

***Conversatio* and *Converso* in The Commentary on the Song of Songs
by
St Bernard of Clairvaux**

Introduction

First, some quick remarks with regard to reading St Bernard...

A number of people are turned off by his style which is often called mellifluous or flowing like honey. Actually that turns out to be spot on. However, it holds true with regard to the original Latin text. Regardless of the English translation (and I assume other languages as well), his writings basically are a turn-off. Not exactly a nice way of starting a document about his **Song Commentary**, but that seems to be a common consensus I've garnered over the years. On several occasions I've run into a number of instances when I would speak of how much I enjoy reading St Bernard. In the eyes of some it was almost as if I were proclaiming myself to be afflicted with some kind of contagious disease and therefore to be avoided. However, I learned to maintain a discreet silence on the matter. This is an exaggeration, of course, but it contains some truth.

As time went on, I could better appreciate the less than positive view of St Bernard's writings on an audience wider than I initially had imagined. However...and that is a humongously important word...such an observation pertains to his works in translation. When it comes to the original Latin, we're in a whole new ball game. In fact, I venture to say that no mere mortal was responsible for the text we have under Bernard's name. Surely the author must have been an angel with a direct line to the Almighty. And to think this goes on and on, one blessed page after the next. This is bound to make the reader smile but is not far off the mark should you have the opportunity to read Bernard in the Latin. At this point I might throw in a brief pitch for Cicero who has a profound influence. Would that more could be said on this but here isn't the place.

So with these brief remarks out of the way, consider two words singled out from the **Commentary on the Song of Songs**, *conversatio* and *converso*. Both are prefaced with the preposition *con-* generally rendered as with. Also both have as their verbal root *verso*, to turn and to do so frequently. This imparts a certain attention, of being occupied, as well as constancy of action. To do so as *con-*

endows both something extra, if you will. That consists in a familiarity which is attractive by reason of being something not done in isolation but *with* someone or in a larger context. Therefore while going through each verse it's helpful to keep in mind the dynamic quality of *verso* as well as the fact that it's not done in isolation but *con-* or with.

Interestingly I started out with a desire to pick out a few references to both *conversatio* and *converso*. However, it turned out far more than I had expected and have included here most instances. The best part of all was the delight I took in discovering that both words went a long way toward understanding how St Bernard's mind works with regard to his **Song Commentary**. Once I shared with a friend just the verse references of the Latin text, he remarked such document could be the basis for a PhD! That would be great, but like all other documents on this homepage, the goal is to read the text in the spirit of *lectio divina*. Outside that, it isn't worth the time nor the effort.

Both the Latin and English words for *conversatio* and *converso* are underlined. In this light it's interesting to see how both words are rendered in translation.

Sources

For the Latin text: **Sancti Bernardi Opera** (Rome, 1957).

For the English text: **On the Song of Songs I** (Spencer, Massachusetts, 1971), **On the Song of Songs II** (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1976), **On the Song of Songs III** (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1979) and **On the Song of Songs IV** (Kalamazoo, Michigan 1980).

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1.12: Caeterum non est illud cantare seu audire animae puerilis et neophytae adhuc, et recens conversae de saeculo, sed provectae jam et eruditae mentis.

The novices, the immature, those but recently converted from a worldly life, do not normally sing this song or hear it sung. Only the mind disciplined by persevering study.

4.1: Diximus, si recolitis, illa oscula sumi ad pedes, ad manum, ad os, singula singulis referentes. In primo sane primordia dedicantur nostrae conversionis;

secundum autem proficientibus indulgetur: porro tertium sola experitur, et rara perfectio.

We said, as you remember, that these kisses were given to the feet, to the hand and to the mouth, in that order. The first is the sign of a genuine conversion of life, the second is accorded to those making progress, the third is the experience of only a few of the more perfect.

4.3: At cum etiam ad vivendum emendatius, Deoque dignius conversandum, placita quadam amplioris gratiae familiaritate donamur; ampliori fiducia caput jam levamus de pulvere, largitoris, ut assolet, manum osculaturi.

But when God endows us with the more ample grace of a sweet friendship with him, in order to enable us to live with a virtue that is worthy of such a relationship, we tend to raise our heads from the dust with a greater confidence for the purpose of kissing, as is the custom, the hand of our benefactor.

4.4: et pedes habet, quorum terra scabellum est, ad quos nimirum peccatores terrae conversi atque humiliati satisfaciunt.

When the sinners of the earth are converted from their ways, it is in abasement before these feet that they make satisfaction.

6.7: His duobus ergo pedibus apte sub uno divinitatis capite concurrentibus, natus ex muliere, factus sub lege invisibilis Emmanuel, in terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est (Bar 3.38).

With these two feet, therefore, so aptly united and controlled by the divine head, he who was the invisible Emmanuel is born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, appears on earth and moves among men.

7.7: Denique laetati sunt de conversione: et in assumptione non agnoscent?

Is it possible that we should be snubbed in heaven by those whom our conversion here below made so happy?

9.1: An vero times repetitum iri, quod tibi de mala tua pristina conversazione indultum praesumpseras? Non.

Do you fear then that you will be condemned anew for the sins of your past life, that you presumed were forgiven? “No” was her answer.

9.2: Sine querela me arbitror, quantum in me est, conversari inter fratres.

As far as I can judge I have lived among the brethren without quarrel.

9.4: *moxque conversa ad ipsum, temeritatem, prout valet, excusare conatur: Quia meliora sunt, inquit, ubera tua vino, fragrantia unguentis optimis.*

So in her endeavor to excuse her temerity she turns to him and says “For your breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments.”

10.5: *Ecce hoc est unum unguentum, quo anima peccatrix suae conversionis primordia condire debet, plagisque suis recentibus adhibere.*

Here then is one ointment which the sinful soul should provide at the beginning of its conversion and apply to its still smarting wounds.

10.6: *Quod si attendamus quanta in unius peccatoris conversione fragrantia respergatur Ecclesia.*

So if we consider how great the fragrance with which the Church is perfumed in the conversion of one sinner, what a sweet smell of life leading to life each penitent can become!

10.6: *Vobis dico, quos nuper conversos de saeculo, et a viis vestris pravis recedente.*

I am speaking to those of you who have recently come to us from the world, who have renounced your sinful ways.

10.9: *Duabus de causis videtur mihi hujuscemodi animi aegritudo et diffidentia solere contingere, aut de novitate videlicet conversionis, aut certe de conversationis tepore, etiamsi in conversione longum tempus habuerit.*

The weakness and misgiving exhibited by this type of person seem to me usually to arise from either of two causes, from the fact that he has been but recently converted, or because he lives in a lukewarm fashion even though converted for long years.

12.9: *Quod si implere non sufficit absque aliqua iniquitate, id est absque quadam inaequalitate vitae et conversationis suae, memento quia charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum.*

And if in the performance of this duty he is guilty of some imperfection, if his life and behavior are less than regular, remember that love covers a multitude of sins.

14.6: Frequenter ego ipse, quod fateri non verecundor, maximeque in initio conversionis meae, corde durus et frigidus, et quaerens quem vellet diligere anima mea: nec enim adhuc diligere poterat quem nondum invenerat, aut certe minus quam vellet diligebat, et ob hoc quaerebat ut magis diligeret.

I am not ashamed to admit that very often I myself, especially in the early days of my conversion, experienced coldness and hardness of heart, while deep in my being I sought for him whom I longed to love.

20.24: Sed sit nihilominus intellectui praevia lux et dux rationi, non solum ob cavendas haereticae fraudis decipulas, et fidei puritatem ab eorum versutiis custodiendam, verum et cautus quoque sis nimiam et indiscretam vehementiam in tua **conversatione** [*alias, conversione*] vitare.

No less than this keep him as a strong light for your mind and a guide for your intellect, not only to avoid the deceits of heresy and to preserve the purity of your faith from their seductions, but also that you might carefully avoid an indiscreet and excessive vehemence in your conversation.

20.6: Ego hanc arbitror praecipuam invisibili Deo fuisse causam, quod voluit in carne videri, et cum hominibus homo **conversari**.

I think this is the principal reason why the invisible God willed to be seen in the flesh and to converse with men as a man.

20.9: Itemque cum in propria **conversatione** illa cautela servatur, ut discretionis meta nulla superstitione vel levitate, vel spiritus quasi ferventioris vehementia excedatur.

In the same way when speaking on its own it exercises such caution as never to exceed the proper limits of discretion by superstition or frivolity or the vehemence of a too eager spirit.

21.2: Hoc sentirem, si dixisset, Trahe me ad te. Nunc vero quia dicit, post te, magis illud mihi postulare videtur, ut **conversationis** ejus valeat vestigia sequi, ut possit aemulari virtutem, et normam tenere vitae, et morum queat apprehendere disciplinam.

But because she says “after you,” she seems rather to appeal for the grace to follow the example of his way of life, to emulate his virtue, to hold fast to a rule of life similar to his and achieve some degree of his self-control.

22.6: Sapientia in praedicatione, justitia in absoluteione peccatorum, sanctificatio

in **conversatione**, quam habuit cum peccatoribus; redemptio in passione, quam sustinuit pro peccatoribus. Ubi ergo haec a Deo factus est; tunc Ecclesia odorem sensit, tunc cucurrit.

Wisdom and righteousness, and holiness and redemption: wisdom in preaching, righteousness in forgiving of sins, holiness in social contacts with sinners and redemption in the passion he endured for sinners. When therefore he was made these by God, then the Church perceived the odor, then it ran.

22.8: Sanctitatem quoque suavissime et copiosissime tua redolet non solum **conversatio**, sed et conceptio.

Your holiness, for its part, is sweetly and richly radiated not only by your mode of life, but even by your conception.

22.9: Alios amplius ad virtutum exercitium vitae et **conversacionis** ejus provocari exemplo.

Others again are inspired to practice the virtues by the example of Christ's life and behavior.

23.12: **Convertantur**, et sanet eos.

And be converted and he would heal them.

25.4: An nigram quidem ob tetram **conversacionem**, quam prius habuit sub principe hujus mundi?

Is she black because of the benighted life she formerly led under the power of the prince of this world?

25.8: Quod cum ita sit, pulchre sponsa **convertit** sibi ad gloriam, quod ei pro opprobrio ab aemulis intorquetur; non modo formosam, sed et nigram esse se glorians.

This being so, how aptly the bride accepted as an enhancement of her glory the insult hurled by those who envied her, rejoicing not only in her loveliness but even in her blackness.

25.9: Beatus qui te in his hominem inter homines **conversantem** diligenter observans, se ipsum praebet pro viribus imitatore tuum.

Happy the man who, by attentive study of your life as a man among men, strives according to his strength to live like you.

26.10: Non erit otiosa socialis conversatio, praesertim inter amicos: et quid effecerit mutuus amor in sibi praesentibus, horror indicat separationis, et dolor de invicem separatis.

Social intercourse, especially between friends, cannot be purposeless; the reluctance to part and the yearning for each other when separated, indicate how meaningful their mutual love must be when they are together.

26.11: Pater, Pater, conversus ad me, exhilarata quidem facie: “Quanta,” inquit, “dignatio Dei, patrem hominum esse! quanta hominum gloria, Dei filios Dei esse et haeredes!

“Father, Father;” then turning to me, his face lit up with joy, he said: “How great the goodness of God, that he should become a father to men!”

26.14: conversus ad orationem cum fletu et gemitu.

So I began to pray in the midst of my tears and groaning.

27.8: Et tunc liquido ostendit quia vere origo ipsius de coelis est, cum onversatio ejus in coelis est.

Their heavenly origin is most evident since their life is centered in heaven.

28.13: Quid exprobratis nigredinem, quam fervor persecutionis, non conversationis pudor invexit?

Why reproach me for blackness caused by the heat of persecution, not by the shame of evil living?

30.3: Denique gaudent in conversione et poenitentia peccatorum, salutem hominum sitientes.

In their thirst for men’s salvation they rejoice in the conversion and repentance of sinners.

30.6: Caeterum conversus ad Dominum, meliuscule coepi, fateor, custodire; non tamen prout oportuit.

On my conversion to the Lord I began to improve, though very little, not as much as I should have.

31.5: Sed angelus ejus, qui unus est de sodalibus sponsi, in hoc ipsum deputatus, minister profecto et arbiter secretae mutuaeque salutationis; is, inquam, angelus

quomodo tripudiat, quomodo collaetatur et condelectatur, et conversus ad Dominum dicit: Gratias ago tibi.

And that soul's angel, one of the friends of the Bridegroom, and by him commissioned to be the minister and witness of that secret and mutual exchange—that angel, I say, must be dancing with joy! Does he not participate in their gladness and bliss, and turning to the Lord, say: “I thank you.”

33.5: Fuit namque quaedam hujus aurora diei, ex quo sol justitiae per archangelum Gabrielem nuntiatus est terris, et Virgo Deum in utero de Spiritu sancto concepit et peperit Virgo, ac deinceps, quoad in terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est.

The dawning of this day began when the Sun of righteousness was announced to the earth by the Archangel Gabriel; when the Virgin conceived God in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit, and still remaining a virgin gave birth to him; and it continued as long as he was seen on earth and lived among men.

33.6: Erat ergo aurora, et ipsa subobscura satis, tota illa Christi videlicet conversatio super terram, usque dum occumbens et rursus exoriens, solaris suae praesentiae lumine clariori fugavit auroram, et mane facto absorpta est nox in victoria.

The dawn, then, and a quite clouded one at that, was the whole life of Christ upon earth, which remained obscure until he died and rose again, to put the dawn to flight by the clearer light of his glorious presence.

33.II: Illud omnes in nobis sentimus et sensimus qui conversi sumus ad Dominum, quod sancta Scriptura dicit: Fili, accedens ad servitum Dei, sta in timore, et praepara animam tuam ad tentationem. Itaque primordia nostrae conversionis, juxta communis quidem experientiae rationem.

All of us who have been converted to the Lord have felt and still feel the truth of what Scripture says: “My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord, stand in fear, and prepare your soul for temptation.”

34.3: Est autem humilis, qui humiliationem convertit in humilitatem, et ipse est qui dicit Deo: Bonum mihi quod humiliasti me.

But he is humble who turns humiliation into humility, and he is the one who says to God: “It was good for me that you humiliated me.”

35.1: Convertere, anima mea, in requiem tuam, quia Dominus beneficit tibi.

“Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.”

35.3: Habitabat in paradiso, et in loco voluptatis conversatio ejus.

His dwelling was in Paradise, he spent his days in the midst of delights.

35.5: se conversione invenerit et propter infirmitatem jacentem in stabulo.

And so he who is food for man has changed himself into fodder for beasts.

35.8: Merito proinde eo ipso censetur homo egredi, et post ire gregalibus animantibus, quod solum hoc animal conversazione degeneri jura naturae transgrediens.

A man then in this condition is rightly judged to go forth from the company of other living creatures and drop to a lower level, since he is the only creature who violates the laws of his nature by a degenerate way of life.

36.5: Nonne magis convertetur in aerumna sua, dum configitur spina.

Convertetur, inquam, ad lacrymas, convertetur ad planctus et gemitus, convertetur ad Dominum, et in humilitate clamabit: Sana animum meam, quia peccavi tibi. Porro conversa ad Dominum recipiet consolationem, quia Pater est misericordiarum, et Deus totius consolationis.

With the thorns of his misery pricking him, will he not rather be changed for the better? Let him be changed and weep, changed to mourning and sighing, changed to acceptance of the Lord, to whom in his lowliness he will say: “Heal me because I have sinned against you.” He will certainly find consolation in this turning to the Lord, because he is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

37.4: Quisquis itaque vestrum post illa amara et lacrymosa conversionis suae primordia respirasse in spem atque in quoddam serenum supernae consolationis pennis gratiae sublevatum se evolasse laetatur.

Anyone therefore who has the happiness of being borne aloft on the wings of grace and of breathing freely in the hope of consolation after the early period of conversion with its bitterness and tears, already in this life gathers the fruit of his tears.

38.1: Forte aliquis reversus in se, et displicens sibi in omnibus malis quae fecit, cogitansque resipiscere, et redire ab omni via mala et carnali conversazione sua.

Imagine a man who decides to take stock of his way of life, who, unhappy in his sinful conduct, wants to reform and abandon his evil and carnal ways.

40.3: Si autem vel solum, vel maxime, ob vitae praesentis necessaria ad Deum converterit intentionem; non quidem faece hypocrisis putidam, pusillanimitatis tamen vitio dicimus subobscuram, et minus acceptam.

Again, if one directs one's mind to God solely or chiefly because of the necessities of the present life, I cannot say that it stinks with the dregs of hypocrisy, but it is so befogged by pettiness of spirit that it cannot merit acceptance.

40.4: Pudica avicula est, et conversatio ejus non cum multis, sed solo degere fertur contenta compare.

This is a chaste little bird that leads a retired life, content to live with one mate.

40.5: Solus es in quantacunque hominum verseris frequentia: tantum cave alienae conversacionis esse aut curiosus explorator, aut temerarius iudex.

However great the crowds that surround you, you can enjoy the benefits of solitude if you refrain from curiosity about other people's conduct and shun rash judgment.

43.3: Et ego, fratres, ab ineunte mea conversione, pro acervo meritorum, quae mihi deesse sciebam, hunc mihi fasciculum colligare, et inter ubera mea collocare curavi.

As for me, dear brothers, from the early days of my conversion, conscious of my grave lack of merits, I made sure to gather for myself this little bunch of myrrh and place it between my breasts.

46.2: Atque is lectus floridus demonstratur, cum exemplis et institutis patrum, tanquam quibusdam bene olentibus respersa floribus, fratrum conversatio et vita refulget.

This bed is seen to be adorned with flowers when the conduct and life of the brothers brightly reflect the examples and rules of the Fathers.

46.3: Ergo validos et constantes necesse est esse eos, qui super alios ordinantur,

necnon et longanimes in spe, atque ad superna mentis verticem attollentes, qui etiam bonum fidei suae et conversationis ubique odorem spargentes.

Hence it is necessary that those who are appointed over others should be strong and reliable, tenacious in hope, their minds directed to supernatural truths, radiating everywhere the good odor of their faith and conduct.

46.4: Non ita illa, quae propriae voluntati nondum abrenuntiavit, sed per se jacet, per se habitat: magis autem non per se, sed cum meretricibus luxuriose vivendo conversatur, concupiscentias loquor carnis, cum quibus dissipat bona sua, et portionem substantiae quam sibi dividi postulavit.

Or rather not by herself, for she lives licentiously in the company of prostitutes, I mean the lusts of the flesh, on which she squanders her goods, and that share of the estate which she demanded to be set aside for her.

48.1: Denique unus eorum: Conversus sum, ait, in aerumna mea, dum configitur spina (Ps 32.4). Bene confixus, qui conversus exinde est. Bene pungeris, si compungeris. Multi cum sentiunt poenam, corrigunt culpam; et talis dicere potest: Conversus sum in aerumna mea, dum configitur spina. Spina culpa est, spina poena est, spina falsus frater, spina vicinus est malus.

Or as one of them said: 'I am turned in my anguish while the thorn is fastened'. Well pierced is the one who is thereby converted. You are well wounded if you repent. Many, when they feel the pain, correct the fault. Such a one can say: 'I am turned in my anguish while the thorn is fastened.' The thorn is the fault, the thorn is the pain, the thorn is the false brother, the thorn is the bad neighbor.

48.7: Sed et mortis est umbra, illius scilicet quae cruciat in aeternum. Sedimus et nos aliquando in tenebrosis et umbra mortis, carnaliter conversantes, et non ex fide viventes.

We too once sat in darkness and the shadow of death, following the way of the flesh and not living by faith.

51.2: Et si communis Ecclesia sanctorum hic recipitur loquens, nos in floribus fructibusque designati sumus; sed et quique conversi de saeculo in toto saeculo. In floribus quidem novella et tenera adhuc incipientium conversatio demonstratur, in fructibus vero proficientium fortitudo et maturitas perfectorum.

And if the speaker here is taken to be the Church, the communion of

saints, it is we who are designated by the flowers and fruits, along with all those converted from a worldly life in the whole world. In the flowers we are shown the fresh and still tender life style of beginners, and in the fruits the fortitude of those making progress, the maturity of the perfect.

52.5: Sed moriatur anima mea morte etiam, si dici potest, angelorum, ut praesentium memoria excedens, rerum se inferiorum corporearumque non modo cupiditatibus, sed et similitudinibus exuat, sitque ei pura cum illis conversatio, cum quibus est puritatis similitudo.

But, if I may say so, let me die the death of angels that, transcending the memory of things present, I may cast off not only the desire for what are corporeal and inferior but even their images, that I may enjoy pure conversation with those who bear the likeness of purity.

52.6: Quorum quoque in campis designata conversatio evidenter liberos atque expeditos signat in contemplatione discursus.

Again, the life [the animals] live in the fields obviously points to the free and graceful discourse of [the angels'] contemplation.

53.7: Denique: In terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est (Bar 3. 38).

For 'he appeared upon earth and lived among men'.

55.2: Puto enim hoc loco prophetam Jerusalem nomine designasse illos, qui in hoc saeculo vitam ducunt religiosam, mores supernae illius Jerusalem conversazione honesta et ordinata pro viribus imitantes.

For I think that in this passage the prophet indicates by the name Jerusalem those who lead a religious life in this world, imitating as far as they can the ways of the heavenly Jerusalem by an upright and orderly life-style.

57.7: Si vero non solum compungeris in sermone illo, sed et converteris totus ad Dominum, jurans et statuens custodire judicia justitiae ejus, etiam adesse ipsum jam noveris, praesertim si te inardescere sentias amore ejus.

Yet if you are not only filled with sorrow by the discourse but totally converted to the Lord, vowing and determining to keep his just decrees, you will know again that he is present, especially if you feel yourself aglow with his love.

59.7: Adde quod in jugis montium et in summitatibus arborum frequentior illi

conversatio est: ut, quod vel maxime propositum pudicitiae, decet, doceat nos terrena despiciere, et amare coelestia.

Rather it (turtle-dove) haunts the mountain ridges and the tops of trees, to teach us to shun the pleasures of earth and to love those of heaven.

60.6: qui conversationem suam inter gentes habentes bonam. Christi erant bonus odor in omni loco.

they lived virtuously among the pagans and bore the good perfume of Christ wherever they went.

60.9: Omnis qui se inter nos communiter socialiterque agit, et non solum sine querela conversatur inter fratres, sed et multa cum suavitate fruendum se omnibus praebet in omni officio charitatis, quidni illum vicem agere ficus convenientissime dicam?

Everyone who lives among us in harmony with the community, who not only mingles with his brothers without complaining, but with a very friendly attitude even makes himself available to all for any occasion of loving service why should I not very fittingly speak of him as a fig tree?

61.3: Conversatio nostra in coelis sit, et nec cadere, nec dejici formidamus.

Our homeland is in heaven, and we are not afraid of falling or being thrown down.

63.3: Sermo, cogitatio, conversatio, et si quid aliud est ex eo, quidni totum Dei agricultura, Dei aedificatio est, et vinea Domini sabaoth?

His discourse, his thoughts, his manner of life, his whole conduct, is it not all God's farm, God's building, the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth?

63.6: Flos novella conversatio est, flos formula recens vitae emendationis est. Induerunt sibi faciem disciplinam, et bonam totius corporis compositionem.

But since these are new beginnings, the flowers must be judged by their very novelty, and a promise of fruits rather than the fruits themselves.

64.8: Itaque homo de Ecclesia exercitatus et doctus, si cum haeretico homine disputare aggreditur, illo intentionem suam dirigere debet, quatenus ita errantem convincat, ut et convertat, cogitans illud apostoli Jacobi: Quia qui converti fecerit peccatorem ab errore viae suae, salvabit animam ejus a morte, et operit multitudinem peccatorum.

So if an experienced and well-instructed churchman undertakes to debate with a heretic, he should direct his intention to convincing him of the error of his ways in such a way as to convert him, bearing in mind the saying of the Apostle James, that anyone who causes a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

65.5: Denique si fidem interrogas, nihil christianius; si conversationem, nihil irreprehensibilis: et quae loquitur, factis probat.

if [you question him] as to his way of life, nothing could be more irreproachable; and he proves his words by his deeds.

70.7: Et fortassis propterea ipse se liliam appellavit, quod totus versetur in liliis, et omnia quae ipsius sunt, lilia sint; conceptio, ortus, conversatio, eloquia, miracula, sacramenta, passio, mors, resurrectio, ascensio.

Perhaps he called himself a lily because he is wholly surrounded by lilies, and all the events of his life are lilies: his conception, birth, way of life, teaching, the miracles he did, the sacraments he ordained, his passion and death, his resurrection and ascension.

70.7: Porro ortum candidavit incorrupta virginitas matris; conversationem, innocentia vitae; eloquia, veritas;

His birth radiated through the undefiled purity of his mother; his life was aflame with innocence, his teaching with truth, his miracles with purity of heart, his sacraments with the hidden power of his goodness.

75.10: Nox est Judaica perfidia, nox ignorantia paganorum, nox haeretica pravitas, nox etiam Catholicorum carnalis, animalisve conversatio.

The faithlessness of the Jews, the ignorance of pagans, the perversity of heretics, even the shameless and degraded behavior of Catholics—these are all nights.

78.5: Nunc vero videntes velociter currere verbum, et populos nationum ad Dominum in omni facilitate converti, concurrere in unitatem fidei tribus et linguas.

But when they saw the word running swiftly, the people of all nations turning readily to the Lord, all tribes and tongues united in the faith.

78.6: Ex quo, ut opinor, clarum fit non otiosum esse, quod se inventam ab his

sponsa testata est; sed propterea quod se ab ipsis collectam agnosceret, non electam; compertam, non conversam. Ei nempe ascribenda cujusque conversio est, cui dicere necesse habent universi illud de psalmo: Converte nos, Deus, salutaris noster. Sed non aequè illi fortassis inventionis vocem competenter aptarim, sicut conversionis.

It is clearly not without significance, I think, that the Bride says she was found by them, for she recognizes that she was gathered in by them, not chosen; they found her, they did not convert her. The conversion of anyone must be ascribed alone to him to whom all men must say, in the words of the Psalm, 'Convert us, O God our salvation.' But I cannot apply to them as fitly the term 'finding' as 'conversion.'

82.3: Caeterum, contraria sapit et quaerit, et mortalitas sese degeneri conversatione conformans, immortalitatis candorem quodam mortiferae consuetudinis piceo colore denigrat.

By its taste for things which are mortal it clothes itself in mortality; but its robe of immortality, though stained with the likeness of death, has not been cast away.

82.5: Et bene sicut diploide, ubi veste veluti duplicata, manente libertate propter voluntatem, servilis nihilominus conversatio necessitatem probat.

It is well said 'as with a cloak,' which is a garment which is folded, for as the soul retains its freedom by virtue of the will, yet it conducts itself as a slave; and this imposes compulsion on it.

85.10: De honesto autem exterior interrogetur conversatio: non quod ex ea honestum prodeat, sed per eam.

But honor concerns outward behavior—not that honor issues from it, but is perceived through it.

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