
Although no complete text of this letter is known to have survived, these two fragments have been preserved in the context of later canonical collections (the *Collectio Trium Partium* and Gratian’s *Decretum*). [Nicholas, bishop of Rome, to Humfried, bishop of Thérouanne]

(1) You asked via the priest Guandalgarius whether, when you are forced out of your see by the Normans, you may live out the rest of your life in a monastery. In this matter, dearest brother, you should know that if it is pernicious for the lookout to abandon a ship in calm waters, how much more so in stormy seas. We do not mean here that we should not flee the ambushes of the persecutors and especially those of the pagans, when they rage for a time and obtain from God the power to injure us because of the multitude of our sins. For, first and foremost, we must not surrender to them voluntarily and also it is plainer than day that many prophets, apostles, and even the Lord himself fled from persecutors. Rather it fitting that we, in particular, who offer leadership to the flocks [of Christians] as rams—indeed, we who are their shepherds—endure with them by God’s will amidst these perils to the extent of our strength and, when calm has returned and the plague of the wrathful has been quieted by divine piety, we should seek out the flock swiftly, gather it together, and raise up its spirits again by preaching the peace, and especially the safety, of the celestial homeland. Furthermore, it is fitting that we be concerned for their safety for however long so that, if perchance by the judgment of God they lose the comforts of the present time, they may hope to receive the eternal joys of the life to come without any doubt.

(2) It is not appropriate that a cleric who kills a pagan be advanced to a higher clerical rank. Indeed, he should lose the rank which he had acquired, for he is a murderer. For since the soldiers of the world have been distinguished from the soldiers of the Church, it is not fitting that a soldier of the Church fight for the world because of the fact that it may be necessary to shed blood. Consequently, just as it is foul and pernicious for a layman to perform the Mass, to confect the sacraments of the body and blood of Christ, so, too, it is ridiculous and inappropriate for a cleric to bear arms and go off to war, since the Apostle Paul says: *No one fighting for God should involve himself in worldly affairs* (I Timothy 2:4), just as he clearly says the converse: *No one fighting for the world should involve himself in spiritual affairs.*