not lack a subsidy to supply necessities to those servants of God who work with their hands, so that they will not suffer want when the hour for them to nourish their minds is freed up in such away that they cannot carry out their bodily works.”

A difficulty of the sort in question can occur, thirdly, because of the former way of life of those who were not used to working with their hands. Hence, in *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “If, when they lived in the world, they had the wherewithal to sustain their lives easily without working, and if, having turned to God, they gave it all away to the poor, then their bodily weakness has to be acknowledged and put up with.” For such individuals, who have been brought up in a more gentle way, are often unable to bear the toil of bodily work.

(b) In the second way, something comes to be owed to someone *because of what they produce*, whether it be something temporal or something spiritual—this according to 1 Corinthians 9:11 (“If we have sown spiritual goods among you, it is not a big deal if we reap your material benefits”). Accordingly, there are four ways in which religious can live off of the alms that are, as it were, owed to them.

First, if they preach by the authority of prelates.

Second, if they are ministers of the altar. For as 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 says, “Those who serve at the altar partake with the altar. So, too, our Lord ordered things in such a way that those who preach the Gospel should live off of the Gospel.” And in *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “If they are evangelizers, I allow, they have” (the power to live off of the contributions of the faithful); “if they are ministers of the altar and dispensers of the sacraments, they do well not to arrogate this power to themselves, but they plainly have a claim to it.” And this is so because whenever the sacrament of the altar takes place, it is something that is common to the whole populace of the faithful.

Third, if they devote themselves to the study of Sacred Scripture for the common good of the whole Church. Hence, in *Contra Vigilantium* Jerome says, “The custom endures in Judea up to the present, not only among us but also among the Hebrews, for those who meditate on the law of the Lord day and night, and who have no father on earth but God alone, to be supported by the assistance of the whole world.”

Fourth, if they have given to a monastery the temporal goods that they possessed, they can live off of the alms donated to a monastery. Hence, in *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “Those who, after their goods—whether ample or of any amount whatsoever—have been left behind or distributed, want with pious and salutary humility to be numbered among the poor of Christ, are such that the very community itself and fraternal charity owe it to them to sustain their life in return. It is praise worthy if they work with their hands, but if they do not want to, who would dare to force them?” And as he adds in the same place, “Nor does it matter in which monasteries, or in what place, any of them has given what he had to his needy brethren. For all Christians belong to a single republic.”

By contrast, if there are any religious who, without necessity and without anything useful to contribute, wish to live as idle individuals off of the alms that are given to the poor, this is illicit for them. Hence, in *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “It is not uncommon for individuals to come to the profession of service to God from a servile situation—from life as a peasant, or from working at a trade, or from being a common laborer. In such cases, it is not apparent whether they have come with the intention of serving God or whether, fleeing a life of want and toil, they wish to be fed and clothed in idleness and, in addition, to be honored by those whom they used to be disdained by and trod under foot by. Thus, such individuals cannot excuse themselves from working by appeal to bodily weakness, since

they are convicted by the nature of their former life.” And later he adds: “If they are unwilling to work, then should they eat. Nor do the rich humble themselves to piety so that the poor might be exalted to pride. For it is altogether unseemly that in a life wherein senators become laborers, laborers should become idle, and that in a place where those who were lords of estates come after having left everything, peasants should become self-indulgent.”

Reply to objection 1: These passages should be understood as having to do with times of emergency (*tempore necessitatis*), viz., when the poor cannot be assisted in any other way. For in cases like that, [religious] are not only obligated to stop receiving alms, but also obligated to donate what they have, if they have anything, to sustaining the poor.

Reply to objection 2: Preaching belongs to prelates *ex officio*, whereas it belongs to religious by their being commissioned. And so when religious work in the Lord’s field, they can thereby make their living—this according to 2 Timothy 2:6 (“It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the fruits,” where a Gloss says, “viz., the preacher, who in the field of the Church tills the hearts of his hearers with the plough of God’s word”).

In addition, those who minister to the preachers can live off of the alms. Hence, a Gloss on Romans 15:27 (“If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they should in turn minister to them in bodily things”) says, “viz., the Jews, who sent the preachers from Jerusalem.”

And yet, as has been explained, there are also other reasons on the basis of which it is owed to an individual to live off of the contributions of the faithful.

Reply to objection 3: All other things being equal, it is more perfect to give than to receive. And yet, as is clear from what was said above (q. 186, a.3, ad 6), giving away, or leaving behind, *all things* for the sake of Christ and receiving a modicum of goods to sustain one’s life is better than giving *some goods in particular* to the poor.

Reply to objection 4: It presents an occasion of sin for an individual to receive gifts to increase his wealth or to receive the necessities of life from another in the absence of any usefulness or of any emergency. But as is clear from what has been said above, this has no place in the case of religious.

Reply to objection 5: When there is a clear necessity and advantage for the sake of which certain religious live off of alms without any manual work, it is not the weak who are scandalized by this, but rather the malicious, in the manner of the Pharisees, whose being scandalized, our Lord taught, should be disdained (Matthew 15:54).

On the other hand, if there were no evident necessity or advantage, a scandal to the weak could thereby be generated, and it would have to be avoided. Yet the same sort of scandal can overhang those who live in idleness on the common resources.

Article 5

Are religious permitted to beg?

It seems that religious are not permitted to beg (*religiosis non liceat mendicare*):

Objection 1: In *De Operibus Monachorum* Augustine says, “Our most cunning enemy has scattered all over the place so many hypocrites, wearing the monastic habit, who go wandering about the provinces.” And later he adds: “They all beg, they all demand the cost of their lucrative poverty or the price of their simulated holiness.” Therefore, it seems that the live of begging religious should be condemned.

Objection 2: 1 Thessalonians 4:11 says, “Work with your hands, as we have commanded you, in order that you might walk honestly toward those who are outside and not desire anything from anyone,” where a Gloss says, “It is necessary for you to work and not be idle, because work is honest and, as it

were, a light to the non-believer; and you shall not desire what belongs to another, much less beg for or take anything.” And a Gloss on 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (“If anyone does not want to work, then let him not eat”) says, “He wants the servants of God to work for their livelihood, so that they are not forced by poverty to beg for the necessities of life.” Therefore, it seems to be illicit to beg in the absence of manual labor.

Objection 3: What is prohibited by the law and contrary to justice seems unfitting for religious. But begging is prohibited in divine law; for Deuteronomy 15:4 says, “There shall be no poor man or beggar among you,” and Psalm 36:25 says, “I have not seen the just man forsaken, nor his seed in need of bread.” And according to civil law, as one finds in the code *De Validis Mendicantibus*, an able-bodied beggar is punished. Therefore, it is unfitting for religious to beg.

Objection 4: As Damascene says, “Shame has to do with what is unseemly.” But in *De Officiis* Ambrose says, “To be ashamed of begging is a sign of good birth.” Therefore, begging is unseemly. Therefore, it is not fitting for religious.

Objection 5: Living off of alms belongs especially to those who preach the Gospel—this according to the command of our Lord, as was explained above (a. 4). Yet it is not fitting for them to beg, since a Gloss on 2 Timothy 2:6 (“It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the fruits”) says, “The Apostle wants the evangelist to understand that to receive the necessities of life from those among whom they work is not begging, but a right (*potestas*).” Therefore, it seems that it is not fitting for religious to beg.

But contrary to this: It is fitting for religious to live in imitation of Christ. But Christ begged—this according to Psalm 39:18 (“But I am a beggar and a poor man”), where a Gloss says, “Christ says this of Himself because of His ‘form of a servant’” (Philippians 2:7), and, further on, “A beggar is an individual who asks something of another, and a poor man is an individual who is not sufficient unto himself.” Again, a Gloss on Psalm 69:6 (“I am needy and a poor man”) says, “‘I am needy’, i.e. a beggar, ‘and a poor man’, i.e., insufficient unto myself, since I do not have worldly abundance.” And in a certain letter Jerome says, “Fear lest, while your Lord”—viz., Christ—“was begging, you are amassing the wealth of others.” Therefore, it is fitting for religious to beg.

I respond: As regards begging, two things can be taken into consideration:

The first is *on the part of the begging itself*, which has a sort of dejection (*abiectio*) connected with it, since the most dejected among men seem to be those who are not only poor, but needy to such a degree that they have to acquire the necessities of life from others. Accordingly, there are those who beg in a praiseworthy way for the sake of humility, in the same way that others take on what involves a certain sort of dejection as an efficacious antidote to pride, which they want to extinguish either in themselves or even in others through their example. For just as a sickness that arises from an excess of heat is most effectively cured through what is excessive in coldness, so, too, a inclination toward pride is most effectively cured through what seems very abject. This is why in *Decretals, De Poenitentia*, dist. 2, chap. beginning ‘If someone once ...’, it says, “Practices of humility include subjecting oneself to the more unpleasant tasks and handing oneself over to more revolting types of service, since in this way the vices of arrogance and human glory are able to be cured.” Hence, in the letter *Ad Oceanum* Jerome commends Fabiola because “after having given away her riches for the sake of Christ, she wished by the same token to receive alms.” This was also done by Blessed Alexis, who, having renounced all of his possessions for the sake of Christ, took pleasure in having received alms even from his own servants. And in *Lives of the Fathers* we read of Blessed Arsenius that he gave thanks that, forced by necessity, he had to beg for alms. Hence, as a penance for serious sins it is imposed on some individuals that they go around begging. However, since humility, like the other virtues, should not exist without discretion, a man has to take on begging in a discreet way for the sake of being humbled, so that he does not thereby incur notoriety for his excessive desire for wealth (*cupiditas*) or for anything else unbecoming.

In a second way, begging can be considered *on the part of the one who acquires things by begging*.

And in this sense a man can be induced to beg in two ways. In one way, by his excessive desire to have riches or the necessities of life while idle. And this sort of begging is illicit. In the second way, out of necessity or for some advantage (*ex necessitate vel utilitate*). Out of necessity, as when an individual cannot have the necessities of life from any source other than begging. For some advantage, as when an individual intends to bring something advantageous to completion but cannot do this without the alms of the faithful, as, for instance, when alms are sought for the construction of a bridge or of a church, or for any other works that contribute to the common good—as, for instance, that scholars be able to free up time for the pursuit of wisdom. And this sort of begging is licit for religious, just as it is for seculars.

Reply to objection 1: Augustine is here talking explicitly about those who beg out of an excessive desire for wealth (*ex cupiditate*).

Reply to objection 2: As is clear from the words of the Apostle, the first Gloss is talking about begging that is done out of an excessive desire for wealth.

On the other hand, the second Gloss is talking about those who, without doing anything useful, beg for the necessities of life in order to live in idleness. By contrast, anyone who lives usefully in any way at all is not living in idleness.

Reply to objection 3: This precept of divine law does not prohibit anyone from begging; instead, what is prohibited is being held under the sway of riches to such an extent that one is thereby forced to beg because of indigence. On the other hand, civil law imposes a penalty on able-bodied beggars who are not begging either for the sake of something useful or out of necessity.

Reply to objection 4: There are two sorts of unseemliness (*turpitude*): (a) the unseemliness of *moral failure* (*inhonestas*), and (b) the unseemliness of *defectiveness* (*defectus*), in the sense that it is unseemly for a man to be sick or impoverished. And begging has the latter sort of unseemliness. Hence, as has been explained, it does not involve sin, but can involve humility.

Reply to objection 5: Preachers are owed their livelihood as a debt by those to whom they preach. However, if they do not wish it to be given as something *owed to* them, but instead want to ask, by begging, that it to be given *freely*, then [their preaching] belongs [to the category] of something that has greater usefulness.

Article 6

Are religious permitted to wear cheaper clothing than others?

It seems that religious are not permitted to wear cheaper clothing (*non liceat religiosis vilioribus vestibus uti*) than others:

Objection 1: According to the Apostle in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, we ought “to abstain from every sort of bad appearance” (*ab omni specie mala abstinere*). But cheapness in one’s clothes has the appearance of something bad. For in Matthew 7:15 our Lord says, “Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep. And a Gloss on Apocalypse 6:8 (“Behold a pale horse ...”) says, “The devil, noticing that he cannot succeed either by open tribulations or open heresies, sends in advance false brothers, who, under the guise of a religious habit, take on the characteristics of the black and red horses by perverting the faith.” Therefore, it seems that religious should not wear cheap clothing.

Objection 2: In *Ad Nepotianum* Jerome says, “Avoid somber”—i.e. black—“as much as bright clothing. Ornate clothes and sordid clothes are equally to be shunned, since the one is redolent of pleasures and the other of glory.” Therefore, it seems that since vainglory is a more serious sin than the enjoyment of pleasures, religious, who ought to tend toward what is more perfect, should avoid cheap clothing more than expensive clothing.

Objection 3: Religious should especially tend toward works of repentance. But in works of

repentance one should make use of exterior signs of joy rather than exterior signs of sorrow; for in Matthew 6:16 our Lord says, “When you fast, do not be sad like the hypocrites.” And later He adds, “When you are fasting, anoint your head and wash your face.” When expounding this passage in *De Sermone Domini in Monte*, Augustine says, “In this chapter one must notice especially that there can be ostentation not only in the splendor and pomp of corporeal things, but also in mournful squalor itself, and the latter is all the more dangerous because it deceives under the name of service to God.” Therefore, it seems that religious ought not to be clothed in cheaper garments.

But contrary to this: In Hebrews 11:37 the Apostle says, “They wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins,” where the Gloss says, “... like Elijah and the others.” And in *Decretals* 21, q. 4 it says, “If anyone is found ridiculing those who are clothed in cheap religious attire, let them be corrected. For in ancient times every man consecrated [to God] went about in common and cheap clothes.”

I respond: As Augustine explains in *De Doctrina Christiana* 3, in the case of all exterior things, “the sin lies not in making use of them, but in an excessive desire to make use of them.” In order to judge this matter, notice that there are two ways to think about cheap or inelegant clothing:

(a) In one way, *as a sign of a human disposition or state*. For as Ecclesiasticus 19:27 says, “A man’s attire shows something about him.”

And on this score, the cheapness of an individual’s clothing is sometimes a sign of *sadness* (*signum tristitiae*). Hence, men who are in sadness often wear cheap clothing—just as, contrariwise, in times of solemnity and joy they wear elegant clothing. Hence, penitents are dressed in cheap clothes, as is clear in Jonah 3:6 with respect to the king [of Nineveh], who “was clothed in sackcloth,” and in 3 Kings 21:27 with respect to Ahab, who “covered (*operuit*) his flesh with a hair-shirt.”

On the other hand, sometimes it is a sign of *contempt for riches and for the arrogance of the world*. Hence, in *Ad Rusticum Monachum* Jerome says, “Let the squalor of your clothes be indicative of a pure mind, and let your cheap robe be a proof of your contempt of the world—yet in such a way that your mind does not get puffed up, and that your [religious] habit and your speech do not disagree with one another.”

And with respect to both of these, cheapness of clothing is fitting for religious, since the religious state is a state of repentance and a state of contempt for worldly glory. Now there are three reasons why an individual might want to signify this to others. First, *for his own humiliation*; for just as a man’s mind is elated by the splendor of his clothing, so he is humiliated by the humble nature of his clothing. Hence, as reported in 3 Kings 21:27, concerning Ahab, who “clothed (*induit*) his flesh in a hair-shirt,” the Lord said to Elijah, “Have you not seen Ahab humiliated before me?” Second, *for the sake of giving an example to others*. Hence, a Gloss on Matthew 3:4 (“[John] had clothes made of camel’s hair”) says, “He who preaches penance simulates the clothing of penance.” Third, *out of vainglory*, in the sense in which Augustine claims that there can be ostentation in mournful squalor. Therefore, in the first two ways just noted, it is praiseworthy to wear humble clothes, whereas in the third way it is sinful.

(b) The second way in which to think about wearing cheap and inelegant clothing is that *it proceeds either from greed or from negligence*. And on this score it likewise involves sin.

Reply to objection 1: Cheapness of clothing does not in its own right (*de se*) have the appearance of something bad—just the opposite, it has the appearance of something good, viz., contempt for worldly glory. And this is why bad individuals hide their malice under the cheapness of their clothes. Hence, in *De Sermone Domini in Monte* Augustine says, “Sheep should not hate their own vestiture just because wolves often hide themselves under it.”

Reply to objection 2: Jerome is here speaking of cheap clothes that are worn for the sake of human glory.

Reply to objection 3: According to our Lord’s teaching, in the works of holiness men should do nothing for the sake of appearance. This happens mainly when an individual does something novel (*aliquid novum facit*). Hence, in *Super Matthaenum* Chrysostom says, “When praying, an individual

should do nothing novel that men will notice, either by shouting or by striking his breast or by stretching out his hands," viz., since men turn their attention to it because of the novelty itself. And yet not every novelty that makes men intent on thinking about it is reprehensible. For it can be done well and it can be done badly. Hence, in *De Sermone Domini in Monte* Augustine says, "When, in the profession of Christianity, an individual makes the eyes of men turn upon himself by his unusual squalor and shabbiness, since he does this voluntarily and not out of necessity, one can gather from his other deeds whether he is doing it out of contempt for excessive adornment or out of some sort of ambition." Now it seems especially to be the case that it is not done out of ambition by religious, who don their cheap habit as a sign of their profession, by which they profess their contempt for the world.