

Theological disputes

a) in the seventh *Homely against the Anomoeans* of January 387 John Chrysostom insists on Jesus Christ's very real passion contradicting a group of Gnostics and Docetes. Whereas among the Apostles' stories about him, and among his own people, there are so many marks of his humility and of his humanity, the devil took it upon himself to persuade some unfortunate and miserable men to negate the reason of divine economy, to dare say that he did not take flesh and to destroy thereby the very foundation of his love of mankind. If he had said none of this how many would have fallen in this abyss? Do you not hear Marcion negate the economy? And Manes and Valentinus and many others? If, for this reason, he spoke so many human and humble words out of keeping with this ineffable essence, that was to make accessible to faith the reason of divine economy. For indeed the devil strains every sinew to destroy this faith among men, knowing that if he destroys faith in the economy, the most part of the realities concerning us will disappear.

After Emmanuel Soler, *Le sacré et le salut [The Sacred and Salvation]*, p. 147 (translation by the translator of the course)

b) on 2 August, date of the Martyrs' festival, John Chrysostom exhorts the Christian faithful to honour also Syriac speaking Christians whose relics rest in the countryside around Antioch

As I was saying at the beginning, yesterday was Martyrs' Day, today is Martyrs' Day, not our own but for those from the countryside. Or rather, they are ours too; for town and country may be differentiated in matters of everyday life but according to revealed faith, they are in communion and fused together. Do not be put off by their barbarous tongue but consider their Christian thinking. What is a common language to me when the minds are divided? What is the problem with diverse languages when there is unity in matters of faith? Accordingly, the country is in no way inferior to the town; all told, they have equal claims to goods. That is why our Lord Jesus-Christ did not remain inside cities but went towards deserted and isolated places. He journeyed among town and villages, preaching the Gospel and curing all sorts of diseases and infirmities [...]

God seeded martyrs not just in cities but also in the very countryside so that, in the inception of these festivals, we found a necessary reason to establish relations with each other. He even granted the country more martyrs than the town. He gave the countryside, which comes after the city the greater dignity. Indeed the country is the weaker party; that is why it received greater attention. City dwellers are in constant receipt of teaching but country folks do not share in such resources. God, making up for the dearth of their preachers by a wealth of martyrs saw to it that a greater number of martyrs be buried among them. Indeed, they do not hear the masters' words at all times but they hear the martyrs' mightier voice rising towards them from the grave.

- c) John Chrysostom notes that Daphne, once a temple to pagan divinities has become, after the translation there of Antiochian Bishop and Martyr Babylas, a replica of Mount Olive before Jerusalem

Now Daphne is charming and loved of God, not only because it springs the most limpid waters or boasts the most graceful heads of foliage but because it offered shelter to a foreign tree, to the cross: now it truly is a wise spring much feared by the Pythian demon. No more does its paths unfurl under impious feet for it is to your piety that it devotes its sacred woods, an image of this sorry place, I mean of the garden where our Saviour's betrayal was projected, where the undertaking of our salvation was seeded.

After Emmanuel Soler, *Le sacré et le salut [The sacred and Salvation]*, p.180 (translation by the translator of the course)