

Evil and Demonological Influences in the life and Development of Saint Martin of
Tours

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A Thesis
In
The Department
Of
Theological Studies

Presented in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2007

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Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-34651-8

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-34651-8

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Abstract

Evil and Demonological Influences in the life and Development of Saint Martin of
Tours

Mark St. Martin

St. Martin of Tours had a significant impact on the development of Christianity throughout northern Europe. No other Saint is as heavily represented in France today as St. Martin of Tours. Clearly this man was an exceptional representative of the church. But what events helped to shape him into the man we know him as today? Why is he unique among his contemporaries for that matter?

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect to this man is his unyielding nature in the opposition of evil. If that is in fact the case, what sort of influence did evil have on the development of this man? Perhaps if one could identify what the term evil means in terms of St. Martin, one could then proceed to identify what makes St. Martin unique.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank first and foremost Dr. Pamela Bright for her guidance and assistance throughout the process. I would like to thank the department of Theological Studies at Concordia University, all the staff and faculty that helped me, as well as the students of the department. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank St. Martin of Tours.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my sister Nicole, whose creative spirit serves as a constant inspiration. To my brother Jean-Luc, whose dedication and perseverance has always encouraged me. To my friend Steve, whose loyalty and dependability is always appreciated. To my mother Ann-Marie, whose unwavering love and support has always carried me. And finally, to my father Lucien, someone who truly represents what it means to be a good man.

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Introduction

Lord, if your people still have need of my services, I will not avoid the toil. Your will be done. I have fought the good fight long enough. Yet if you bid me continue to hold the battle line in defense of your camp, I will never beg to be excused from failing strength. I will do the work you entrust to me. While you command, I will fight beneath your banner. Amen¹

It has been said that “Evil thrives when good men do nothing”, and indeed it is easy to see the path evil has carved throughout history with the aid of the indifference or apathy of good men. So then what defines a good man? Is good the absence of evil? Does every person not have the capacity for good and evil? If so then it can not be the absence of evil, but rather the triumph of good over evil in the intentions and actions of the individual that would identify a good man.

This leads us to an even greater question of what is good, and what is evil? Perhaps evil is the hateful malevolent force behind all that is damnable, and good is the un-corruptible blameless force behind that which is charitable and righteous.

So if evil thrives when good men do nothing, is it not also true that the inaction of good men is at the root of evil? That is to say that in order for evil to thrive, inaction on the part of good men is required. If that is in fact the case then is it not good men who permit evil to flourish, and if so, would they themselves still be considered good? Perhaps

¹ Prayer to continue to fight for God; Prayer of St. Martin de Tours

that is a bit extreme, however it would seem that being good and confronting evil where it exists is connected.

This idea of the individual responsibility of faith is paramount in understanding the struggles of Martin and his contemporaries. For them, it wasn't enough to believe in the message of Christ alone; one must live that message to one's fullest ability. This determination to follow the lead of Christ to one's best ability is the basis of the argument; show me your faith without works and I'll show you my faith through my works.

My thesis concerns a man who confronted evil. The nature of that confrontation was captured in one of the earliest Christian biographies, written by Sulpicius Severus. The biography was an attempt to capture an insight into the transfiguration of a young soldier, a convert to Christianity, into one of the most revered men of his time. A champion of Christ in the chaotic world of the fourth century, St. Martin, as he is known to history, became one of the most popular of Christian heroes. My purpose is not as much to follow the process of that transformation, nor to examine the causes of his subsequent fame, but rather to examine the nature and purpose of his confrontation with evil, which was a fundamental part of his understanding of Christianity.

It was through his readiness to counter evil that Martin of Tours remains vividly present to the Christian community through the sixteen centuries after his death in 397 A.D. During the time of the slow dissolution of the Roman Empire, and widespread instability throughout Eurasia, both religious and secular conflict abounded. The

followers of Arius led the charge to identify Christ as subordinate to God the Father, and men such as Martin felt great pressure to confront those that would threaten what they believed to be at the core of their Christian faith.

It is important to note that conflicts arising over fundamental aspects of Christianity were especially dangerous, and often resulted in many deaths. Examples of these types of conflicts can be seen throughout history. In the fourth century A.D., arguably the most significant of these theological conflicts was that of the Arian heresy. Martin and other defenders of the faith had to be careful as to how they went about confronting this heresy, due to the number of people directly involved, as well as the danger this apparent perversion of Christian doctrine, as accepted by Martin, Hilary, and Augustine presented. Martin met this challenge with the same zeal he met all challenges, and he did so through a profound understanding of his faith, and the beliefs that governed it.

For we must not conceive separation or division in any way, as if either the Son could be supposed by the Father, or the Spirit disunited from the Son. But there is discovered between them some ineffable and incomprehensible, both communion and distinction.²

The Arian heresy is a good example of men being forced into a situation where conflict was inevitable. Two conflicting interpretations of a fundamental aspect of

² On the importance of the Catholic understanding of Trinitarian philosophy as represented in Newman, John Henry Cardinal. *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 2001
P.174

Christianity rarely are able to stand together, and perhaps naturally, the two camps engaged one another. Many men engaged in this conflict, chose to engage themselves because they were to be directly affected by the outcome. Martin's contemporaries engaged this conflict because they were faced with it, and they did not hesitate to do so because they believed it was their obligation. They confronted an evil that was directly before them. Many of Martin's contemporaries confronted evil when it was present. They did not necessarily seek it out.

Martin, however, went above and beyond, as he sought out that which he believed to be evil and confronted it. Not conflict itself, but rather the act of seeking out conflict with what he believed to be evil, is where he can be identified as outstanding among his contemporaries.

Although the main focus of this paper is to identify that very quality that identifies Martin as being unique, it is important to examine Martin as a whole. It is through his other qualities and actions that we can begin to see a clear picture of the man we know today as Saint Martin of Tours.

What drove Martin to accomplish what he felt needed to be accomplished, and where did his drive for confrontation come from? Why was Martin so consumed with the need to confront evil? Many other figures within the church were content to confront evil when faced with it, but Martin sought it out. The Vita reveals a man of action, who was quick to fight for what he believed to be good, and he believed Christ and by extension

Christianity was good, and he met his opponents with the same zeal whether they were unbelievers³, heretics, or even Satan himself.

What is it to oppose evil? One could argue that it means doing the right thing when the need arises, or to stand up for what one believes in, but perhaps, as we can see in the case of Martin, this is not enough. That is to say, it might appear that this at least was not enough for Martin.

Even from an early age it becomes apparent through the writings of Severus that Martin's generosity and kindness made him unique among his contemporaries, as can be seen in the story with the beggar.

...They especially felt this, because, being possessed of more than Martin, they could have clothed the poor man without reducing themselves to nakedness. In the following night, when Martin had resigned himself to sleep, he had a vision of Christ arrayed in that part of his cloak with which he had clothed the poor man. He contemplated the Lord with the greatest attention, and was told to own as his the robe which he had given...⁴

It is important to note that the guilt felt by his fellow soldiers at viewing Martin's act of generosity was in no way solicited. Martin appears to have acted entirely out of compassion for the beggar, without regard for appearances to his fellow soldiers. Severus makes a point to mention that Martin was not prone to judging or instructing his fellow

³ The intended meaning of meeting the unbelievers with the same zeal as he met all his opponents is indicative of Martin's zeal for Christ and his message, as well as bringing that message to all, and not in any way zeal against the unbelievers. Unbelievers in this context meaning; those that do not believe in Christ or Christianity.

⁴ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland. P. 5

soldiers on behavior, and even though they originally laughed at the appearance of Martin after his effort with the beggar, ultimately they felt guilt. It would appear that the guilt can be attributed to their unwillingness to sacrifice for the benefit of another, whereas their fellow soldier was so quick to do so. This raises the question of why such feelings would have occurred in the other soldiers.

Antony of Egypt, the subject of the first Christian biography and a contemporary of Martin explains in his Letters, love is inherent within us, and original love is implanted within us at the very moment of creation, and as such, it is in our nature to help others, for in helping others we help ourselves.⁵ Regardless, it is clear that even at such an early point in his life, Martin, led by an example of self sacrifice on the part others, and even if the soldiers continued on in the same way, Martin showed them the responsibility they were neglecting.

Is it enough to live ones life doing what he/she believes to be right, even though the knowledge of evil elsewhere is ever present? One could argue that since the struggle between good and evil will always exist, efforts for or against evil are ultimately inconsequential. Martin's life seems riddled with questions like these, yet throughout all the materials written on him, there seems to be a constant thread of a theme of a relentless struggle between good and evil. This theme can be seen in the Letters of Antony, the Life of Saint Antony, and the works of Origen. It is my intention to examine what Evil is

⁵ Concept of Original Love, See: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

within the context of the life of Martin, including his relentless desire to confront it, and the impact it had on his development into the Saint we know him as today.

In 317 A.D. a man was born who would significantly impact the development of the church in Europe, but who was Martin of Tours? We can read the Vita, a vivid and inspiring document straight out of the fourth century and learn about his actions, some of his history, and the reactions of others towards him, but what made him who he was? What separates him from other figures within church history? Martin was a soldier, but so were many other church figures. Perhaps it is not what he did, or where he came from, but rather why he did what he did that makes him unique among the pantheon of saints of his time, beginning at the Constantinian era, after the persecutions of Christians had ended.

For Martin, evil was not relegated to the demonological in the physical sense, i.e. physical manifestation of demons, but also in the malicious intent of men. It has been argued that there is a direct relation between the malicious intent of men, and the demonic. Origen of Alexandria, and Antony of Egypt both believed in the multiplicity of evil. Regardless in what form evil is represented, Martin actively sought out and confronted it. It is in that way that Martin is unique, and it is in that way that he should be remembered above all else: good men have a responsibility to oppose evil lest it grow to consume others. It would seem that given the lack of self interest and the extraordinary generosity of Martin, together with his relentless opposition to evil, that he should be remembered first and foremost as a good man.

Martin's example can be seen even today in his church. When one looks at the battle between good and evil from the perspective of a Catholic, one sees a different picture. Evil exists, not just in a loose non-corporeal form influencing decisions, and causing doubt and distain among humanity, but also in other forms. Poverty, hunger, war, depression, among others, it could be argued are evil, in that they exist because good men often do too little in opposing them.

The Vita, written by Sulpicius Severus thought to have been finished shortly after Martin's death in 397 A.D.⁶ was the second Christian biography. The first being the biography of Antony of Egypt, by Athanasius. Written some time between 356 and 372 A.D., one can see similarities in the overall conveyance of the messages carried within the text.

Martin's biographer Severus was born around 363 A.D. in Aquitania to a noble family where he was educated in jurisprudence, and achieved recognition in his practice of law, through a unique and impressive style of oration. Besides the significance of the Vita (among other works) Severus is an important commentator of the Arian conflict, of which Martin was a major participant beginning with his discipleship of Hilary. Hilary appears to be one of the first Gallic church fathers with a detailed understanding of the Arian debate. As a disciple of Hilary, Martin most likely became well versed in the

⁶ The exact date of the completion of the *Vita* is disputed. Most historians agree that the *Vita* was completed prior to 399 A.D. See: *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland

theological and political details surrounding the conflict. A well respected man among his contemporaries, St. Augustine himself refers to Severus as “a man excelling in learning and wisdom”,

Alypius, Augustin, and Samsucius, and the brethren who are with them, send greeting in the Lord to Severus, their Lord most blessed, and with all reverence most beloved, their brother in truth, and partner in the priestly office, and to all the brethren who are with him⁷.

Despite questions concerning the impartiality of the Vita, it stands to reason that Martin displayed a spirit and character that inspired Severus.

There is no debate on the authenticity of the Vita or its authorship, nor for other works by Severus, including Chronicles, Dialogues, and five of his letters. There is a great deal of debate on the authenticity of another five letters attributed to Severus, but none have an impact on the recognized works of Severus involving the Vita. Within the context of other writings of the period, it could be argued that Severus wrote with a somewhat more methodical process, with a greater emphasis placed on detail. The works of Severus include: Vita, Letters, Dialogues, Letters, and the Sacred History.

Given the nature of the subject, the most reliable source for this paper is the Vita, by Sulpicious Severus. Most contemporary scholarship on Saint Martin uses the Vita as their primary source of information. In many cases, when numerous scholars use the

⁷ From Augustine, Alypius, and Samsucius, to Severus, Letter 62, in New Advent, and Wm. Heinemann *Select letters Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, London, 1965

same text as a basis for their primary resource, one can often see differing opinions and interpretations that arise. In the case of Martin, however, the text itself does not seem to encourage debate as to its meaning. Most popular scholarship on the subject seems to leave little room for contradiction or debate. It is likely this can be attributed to the style of writing and method used by Severus.

The works do come into question in regards to impartiality. Many scholars believe that the descriptions of the miraculous events covered in the works, are either entirely false, or exaggerated greatly.

Severus entered the monastic life after the premature death of his wife in 390 A.D. During this time, Severus became friends with Martin around 392 A.D.⁸ and began recording the events of his life. The stories he recorded, and the personal observations of Martin himself were his basis of information for the Vita.

The closeness of Severus to his subject, and the reliance on what is most likely exaggerated rumor would tend to disqualify the text as an entirely accurate historical reference. That being said, although many scholars disregard the text as anything more than a collection of inaccurate stories and fables, it seems unlikely that everything represented within the text is without any merit. Clearly there were incredible circumstances surrounding Martin, as he was an incredible man.

⁸ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin: Tome I*, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967

Severus was a contemporary of several great church fathers other than Martin, among them are perhaps most notably St. Augustine and St. Jerome. St. Augustine mentions Severus in several of his works referring to him with a certain degree of fondness.

Severus, My lord Most Blessed and Venerable, a Brother Worthy of Being Embraced with Unfeigned Love, and Partner in the Priestly Office, and to the Brethren that are With Him, Augustine and the Brethren with Him Send Greeting in the Lord.⁹

It would seem to be unlikely that a man such as St. Augustine would give praise such as this to someone without merit in the field in which they were writing. That is to say, merit in the message, and not necessarily anything else.

Perhaps it would be a fair argument to suggest that although the text itself is not necessarily accurate in its recollection of historical events, nor is it entirely accurate in its description of the life and actions of Martin, that that was not necessarily the intention of the author. Martin was a man surrounded by incredible circumstances, and he lived an incredible life, and regardless of anything else, that is accurately conveyed.

Whether the text is accurate to the point of flawless impartial accounts of historical events, or whether it is the account of one man writing about another man during a complicated, dangerous and morally ambiguous time, seems to be neglecting the underlying message of the text. Rather than focusing on the questions of authenticity,

⁹ Letter 63, in New Advent, and Wm. Heinemann *Select letters Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, London, 1965

historicity, or biographical bias, this study will concentrate on exploring the motivations and world views of Saint Martin with special attention given to his own vocation to combat the forces of evil that opposed the gospel.

Chapter I:**Life and Influences of Martin of Tours**

Historical Background

In order to understand a man, one must understand the circumstances into which he is born. There is some debate over the exact date of Martin's birth, but most scholars believe Martin was born to pagan parents close to 316 A.D. in the Roman province of Pannonia in modern day Hungary¹⁰.

What we do know is that Martin was born into a divided world. Peoples in turmoil, an empire divided, conflict and strife a way of life, and religious conversion the new frontier of imperial expansion. The fourth century A.D. saw the rise of many church figures that had a significant impact on the development and expansion of Christianity. Antony of Egypt, Nicholas of Myra, Basil of Caesarea, Augustine of Hippo, Hilary of Poitiers, etc. all had significant impacts not just in their individual communities, but also with the overall spread of Christianity.

Gallic church fathers such as Paulinus of Nola, who recorded much of our information about Severus, and Hilary of Poitiers who led the campaign to oppose the Arian heresy were greatly responsible for the conversion of northern Europe, a region that remains predominantly Christian even today. That is not to say church fathers in other regions such as the near east, and northern Africa were not as successful in their efforts, since circumstances in all regions varied significantly, but rather that the one region that has remained predominantly Christian since the time of conversion has

¹⁰See: *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin: Tome I*, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967

remained so at least partially because of the foundations laid by men such as Martin, Hilary, and Paulinus.

The fourth century was filled with doubt and conflict. The century began with the Christian persecution that had Emperor Diocletian see the death of tens of thousands of Christians, beginning in November 20, 284 A.D. and ending with Christianity dominating the Empire and spreading throughout the western world. Religious unrest, political instability, and increased pressure from outside the empire all contributed to the fall of the old Roman pantheon and the rise of Constantine and Christianity throughout the Empire, and ultimately by extension, the western world¹¹.

After the victory of Emperor Constantine the Great over Licinius in 324 A.D.¹², a period of social, political, and economic reform began. New coins were minted in an effort to cease the decline in value of the denarius, new trade routes were opened and a reformed simplified tax system paved the way for economic renewal within the empire. This economic renewal and increase trade and transport permitted better access to various points throughout the empire. In many ways, the economic renewal assisted in part paving the way for Christianity to become so widely accepted.

¹¹ The conclusion that the victory of Constantine was responsible for the spread of Christianity throughout the western world was not expressly stated in the text. Statistics as indicated in; Timothy David, *Early Christianity and the Roman Empire*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1984

¹² Definitive battle of Constantine's rise to power.

Family and Religious Origins

It is likely that Martin's father was of noble birth, as indicated by his rise in status in the military in attaining the rank of Tribune. Martin, himself an officer, served in the ranks of the Praetorian Guard while in the service of the emperor as indicated by his biographer¹³. Martin's family was of Gallic origin and assigned by the Emperor to the Province of Pannonia at the time of Martin's birth. The family relocated to Ticinum, in modern day Italy where Martin grew up¹⁴.

The Gallic tradition was heavily tribal, as the tribe was at the heart of the organizational structure as well as the religious structure of Gallic society. Every tribe was governed by a king and a council of elders¹⁵. Given the status awarded to Martin's father, he most likely descended from this class. The tribe would elect annually a magistrate and the council of Druids would act as a check and balance for the magistrate. The Druids also exercised their religious authority over the tribes through their kings and elders. The druids often expelled individuals from their religious circles in a sort of 'excommunication' which was not simply a religious punishment, but also civil as well¹⁶. The Gallic religious traditions contained loose animistic trends. Although no central religion was predominant, some gods were worshiped universally among the various

¹³ See: *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967

¹⁴ The fact that Martin most likely was of Gallic descent is not widely debated. See the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967

¹⁵ J.J. Hatt, *Histoire de la Gaule Romaine*, Paris: Payot Paris, 1959

¹⁶ Anthony King, *Roman Gaul and Germany*, California: University of California Press, 1990

tribes, and some were localized. Animals and natural bodies such as mountains or rivers were often deified and worshipped. The most commonly recognized animal deity of the Gallic tribes was the Boar¹⁷.

It is important to note that understanding the Gallic religious traditions is necessary in order to understand the relationship between Martin and his parents. Martin, by his example converted his mother, yet his father refused conversion¹⁸.

At the beginning of the fourth century A.D., Christianity was a small religion in the Western Empire (comparatively), whose followers were looked down upon and persecuted. Although contemporary sources state the number of Christian martyrs were relatively few, the actual number of Christian deaths at the hands of the Romans is unknown. By the end of the fourth century A.D. Christianity was the official religion of the Roman World. Some scholars estimate the population of the empire's Christian population to be 25-30% (15-20 million of 60 million)¹⁹.

This period in time saw the rise of Christianity to dominate the greatest empire the world has ever known, the conversion of political and military leaders, the council of Nicaea, the rise of some of the most influential theologians in history, and some of the greatest conflicts and threats to the church as well. The Arian movement threatened the

¹⁷ J.J. Hatt, *Histoire de la Gaule Romaine*, Paris: Payot Paris, 1959

¹⁸ See story of Martin's encounter with the Brigand. P.21 See Also: *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 6

¹⁹ The number is only an estimate. From Timothy David, *Early Christianity and the Roman Empire*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1984

very foundation of Christian belief throughout the fourth century. The teachings of Arius concluded that the Christ was created by God, and not eternal. The argument of unbegotten versus begotten rocked the foundation of the traditional Trinitarian belief system. The Arian heresy, much like Hilary to whom Martin would become a disciple, would ultimately prove to be one of Martin's greatest battles.

Martin's conversion to Christianity came when he was ten, when against the wishes of his parents, who were pagan, he became a catechumen.

He himself in his youth following military pursuits was enrolled in the imperial guard, first under king Constantine, and then under Julian Caesar. This, however, was not done of his own free will, for, almost from his earliest years, the holy infancy of the illustrious boy aspired rather to the service of God. For, when he was of the age of ten years, he betook himself, against the wish of his parents, to the Church, and begged that he might become a catechumen. Soon afterwards, becoming in a wonderful manner completely devoted to the service of God, when he was twelve years old, he desired to enter on the life of a hermit; and he would have followed up that desire with the necessary vows, had not his as yet too youthful age prevented. His mind, however, being always engaged on matters pertaining to the monasteries or the Church, already meditated in his boyish years what he afterwards, as a professed servant of Christ, fulfilled. But when an edict was issued by the ruling powers in the state, that the sons of veterans should be enrolled for military service, and he, on the information furnished by his father, (who looked with an evil eye on his blessed actions) having been seized and put in chains, when he was fifteen years old, was compelled to take the military oath, then showed himself content with only one servant as his attendant.²⁰

Continuing to follow the religious path, despite being forced to serve in the military, while passing through the gates of Amiens he passed a scantily clad beggar and

²⁰ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 5

proceeded to cut his military cloak in two and offered half to the beggar he took pity on to keep him warm.

...when he had nothing except his arms and his simple military dress, in the middle of winter, a winter which had shown itself more severe than ordinary, so that the extreme cold was proving fatal to many, he happened to meet at the gate of the city of Amiens a poor man destitute of clothing. He was entreating those that passed by to have compassion upon him, but all passed the wretched man without notice, when Martin, that man full of God, recognized that a being to whom others showed no pity, was, in that respect, left to him. Yet, what should he do? He had nothing except the cloak in which he was clad, for he had already parted with the rest of his garments for similar purposes. Taking, therefore, his sword with which he was girt, he divided his cloak into two equal parts, and gave one part to the poor man, while he again clothed himself with the remainder. Upon this, some of the bystanders laughed, because he was now an unsightly object, and stood out as but partly dressed. Many, however, who were of sounder understanding, groaned deeply because they themselves had done nothing similar.²¹

Centuries later, this random act of generosity is still the most widely recognized representation of Martin however this is only one dimension of a uniquely layered individual.

That night, Martin had a vision of Christ wearing that half cloak and telling the angels "...behold Martin that he who is not baptized has clad me." At which point Martin awoke to see his cloak restored. This story would become the most famous representation of Martin.

...he happened to meet at the gate of the city of Amiens a poor man destitute of clothing... when Martin, that man full of God, recognized

²¹ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland p.5

that a being to whom others showed no pity, was, in that respect, left to him.... Taking, therefore, his sword with which he was girt, he divided his cloak into two equal parts, and gave one part to the poor man, while he again clothed himself with the remainder. Upon this, some of the by-standers laughed, because he was now an unsightly object, and stood out as but partly dressed. Many, however, who were of sounder understanding, groaned deeply because they themselves had done nothing similar. They especially felt this, because, being possessed of more than Martin, they could have clothed the poor man without reducing themselves to nakedness.²²

The dream of the following night as recorded by Severus is very significant for understanding Martin's vocation. It reveals his dedication to the central command of the gospel, love of God and neighbor as represented in Matthew 22:15-46.

In the following night, when Martin had resigned himself to sleep, he had a vision of Christ arrayed in that part of his cloak with which he had clothed the poor man. He contemplated the Lord with the greatest attention, and was told to own as his the robe which he had given. Ere long, he heard Jesus saying with a clear voice to the multitude of angels standing round -- "Martin, who is still but a catechumen, clothed me with this robe." The Lord, truly mindful of his own words (who had said when on earth -- "Inasmuch as ye have done these things to one of the least of these, ye have done them unto me), declared that he himself had been clothed in that poor man; and to confirm the testimony he bore to so good a deed, he condescended to show him himself in that very dress which the poor man had received.²³

Martin was baptized at eighteen and served in the military for another two years, until he decided his faith prevented him from fighting, and was imprisoned for

²² From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p.5

²³ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p.5

cowardice. He offered to go to the front lines unarmed. However this was unnecessary for the opposing army had already been offered peace, and the battle never took place.

Another section of the Vita which holds special significance highlights the self-understanding of Martin's vocation. It was the transformation from Martin as Soldier of the Empire, to Martin Warrior of God.

If this conduct of mine is ascribed to cowardice, and not to faith, I will take my stand unarmed before the line of battle tomorrow, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, protected by the sign of the cross, and not by shield or helmet, I will safely penetrate the ranks of the enemy." He is ordered, therefore, to be thrust back into prison, determined on proving his words true by exposing himself unarmed to the barbarians. But, on the following day, the enemy sent ambassadors to treat about peace and surrendered both themselves and all their possessions. In these circumstances who can doubt that this victory was due to the saintly man? It was granted him that he should not be sent unarmed to the fight. And although the good Lord could have preserved his own soldier, even amid the swords and darts of the enemy, yet that his blessed eyes might not be pained by witnessing the death of others, he removed all necessity for fighting. For Christ did not require to secure any other victory in behalf of his own soldier, than that, the enemy being subdued without bloodshed, no one should suffer death.²⁴

Martin was excused from military service after that. He became a disciple of Hilary of Poitiers and became a proponent of Trinitarian theology. After Hilary was exiled from Tours, Martin traveled to Italy, and during that trip, he converts a brigand.

Martin entered on that journey in a melancholy frame of mind, after calling the brethren to witness that many sufferings lay before him. The result fully justified this prediction. For, first of all, having followed some devious paths among the Alps, he fell into the hands of

²⁴ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Tome I, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p.6

robbers. And when one of them lifted up his axe and poised it above Martin's head, another of them met with his right hand the blow as it fell; nevertheless, having had his hands bound behind his back, he was handed over to one of them to be guarded and stripped. The robber, having led him to a private place apart from the rest, began to enquire of him who he was. Upon this, Martin replied that he was a Christian. The robber next asked him whether he was afraid. Then indeed Martin most courageously replied that he never before had felt so safe, because he knew that the mercy of the Lord would be especially present with him in the midst of trials. He added that he grieved rather for the man in whose hands he was, because, by living a life of robbery, he was showing himself unworthy of the mercy of Christ.²⁵

Martin's courage and his dedication to his faith can be seen best in his complete disregard for self preservation when confronted by the brigand in favor of the brigand's salvation.

Through helping his neighbor he is helping Christ, and by extension, himself.

And then entering on a discourse concerning Evangelical truth, he preached the word of God to the robber. Why should I delay stating the result? The robber believed; and, after expressing his respect for Martin, he restored him to the way, entreating him to pray the Lord for him. That same robber was afterwards seen leading a religious life; so that, in fact, the narrative I have given above is based upon an account furnished by himself.²⁶

The confrontation with the brigand is interesting in that it is clear that Martin engaged the brigand in religious discourse, and brought the message of Christ to the man, without any regard for the possible reaction of the man or to his own personal wellbeing. His desire to confront evil far outweighed any fear he might have had, and speaks well to his confidence in his message.

²⁵ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p.6

²⁶ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p.6

After the conversion of the brigand, Severus describes a much more ominous encounter.

Martin, then, having gone on from thence, after he had passed Milan, the devil met him in the way, having assumed the form of a man. The devil first asked him to what place he was going. Martin having answered him to the effect that he was minded to go whithersoever the Lord called him, the devil said to him, "Wherever you go, or whatever you attempt, the devil will resist you." Then Martin, replying to him in the prophetic word, said, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do unto me." Upon this, his enemy immediately vanished out of his sight; and thus, as he had intended in his heart and mind, he set free his mother from the errors of heathenism, though his father continued to cleave to its evils. However, he saved many by his example.²⁷

Not unlike his encounter with the brigand, Martin appears fearless and undoubtedly confident in the message he brings. It is interesting, however, that according to Severus, this event led to the conversion of his mother, while his father maintained his refusal to convert.

Martin then lived as a hermit outside of Gallinaria, near modern day Genova, Italy until the return of Hilary. Hilary is similar in origin to Martin in that both men descend from a most likely Pagan noble family. Hilary became well known for his ardent opposition to Arianism, which was then rampant throughout the empire. Hilary was exiled to Phrygia after the council at Béziers in 356 A.D. where he was unable to

²⁷ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p7

convince those convened of their heresy, due to their refusal to hear him speak²⁸. While in exile, Hilary continued the struggle against heresy and succeeded in convincing many Arians, and semi-Arians (individuals who agreed fundamentally with the doctrines of Arianism, however desired reconciliation with the Catholic Church) of their error. In 361 A.D. Hilary was sent back to Poitiers, whereby Martin, his former disciple, visited him and together they established a monastery at Liguge. From there Martin traveled throughout Gaul winning many converts. Through his actions and deeds, Martin became popular with the masses and ultimately became the Bishop of Tours, despite his objections, truly one of the great moments of fourth century Gaul.

Nearly about the same time, Martin was called upon to undertake the episcopate of the church at Tours; but when he could not easily be drawn forth from his monastery, a certain Ruricius, one of the citizens, pretending that his wife was ill, and casting himself down at his knees, prevailed on him to go forth. Multitudes of the citizens having previously been posted by the road on which he traveled, he is thus under a kind of guard escorted to the city. An incredible number of people not only from that town, but also from the neighboring cities, had, in a wonderful manner, assembled to give their votes. There was but one wish among all, there were the same prayers, and there was the same fixed opinion to the effect that Martin was most worthy of the episcopate, and that the church would be happy with such a priest.²⁹

The people were adamant in their desire for Martin to serve as bishop. Martin, who was not prone to administering to the public at large was not immediately convinced, despite the insistence of the people. Martin was not alone however in his reluctance to accept the position. Other figures of varying religious authority were also against this appointment.

²⁸ See: Newman, John Henry Cardinal. *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 2001

²⁹ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*; Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p. 8

A few persons, however, and among these some of the bishops, who had been summoned to appoint a chief priest, were impiously offering resistance, asserting forsooth that Martin's person was contemptible, that he was unworthy of the episcopate, that he was a man despicable in countenance, that his clothing was mean, and his hair disgusting. This madness of theirs was ridiculed by the people of sounder judgment, inasmuch as such objectors only proclaimed the illustrious character of the man, while they sought to slander him. Nor truly was it allowed them to do anything else, than what the people, following the Divine will, desired to be accomplished.³⁰

Martin did not care for the attention and left for a monastery he founded called Marmoutier, near Tours, where today Marmoutiers abbey stands. Life was difficult at the monastery however Martin did not seem in any way displeased with that way of life.

The defense of the Priscillians is a good example of the character of Martin. The Priscillian heresy originated in Spain in the fourth century, based on the doctrines of Marcus of Memphis. Priscillian was a man born into wealth and was a gifted orator, being well educated, and was able to convince many people of his doctrines through discussion and by the example of Priscillian giving up his wealthy life for one of a hard ascetic nature. Although many specific doctrines existed, the basic doctrines of Priscillianism had to do with the nature of man. Priscillian taught that angels and men had a spirit that was severed from the divine, and it was the destiny of those beings of light to conquer the kingdom of darkness. The failure to do so is why man is comprised of two kingdoms, one of light and the other of darkness. Christ is the means through which we

³⁰ From the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, Scotland, p. 8

combat that darkness within ourselves. Although one can see similarities in the overall intention of the doctrine put forward by Priscillian and that held true by Martin, the concept of man's nature being of both light and darkness, is fundamentally impossible to reconcile with the belief that the nature of man is good. Therefore it was inevitable that Martin would stand against the doctrines of the Priscillian heresy.

Although morally opposed to the teachings of Priscillian³¹, he was quick to defend those who believed in those teachings, as he was merciful and believed they should be removed from the jurisdiction of Emperor Maximus. It is impressive when other church representatives cried for the destruction of the priscillian movement and condemnation for all those who would follow it, Martin would be quick to condemn the heretical teachings, but quicker still to defend the people.

Once again, the generosity and kindness of Martin is evident. Those excerpts from the Vita are indicative of the two complementary aspects to Martin's character, a man of immutable spontaneous kindness and generosity, and at the same time a fearless combatant for his faith. A faith that would see him defend to his full ability those that he was in direct theological opposition to. This love for his neighbor, in all shapes and forms would govern his desire to confront evil.

Martin's complete dismissal of the priscillianist canons, yet fierce defense for the priscillian followers is not unlike his conflict with Arianism. Martin held no contempt for

³¹ See: *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967

nor did he blame the followers of the heretical teachings, but instead chose to try to persuade them of their mistake, and even defend them if and when necessary, regardless of any past mistakes.

Chapter II:

Good, Evil and Exorcism

Good and Evil

Within the context of the Judeo-Christian tradition, the opposition between Good and Evil are among the basic elements of our cosmology. This is not to say that everything inherent in our lives revolves around Good and Evil, but simply that Good and Evil, and the inherent struggle are at the root of our spirituality. God is good. Everything good comes from God. So then if everything good comes from God, where does everything evil come from? For that matter, what is evil? Is evil simply the absence of Good? If that were the case, and God is everything that is good, then that would imply that evil is the absence of God. And since the absence of God is impossible, how does one define evil?

In the Judeo-Christian tradition it is the book of Genesis that gives the first glimpse of evil. Evil reveals itself as multiform. Within the confines of the stories represented in the book of Genesis, one can clearly identify a wide range of evil actions. In the story of Cain and Abel, jealousy causes Cain to murder his brother Abel, and proceed to lie to God where we can clearly see the sins of Invidia (envy) and Ira (wrath). In the story of Noah and the flood God destroys mankind (saving Noah and his family) because of the sinful ways of man. Later the story continues with Noah taking to the farming of grapes, making of wine and getting drunk. In the story of the Tower of Babel, God destroys the tower and scatters the peoples of the world and condemns them to speak different languages³².

³² Story of the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11:1-32

The writings of fourth century Christian teachers are full of instances of the need to recognize and struggle against evil, whether it be represented outside of the individual in whatever form it may take, or the internal struggle of all individuals. It can be argued that sin is a physical manifestation of evil. St. Augustine describes sin as being something that is said, done or desired contrary to the eternal law. Sin in the Judeo-Christian sense is common to everyone. Nobody is without sin, therefore all are capable of evil. Some would argue that evil is what happens through sin, while others would argue that it is evil that causes us to sin. In any case, it is clear that in this context sin and evil are linked.

Early in the 5th century, there was a new heresy being taught on the subject of sin. Based on the theories of Pelagius (354 A.D.- 425/440 A.D.), pelagianism taught that the sin of Adam was not passed down to man, and that man had no restrictions over his free will. Although praised early on in his career by many church figures, including St. Augustine, from who much of the knowledge on the subject comes, he would end his life defending himself and his teachings against those very fathers and the church who once praised him.

St. Augustine argued that the sin of Adam, wounded man. Man is born of a divine spirit, and as such our nature is good, but man is wounded at birth, and only through Christ can man be healed. Pelagianism was the school of thought that may have seduced Severus, Martin's biographer, near the end of his life around 420-425 A.D., although he

later would reject Pelagianism, and may have spent the rest of his days in silence as a self imposed penance³³.

Demonology

During the fourth century A.D., for many of the early church fathers, the struggle between Good and Evil manifested itself in the physical world as well as the spiritual one. Even today we can see examples of how people believe that evil exists in the physical world. I do not refer to the evil of men, or of men's action, but rather the physical manifestation of demonic possession.

Demonological influence in early Jewish traditions can trace its roots to surrounding cultures. The Egyptians, for example believed in demonic monsters that prevented souls from reaching the afterlife by consuming them. It seems likely that one of the largest contributors to early Hebrew concepts of Demons came from Zoroastrianism and during the years of exile partial influence on the Hebrew beliefs and traditions was unavoidable. Polytheistic traditions of demons and malevolent spirits found new interpretations as fallen angels within traditional Jewish beliefs at the time³⁴.

³³ This is an unsubstantiated legend which speaks to the repentant character of Severus. It is likely that this is exaggerated and is used to emphasize this aspect of Severus' personality. There is no evidence to support the claim that Severus in any way followed or believed in the Pelagian teachings. As discussed in the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland, p. 1

³⁴ See: Jeffrey, Russell, Burton, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*, Ithaca, Connecticut University Press, 1981

The concept of adopting another religion's deity as a demon in your own is not uncommon in the ancient world. The god of an enemy force is undoubtedly going to be looked upon with malice. For the most part, one culture's demons might have originally been the deities of other cultures. In the Christian tradition all demons are bad. The ultimate goal of all demons is to create as much havoc and destruction as possible to humanity. Nothing about them is to be trusted for they spin nothing but falsehoods and will destroy those who let them.

In the early Christian teachings of demonology there are ranks and personalities to each of the demons, and often their opponent in heaven, much in the same way that the opponent of Lucifer is Saint Michael. It seems these forces are locked in an ever present battle of wills. The multiplicity and the malevolence of the demons against human beings can be found in the theories of the 3rd century theologian Origen of Alexandria. In Book III of his great work On First Principles we read:

Thus, when men at first for a little, desire money, covetousness begins to grow as the passion increases, and finally the fall into avarice takes place. And after this, when blindness of mind has succeeded passion, and the hostile powers, by their suggestions, hurry on the mind, money is now no longer desired, but stolen, and acquired by force, or even by shedding human blood. Finally, a confirmatory evidence of the fact that vices of such enormity proceed from demons, may be easily seen in this, that those individuals who are oppressed either by immoderate love, or incontrollable anger, or excessive sorrow, do not suffer less than those who are bodily vexed by devils. For it is recorded in certain histories, that some have fallen into madness from a state of love, others from a state of anger, not a few from a state of sorrow, and even from one of excessive joy; which results, I think, from this, that those opposing powers, i.e., those demons, having gained a lodgment in their minds which has been already laid open to them by intemperance, have taken

complete possession of their sensitive nature, especially when no feeling of the glory of virtue has aroused them to resistance³⁵.

This is an interesting aspect to Origen's description of demons. We can see the diversity of the body of demons, ranks and positions, personalities etc. yet it is also clearly mentioned in the Letters of Antony that all beings, demons and man included come from the same one divine God. This paradox of unity despite diversity in the rational beings is fundamental to the understanding of Martin's love for everyone. We are all of God, and as such, regardless of the actions or beliefs of others, in our dealings with them, we are dealing in essence with Christ.

For they are all from one source in their intellectual substance but in their flight from God, great diversity arises between them, through the variety of their workings." Just as there are different names of the choirs of angels, the devils, too, have different names according to their works—"evil and impure spirits," "seducing spirits," "princes of this world." ...lift up "this heavy body" so that it may be an altar, reminding Antony of the contest between Elijah and the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:38-44). He urges us to lift up the hands of our heart before the Lord, and the demons, like the priests of Baal, will flee before us and we will receive the "spirited rain" of the Holy Spirit.³⁶

It is interesting to note that although of the same origin, it is in their flight from God that the diversity of the nature of the demons is shown.

³⁵ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book III, Chapter 2, Paragraph 3. See: Origen. *Treatise on the Passover and Dialogue of Origen with Heraclides and His Fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul*. Burghardt, Lawler, Dillon. New York: Paulist Press. 1992

³⁶ From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As represented by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg, p. 4

One of the most vivid depictions of demonic encounter in fourth century Christianity was that of the monk Antony whose life was written by Athanasius of Alexandria.

He was carried therefore by the man, and as he was wont, when the door was shut he was within alone. And he could not stand up on account of the blows, but he prayed as he lay. And after he had prayed, he said with a shout, Here am I, Antony; I flee not from your stripes, for even if you inflict more nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ. And then he sang, 'though a camp be set against me, my heart shall not be afraid' These were the thoughts and words of this ascetic. But the enemy, who hates good, marvelling that after the blows he dared to return, called together his hounds and burst forth, 'Ye see,' said he, 'that neither by the spirit of lust nor by blows did we stay the man, but that he braves us, let us attack him in another fashion.' But changes of form for evil are easy for the devil, so in the night they made such a din that the whole of that place seemed to be shaken by an earthquake, and the demons as if breaking the four walls of the dwelling seemed to enter through them, coming in the likeness of beasts and creeping things. And the place was on a sudden filled with the forms of lions, bears, leopards, bulls, serpents, asps, scorpions, and wolves, and each of them was moving according to his nature. The lion was roaring, wishing to attack, the bull seeming to toss with its horns, the serpent writhing but unable to approach, and the wolf as it rushed on was restrained; altogether the noises of the apparitions, with their angry ragings, were dreadful. But Antony, stricken and goaded by them, felt bodily pains severer still. He lay watching, however, with unshaken soul, groaning from bodily anguish; but his mind was clear, and as in mockery he said, 'If there had been any power in you, it would have sufficed had one of you come, but since the Lord hath made you weak, you attempt to terrify me by numbers: and a proof of your weakness is that you take the shapes of brute beasts.' And again with boldness he said, 'If you are able, and have received power against me, delay not to attack; but if you are unable, why trouble me in vain? For faith in our Lord is a seal and a wall of safety to us.' So after many attempts they gnashed their teeth upon him, because they were mocking themselves rather than him.³⁷

³⁷ From *Letters*, as represented in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950. See also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

In this case, evil manifests itself in a physical form, inflicting pain on the individual. The relentlessness of evil in its attack on what is good, is a theme that will continue on in other works of the period.

Possession

Exorcism is the act of removing a foreign spirit or demon from a person, animal, place or object. The focus of this section will be on the individual. Exorcisms exist in one form or another in many different cultures and religious traditions. In this section, we will be examining the Christian Doctrine of Exorcism and how it relates to Martin of Tours.

In order to understand exorcism, or at least the underlying concepts thereof, one must first examine possession, since possession is the root condition for which an exorcism would take place. Possession is a complicated subject to approach. Throughout many religions there are stories of spirits or foreign influences taking over an individual. Although in many cultures the act of possession is not always necessarily a negative occurrence. In many stories, the act of a possession by a positive influence could be beneficial however, the opposite is also true³⁸.

The possession of an individual by a malevolent outside force is common throughout near eastern religions. Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hittite cultures all make

³⁸ T. Dietrich, *Possession and Exorcism*, New York: Causeway Books, 1974

reference to this. However, the main focus of this section will be on the Judeo-Christian concepts of Exorcism.

In early Jewish culture, demonological influences were prevalent in different forms. To be more precise, the concept of demonological influence was prevalent however, the concept of demonological possession over the individual was not. Although most likely a direct result of the influences of neighboring religions, possession in the Jewish religion was (with a few exceptions) not usually considered beneficial. In most cases the act of possession was undesirable, and ultimately harmful. This is best seen in the story of Tobias.

Sarah was possessed by a demon who would slay her husbands on the night of their wedding, preventing the marriage from being consummated. Tobias drove the demon away with the help of Raphael the Archangel, who chased the demon to upper Egypt and bound him³⁹. In Kabbalah, possession of the individual by demons does not take place. Rather it is the wandering soul of someone already dead. These souls, referred to as dybbuk can be good or bad in nature, and are ultimately acting due to an unfinished aspect of their life. In the case of a malevolent spirit, the aim would be to cause the subject of the possession the same grief suffered by the possessed in their lifetime.

In most Christian examples of possession, the subject is occupied by a demon, or demons. Unlike in the traditional Jewish concept of possession, in early church ideology,

³⁹ As represented in the Book of Tobias Section 1

the ultimate goal of those who would possess is to inflict pain and suffering and bring the possessed as far away from Christ as possible.

In the pre-Christian tradition of the Gallic tribes, in the animism aspect of their religious traditions they assumed the inherent unification of the body and soul, or the physical and the spiritual. This included animals, plants, mountains and bodies of water. They did, however, believe in independent spirits. That is spirits without any physical aspect to them. These spirits often appeared in various ways such as hallucinations, or unexplained sicknesses etc. In many ways, these occurrences resembled later descriptions of possession in the Christian sense⁴⁰.

Exorcism

The Christian tradition of exorcism traces its roots directly to the acts of exorcism by Christ. The ritual invokes the power of Christ to expel the demons inhabiting a body. For it is only through the Son of Man that one can command the world around him.

When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "he is dead", But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "This kind can only come out through prayer. (Mark 9:25-29)

⁴⁰ T. Dietrich, *Possession and Exorcism*, New York: Causeway Books, 1974

The reaction of Christ to his disciples seems to indicate his disappointment in their lack of faith. This is perhaps better illustrated in Matthew:

Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.
(Matthew 17:20-21)

The confrontations Christ had with demons and the demonic by way of exorcism, as represented in the New Testament, are of particular interest. The casting out of one demon possessing one body is present;

After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees "By the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." (Matthew 9:32-34)

but also the possession of one body by many demons;

as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, (Luke 8:2)

It is perhaps in the possession of one body by many demons that is most intriguing, and of these stories, the description of 'legion' is unique:

Come out of the man you unclean spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is legion, for we are many." He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on

the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding, and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea. (Mark 5:8-13)

Firstly, Christ enters into dialogue with the demons possessing the man he was to exorcise. Secondly, the demon(s) seem to be respectful of Christ, whereas despite the fact demons are forced to bend to the will of Christ, rarely in other cases of Christ or his disciples exorcising demons do we see anything but contempt for God from the mouth of the possessed during exorcism. Thirdly, 'legion' requests Jesus cast him/them into a herd of swine to inhabit, a request that Christ listens to and grants. Finally, the most intriguing aspect of the story is the nature of 'legion' as an entity. The multiplicity of a demonic possession in such a united form, ie the representation of the many in the singular form is fascinating.

Early Christians placed great emphasis on the example of Christ in matters of exorcism. Up to the early third century, it was through these means that exorcisms were performed. The rituals and practices of early Christian exorcism are mostly lost to us save the recorded written examples of baptism. Although the rituals differed with the region, practitioner and participants, early Christians linked baptism, exorcism, and conversion into a similar ideological category; the rejection of evil/Satan, and the acceptance of Christ.

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in

my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. (Mark 9:38-41)

If one were to examine exorcism in the context of Augustine, we can see direct parallels to both Martin and Antony in the existence of demons and the demonic ever present and ever ready to capitalize on the weakness of man, and the struggle of the individual to reject such temptations.

The actual act of exorcism is intertwined with that of baptism.

Just as you saw today, even little children are hissed at and exorcised, so that the hostile power of the devil-who deceived one man to lay hold of everyone-might be knocked out of them. So it is not these children-God's creation-whom we his at and exorcise, but the one whose sway all those born with sin come under: that is, the prince of sinners.⁴¹

The overall goal of rejecting Satan and removing all of his influence over the individual is at the center of these rituals. The rituals themselves as described had some regional variance, but all were centered around the exorcist shouting at the devil to leave the body of the individual and performing such acts as hissing at Satan:

This gesture, the *exsufflatio*, was a conventional sign of contempt and had become, in Christian circles, a standard exorcistic act. For instance, Athanasius says that Saint Antony, when confronted by a demon, had hissed at it and called on the name of Christ.⁴²

⁴¹ William Harmless, S.J. *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995 p. 264 Paragraph. 2

⁴² William Harmless, S.J. *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995 p. 264 Paragraph. 2

Given the communal nature of the ceremonies in which these events took place, the act of the exorcism, baptism or conversion was as much for the congregation as it was for the individual being exorcised, baptized or converted.

Exorcism still exists today. However, it is rarely discussed outside of the religious community. Although all dioceses have at least one priest trained in matters of exorcism and possession whom the bishop can call upon in such matters, generally this aspect of religious life is not advertised. The exorcist in modern times is an enigmatic figure, ideally an older man of high moral standard, known for his piety and purity of spirit. The exorcist is suggested to go to confession, and if at all possible to celebrate mass prior to the ritual taking place. This is to ensure the priest is prepared spiritually to do battle with the demonic.⁴³

Put on all the armor that God has forged, that you may be able to make a stand against the devil's cunning tricks. Our wrestling is not against weak human nature, but against the Principalities and the Powers, against those that rule the world of darkness, the wicked spirits that belong to an order higher than ours. . . . With all this take up the shield of faith, with which you will be enabled to put out all the flaming arrows of the wicked enemy. (Eph 6.12-16)

The reticence to speak of the power and prevalence of the demonic was something of a reflection of the mentality of the Christian writings of the 4th century. It is noteworthy that the biographer of St. Martin gave so much attention to the struggle of his hero against the spiritual forces of evil.

⁴³ There are no texts other than the *Rituale Romanum* approved by the Roman Catholic Church for official reference in matters of exorcism.

Battle with Demons and Satan

Martin's first encounter with Satan took place on his way to Italy where the devil appeared to him as a man;

Martin, then, having gone on from thence, after he had passed Milan, the devil met him in the way, having assumed the form of a man. The devil first asked him to what place he was going. Martin having answered him to the effect that he was minded to go whithersoever the Lord called him, the devil said to him, "Wherever you go, or whatever you attempt, the devil will resist you." Then Martin, replying to him in the prophetic word, said, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do unto me." Upon this, his enemy immediately vanished out of his sight; and thus, as he had intended in his heart and mind, he set free his mother from the errors of heathenism, though his father continued to cleave to its evils. However, he saved many by his example.⁴⁴

From his first interaction with the Devil, Martin succeeds in turning him away and through the contest is able to convert his mother. According to Severus, Martin's second encounter with the Devil did not go as well.

As to the devil, Martin held him so visible and ever under the power of his eyes, that whether he kept himself in his proper form, or changed himself into different shapes of spiritual wickedness, he was perceived by Martin, under whatever guise he appeared. The devil knew well that he could not escape discovery, and therefore frequently heaped insults upon Martin, being unable to beguile him by trickery. On one occasion the devil, holding in his hand the bloody horn of an ox, rushed into Martin's cell with great noise, and holding out to him his bloody right hand, while at the same time he exulted in the crime he had committed, said: "Where, O Martin, is thy power? I have just slain one of your people."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 7

⁴⁵ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 14

The most intriguing example of the combative nature of Martin is perhaps best illustrated in the next encounter with Satan, whereby Martin preaches forgiveness to the Devil.

If thou, thyself, wretched being, wouldst but desist from attacking mankind, and even, at this period, when the day of judgment is at hand, wouldst only repent of your deeds, I, with a true confidence in the Lord, would promise you the mercy of Christ." O what a holy boldness with respect to the loving-kindness of the Lord, in which, although he could not assert authority, he nevertheless showed the feelings dwelling within him!⁴⁶

When we examine Martin as an exorcist we have to distinguish between Martin as a performer of the physical act of exorcism, and Martin as opponent to the Devil. Martin as exorcist from the perspective of one who is studying him seems to take on an interesting progression.

Martin, then, laying his hand upon the boy, cast the evil spirit out of him. On seeing this, Tetradius believed in the Lord Jesus, and immediately became a catechumen, while, not long after, he was baptized; and he always regarded Martin with extraordinary affection, as having been the author of his salvation.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 12

⁴⁷ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 12

Exorcism-Within the Context of Martin

God exorcises demons through the exorcist. In the Catholic tradition, invoking the name of Christ is necessary in the ritual. Martin began in a similar fashion however, seemed to progress to not requiring to invoke the name of God. Further progression can be seen in later writings by Severus:

After he left, all the virgins used to rush into that retirement: they kiss every place where the blessed man had either sat or stood, and distribute among themselves the very straw on which he had lain. One of them, a few days afterwards, took a part of the straw which she had collected for a blessing to herself, and hung it from the neck of a possessed person, whom a spirit of error was troubling. There was no delay; but sooner than one could speak the demon was cast out, and the person was cured.⁴⁸

This raises a few questions. How would this in theory be possible? What does this imply in regards to the nature of Martin? It would seem that towards the end, threads from his clothing could exorcise demons with their presence alone. It is an interesting concept that Martin would be able to exorcise demons, without the necessity to be present. What is the basis for these claims? Was Martin any more able as an exorcist than other church fathers of the period?

Martin threw himself in the way of the frenzied creature, and first of all commanded him to stand still. But when he continued to gnash with his teeth, and, with gaping mouth, was threatening to bite, Martin inserted his fingers into his mouth, and said, "If you possess any power, devour these." But then, as if red-hot iron had entered his jaws, drawing his teeth far away he took care not to touch the fingers of the saintly man; and when he was compelled by punishments and tortures, to flee out of

⁴⁸ Excerpt from the *Dialogue* English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland, p. 24, Dialogue 2, Chapter 8

the possessed body, while he had no power of escaping by the mouth, he was cast out by means of a defluxion of the belly, leaving disgusting traces behind him.⁴⁹

One of the early proponents of the necessity of exorcism was Saint Hilary, who insisted that demons would take over an individual to do their bidding in whatever form that may take. Given that Martin held Hilary in such high regard, the concept of this invariably left an impression. It was in fact Hilary that first handed Martin the responsibility of Exorcist in order to ensure Martin would remain in his diocese.

It is significant that both early biographies, that of St. Athanasius recounting the achievements of St. Antony of Egypt, and that of Severus on the life of St. Martin of Tours both devote long and vivid sections to the presence and danger of demons. Both Martin and Antony are portrayed as warriors of God against the forces of evil.

⁴⁹ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P.12

Chapter III:

Warriors of God

Warriors of God

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about,
seeking whom he may devour.
(I Peter V:8)

The conflict between good and evil can only be understood in the context of our own understanding of God. Since everything good comes from God, it stands to reason that it is only through God that the conflict between good and evil can be understood. Since God is beyond our understanding, we have to look at ourselves and our struggle to understand our relationship with God.

Origen argued the soul was eternal, and therefore incorruptible. Antony argued that the soul had an implanted law of the covenant, and as such an inherent link to the divine. By extension of this point, Antony argues we are good by nature. Our souls were created and given to us by God, and therefore God is at the very foundation of our being. This argument can easily be compared to the earlier works of Origen of Alexandria. Therefore, all that is right and good and true is in our very nature. It is then the world outside of ourselves that cause the corruptions within. Regardless of external circumstances, our nature is good because God created our nature and he is good.

It is in our nature to be good, because our nature is from God, yet all rational beings possess free will. Origen dictates that it was the misuse of free will that led to the woundedness of our condition. Despite this woundedness, free will still exists, and it is

still our responsibility to follow the path which the very nature of our being dictates, despite any other influences, be they demonic or otherwise.

Origen and Antony of Egypt

Origen of Alexandria was one of the earliest theologians to explore some of the more difficult concepts in Christian tradition, such as the Trinitarian God, the divine creator of the soul, and the temporal constant of God and the soul⁵⁰. His contribution to Christianity is significant within the context of fourth century theologians, in that many conflicts of the time revolved around those very ideas, and the arguments and defense of their solid belief in those very aspects of Christianity were paramount in overcoming those conflicts. In so doing, the way was paved for later theologians to build upon their work, and continue to expand the church and Christianity; both united in common traditions and ideals.

Origen was influenced by elements of Greek philosophy, specifically elements concerning the nature of the soul. The ideological concepts of the soul, and the non-temporal nature thereof were not new concepts at the time, having been the subject of discussion for many Greek philosophers throughout history.

Plato conceptualized the soul, based on three aspects of man; reason, appetite, and emotion embedded in the concepts of justice and reason, which spoke to the nature of

⁵⁰ See: Origen. *Treatise on the Passover and Dialogue of Origen with Heraclides and His Fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul*. Burghardt, Lawler, Dillon. New York: Paulist Press. 1992

man as always seeking true justice. It is in this understanding of the soul, as being the immortal aspect of man, the part of man that is firmly rooted in justice and reason, that we can see similarities from these early discourses on the nature of the soul, and fourth century theological debate on the same subject. The soul of man is always seeking true justice, and it is this pursuit that is ongoing. If one were to consider the Greek ideas concerning the nature of justice, and man's desire to achieve it, and compare it to Antony's appeal for all men to remain ever vigilant in the face of evil, one might come to the conclusion that these arguments are fundamentally similar. In essence, the permanent struggle between justice and injustice of Plato is very similar to the eternal vigilance, and the struggle between good and evil of Antony, both being rooted in the notion of the soul being immortal, and good, or just, by nature.

Although conceptually similar to early Greek philosophical works, one of the most important aspects to Origen, Antony, (as recorded by Athanasius), Augustine, and Martin (as recorded by Severus) is the nature of the individual struggle between good and evil being securely placed within the broader context of salvation.⁵¹ Man does not possess the means of salvation alone. Although the nature of man is good, and the soul is of divine essence, the inherent woundedness of man is only healed through Christ. Christ as the divine physician to our wounded condition is the only means through which we attain salvation however it still falls to us to choose our side in the battle between good and evil, as Origen argued, that our wounded condition is a result of the misuse of the free will that

⁵¹ From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As interpreted by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg,

man, and all rational creatures possess, since all rational creatures are united in their manner of creation.

In Book I, Origen's reference to the demons is in the context of the anti-Gnostic polemic of the unity of creation. The variety of rational spirits is the result of their fallenness from a state of original unity. In Chapter 5, he comments on the fallen condition of the Devil (the Prince of Tyre, Ezekiel 28:11-19 and the king of Babylon, Isaiah 14:12-22). Chapter 8 focuses on the multiple functions of rational beings, derived "not from unfairness on the part of the dispenser, but for their own actions..." (I.8.2) Origen notes the multiple titles of angels, principles, powers, dominations—"glorious variety of offices"—then the opposing powers—"rulers of the darkness of the world, spiritual hosts of wickedness," "malignant spirits," "impure spirits." (I.8.4)⁵²

Origen describes the physical manifestation of evil, in the form of demons. These demons, who are also rational creatures, and who also possess free will, influence our lives, and it is in this context that Origen, and later theologians like Antony discuss battle with demons, a battle to prevent evil from corrupting the actions that should be reflective of our nature, and our relationship with God.

...Origen elaborates on the variety and diversity of creation, noting that in the "harmony of a single world, some are in need of help, others able to give help..." (II.1.2) The common themes of *Peri Archon* Books I and II and Antony's *Letter* 6 are notable: the original unity of our intellectual substance, the multiplicity and diverse functions of rational beings, the intercommunion of helpers and those needing help.⁵³

It is important to mention the significance of rendering help to those who need it. The idea of a harmony of a single world, whereby for one person who needs help, another

⁵² From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As interpreted by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg, p. 6

⁵³ From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As interpreted by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg, p. 6

person is able to give and does give is an aspect of our nature, and adhering to it is one aspect of a Warrior of God.

Although there is no evidence to support the claim that Martin had read earlier Christian writings, it would seem that this was at the very least possible. Martin was an educated individual, and was a devout follower of the Christian doctrines, and it would seem likely that his nature would dictate a desire to read and educate himself in matters of faith. One can see a basis for this argument in how Martin's actions were represented by Severus.

In helping your neighbor, you help yourself. In helping your neighbor, you help Christ. If one were to examine the Life of Saint Martin, and pay close attention to the story of Martin giving half his cloak to the beggar, this concept becomes very clearly illustrated. Martin, while passing through the gate to the city with his fellow soldiers sees a beggar, naked and without regard for himself, cuts his cloak in half and gives it to the beggar to cloth himself. This shows Martin helping his neighbor. Later Martin within his dream experiences a vision of Christ wearing that very half of his cloak, telling the angels that Martin had clothed him. This shows Martin helping Christ through helping his neighbor. When Martin woke up, he noticed his cloak had been returned to its full form. This shows that Martin, through helping his neighbor, he helped Christ, and through that act of helping Christ he helped himself.

Origen argues that the very existence of our free will makes us wholly responsible for our sins, despite any external influences.

...Origen treats the question of the struggle which the “opposing powers” maintain against the human race. Origen insists that the exercise of our free will makes us responsible for sin, but that when we are intemperate, “the hostile powers seize the opportunity.” There is need for discernment between the good and evil spirits which attend us. In Chapter 3, Origen notes that the “apostate and exiled powers tempt us to “false knowledge” out of envy and to prevent our ascent to that station from which they have fallen. We must be constantly watchful against evil and not slip into negligence but maintain strict guard day and night against the “opposing powers.”⁵⁴

It would appear that the eternal vigilance against the “opposing powers” mentioned by Origen is not just an abstract concept, but also a literal instruction to confront the demons that would lead us to negligence.

The battling of the demons, is in essence the struggle against evil, and the conscious effort to follow the righteous path, within a larger picture of salvation. This can be seen within the Letters.

The combat with the demons (sections 3-7) is set in the broader context of the economy of salvation as it is schematized throughout the Letters (notably letters 2 and 5). God reaches out to fallen humanity through numerous visitations culminating in the coming of the Son—the true Physician of our wounded condition... For Antony, the combat with the demons is situated within the vast panorama of the fall of rational creatures and the gracious visitations of God, responding to their woundedness and disorientation. While the efficacy of the Divine Physician/Son in healing our wounded condition is assured, as rational creatures, we chose between good and evil. Wounded in our intellectual perception, we are surrounded by malignant forces who know well our vulnerability. The demons, with whom we share a common origin, now

⁵⁴ From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As interpreted by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg, p. 6

envy human beings and plot their downfall. But weak and vulnerable though we are, we are not alone. A multitude of holy beings watch over us to whom we have only to raise our hearts for help.⁵⁵

Christ is the physician through which our fundamental wound is healed. This act of Christ is how we attain salvation. But if the act of salvation is a result of God sending his son as the physician to our wounded condition, what impact does our free will have on the overall picture of salvation?

When I have adhered (Ps 72:28) to you with the whole of myself, I shall never have “pain and toil” (Ps 89:10), and my entire life will be full of you. You lift up the person whom you fill. But for the present, because I am not full of you, I am a burden to myself....See I do not hide my wounds. You are a physician. I am the patient. (10.28.39)⁵⁶

Is the healing aspect of Christ achieved through the faith of the individual? Or is it the decisions and behavior of the individual that define their faith? In regards to Origen, Antony, and later Martin, it seems that all three men were adamant in their constant vigilance against evil, and of their responsibility of faith. The best example for Antony of this vigilance is his battle with the demons, and their “hidden malignancies” which surround us:

First they attack the mind, filling it with blasphemies and infidelities, and hardening the heart. Second, they incite to sins against charity, “when we are hard –hearted, bitter against each other, judgmental in disputes and divisions.” Third, the demons attempt to deceive us so that we do not discern our proper tasks or react with appropriate emotions.

⁵⁵ From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As interpreted by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg, p. 3

⁵⁶ The Confessions of Saint Augustine, in: Kim Paffenroth and Robert P. Kennedy, *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003, p. 155

“We laugh when we should cry and cry when we should laugh.”... Antony reminds his readers that these attacks are manifold: “They have not one uniform method of hurting.” They are not seen visibly, the drama being in the psyche, but when the soul receives their wickedness: “it brings them to manifestation by the body in which we dwell.” The invisible demons are made manifest by our works, particularly our dealings with our neighbor.⁵⁷

It is in dealing with our neighbor, that is to say dealing with others, where our free will to follow the nature of our being is most important, and also, where the greatest temptation to not adhere to that nature lies.

We must love one another with a single love. For all who know themselves know they are of one immortal substance.” This unity of love is founded on Jesus Christ. “We are in the image of Jesus Christ, the Head of all Creation” (Col. 1:15-18). We are all members of one body, “gathered together out of all regions” “to teach us that we are all of one substance and members of each other.” Our careless conduct is a weariness for the angels and the saints, while our salvation and joy give joy and refreshment to them all.⁵⁸

St. Antony of Egypt (251 A.D.- 356 A.D.) is best known as the father of all monks. Although monasticism was already being practiced, Antony pioneered the monastic life, opting to live in seclusion in the desert in order to continue the struggle against evil he felt was being waged within him. St. Athanasius describes this battle against evil being waged not only within Antony, but outside as well, with detailed examples of the physical manifestations of demons.

⁵⁷ From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As interpreted by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg, p. 3

⁵⁸ From St. Antony, *Letters*, Letter 6, Section 7, As interpreted by Pamela Bright, *Origeniana Septime*, Ed. W.A. Bienert and V. Kuhneweg, p. 3

Antony takes the argument of man being good by nature further and relates good with love. Although this may seem like a logical conclusion it is an important factor in our understanding of what the concept of good is to Antony, as he explains in one his letters;

There are those who are called by the law of love which is in their nature, and which original good implanted in them at their first creation. The word of God came to them, and they doubted not at all but followed it readily like Abraham the patriarch.: for when God saw that it was not from the teaching of men that he had learnt to love God, but from the law implanted in the nature of his first compacting, God appeared to him and said 'Get thee out from thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.' (Gen. 12:1.) And he went nothing doubting, but was ready for his calling. He is the pattern of this approach, which still persists in those that follow in his footsteps. Toiling and seeking the fear of God in patience and quiet, they achieve the true manner of life, because their souls are ready to follow the love of God.⁵⁹

Good is the opposite of evil. If our nature is good, it would also be true that it is our nature to oppose that which is opposite to our nature. Therefore, it would seem that it is the nature of the soul to combat evil. This is important to remember when looking at Antony and his struggle with the demonic.

What does it mean to be a 'Warrior of God'? The term seems to imply a conflict of a divine nature, since one cannot be a warrior without there being a war. There is of course the obvious answer that a soldier who fights for his religion, and therefore by extension his God could be considered such. It would seem however, that the concept of fighting for God is inherently flawed, in that God is not capable of needing someone to

⁵⁹ Antony *Letters* 1, p. 1, paragraph 2, as represented in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

fight for him. Truly, God is the one constant and therefore unshakable foundation of the physical and spiritual world. So it would seem perhaps better suited that the fight would not be for God, but rather for people through divine inspiration.

So if the warrior is not fighting for God, but rather for man, in what way can he call himself a warrior of God? It seems, in terms of Antony's argument that our nature is good and if our soul's desire is to oppose evil in all its forms, then a warrior of God would perhaps be simply a warrior of soul. An individual who listens to the desires of his soul, and whose actions adhere to the divine nature of the spirit would undoubtedly come into conflict with evil, and therefore could be called a warrior of God. Since we can really only understand evil in the same way we can understand good, how can one explain evil, or the corruption of human nature which Antony suggests is good and virtuous?

It would seem that Antony puts a great deal of emphasis that it is the demonic influences that are at the root of our corruptions.

Truly my children, they envy us at all times, with their evil counsel, and hidden persecution, and subtle malice, and spirit of seduction, and their blasphemous thoughts, and their infidelities which they sow in our hearts every day, and their hardenings of heart, and their many griefs which they bring upon us at every hour, and the faintings with which they make our heart to faint daily, and all the mutual slander and anger they teach us, and the self-justifications in what we do, and the judgments which they set in our hearts, causing us, when we are sitting alone, to judge our fellows though they dwell not with us; and the contempt which they set in our hearts by pride, when we are hard hearted and despise each other, when we are bitter against each other with hard words, grieving at every hour, accusing each other and not ourselves, thinking that our toil is from our fellows, sitting on judgment on what appears outwardly, while the robber is all within our house; and the

disputes and divisions wherein we dispute against each other until we establish our own word, to appear justified in the face of each other.⁶⁰

In this way, the demons are all around us, seizing all opportunities to harden our hearts to make us question our nature.

It seems that the battle for Antony, much the same as Martin, holds the soul as the battlefield. For one cannot affect change without before they affect the same change within.

Truly I tell you, my children, that this vessel in which we dwell is perdition for us, and a house full of war. In truth, my children, I tell you that any man who delights in his own will, and is subdued to his own thoughts, and takes up the things sown in his heart, and rejoices in them, and supposes in his heart that these are some great chosen mystery, and justifies himself in what he does-the soul of such a man is a lair of evil spirits, counseling him to evil, and his body a store of evil mysteries, which it hides in itself: and over such a one the demons have great power, because he has not dishonoured them before all men.⁶¹

In his letters, Antony does not discuss the physical battle with the demonic as Severus does in regards to Martin. Antony seems to maintain that the only physical manifestation of the demonic is within ourselves. And it with each other that we battle.

Truly, my children, I think it is no great wonder, if you neglect yourselves and do not discern your works, that you should fall into the

⁶⁰ Antony *Letters* 6 p. 18 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

⁶¹ Antony *Letters* 6 p. 19 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

hands of the devil, when you think you are near God, and that in your expectation of the light, darkness should overtake you.⁶²

Athanasius' Vita Antonii describes more physical battles of Antony with the demonic.

But the devil, who hates and envies what is good, could not endure to see such a resolution in a youth, but endeavoured to carry out against him what he had been wont to effect against others. First of all he tried to lead him away from the discipline, whispering to him the remembrance of his wealth, care for his sister, claims of kindred, love of money, love of glory, the various pleasures of the table and the other relaxations of life, and at last the difficulty of virtue and the labour of it; he suggested also the infirmity of the body and the length of the time. In a word he raised in his mind a great dust of debate, wishing to debar him from his settled purpose. But when the enemy saw himself to be too weak for Antony's determination, and that he rather was conquered by the other's firmness, overthrown by his great faith and falling through his constant prayers, then at length putting his trust in the weapons which are 'in the navel of his belly' and boasting in them--for they are his first snare for the young--he attacked the young man, disturbing him by night and harassing him by day, so that even the onlookers saw the struggle which was going on between them. The one would suggest foul thoughts and the other counter them with prayers: the one fire him with lush the other, as one who seemed to blush, fortify his body with faith, prayers, and fasting. And the devil, unhappy wight, one night even took upon him the shape of a woman and imitated all her acts simply to beguile Antony. But he, his mind filled with Christ and the nobility inspired by Him, and considering the spirituality of the soul, quenched the coal of the other's deceit. Again the enemy suggested the ease of pleasure. But he like a man filled with rage and grief turned his thoughts to the threatened fire and the gnawing worm, and setting these in array against his adversary, passed through the temptation unscathed.⁶³

⁶² Antony *Letters* 6 p. 19 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

⁶³ Antony *Letters* 6 p. 19 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

This particular battle with demons expresses very well the idea of the multiplicity of the demonic. The attack is not in one capacity alone, but rather a barrage of attacks on many fronts. Antony's refusal to succumb to the attacks only serves to increase the anger, frustration and determination of the demons to continue their attack. This is a clear illustration of the relentlessness of the battle between good and evil, and the necessity for the good to be ever vigilant for evil will be relentless.

All this was a source of shame to his foe. For he, deeming himself like God, was now mocked by a young man; and he who boasted himself against flesh and blood was being put to flight by a man in the flesh. For the Lord was working with Antony--the Lord who for our sake took flesh and gave the body victory over the devil, so that all who truly fight can say, 'not I but the grace of God which was with me.' At last when the dragon could not even thus overthrow Antony, but saw himself thrust out of his heart, gnashing his teeth as it is written, and as it were beside himself, he appeared to Antony like a black boy, taking a visible shape in accordance with the colour of his mind. And cringing to him, as it were, he plied him with thoughts no longer, for guileful as he was, he had been worsted, but at last spoke in human voice and said, 'Many I deceived, many I cast down; but now attacking thee and thy labours as I had many others, I proved weak.' When Antony asked, Who art thou who speakest thus with me ? he answered with a lamentable voice, 'I am the friend of whoredom, and have taken upon me incitements which lead to it against the young. I am called the spirit of lust. How many have I deceived who wished to live soberly, how many are the chaste whom by my incitements I have over-persuaded! I am he on account of whom also the prophet reproves those who have fallen, saying, "Ye have been caused to err by the spirit of whoredom." For by me they have been tripped up. I am he who have so often troubled thee and have so often been overthrown by thee.' But Antony having given thanks to the Lord, with good courage said to him, 'Thou art very despicable then, for thou art black-hearted and weak as a child. Henceforth I shall have no trouble from thee, "for the Lord is my helper, and I shall look down on mine enemies."' Having heard this, the black one straightway fled, shuddering at the words and dreading any longer even to come near the man.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Antony *Letters* 6 p. 19 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See

The Devil attacked Antony through boredom, laziness and man's desire for women.

Antony was able to overcome the onslaught through the power of prayer, and a strong resolution.

Thus tightening his hold upon himself, Antony departed to the tombs, which happened to be at a distance from the village; and having bid one of his acquaintances to bring him bread at intervals of many days, he entered one of the tombs, and the other having shut the door on him, he remained within alone. And when the enemy could not endure it, but was even fearful that in a short time Antony would fill the desert with the discipline, coming one night with a multitude of demons, he so cut him with stripes that he lay on the ground speechless from the excessive pain. For he affirmed that the torture had been so excessive that no blows inflicted by man could ever have caused him such torment. But by the Providence of God--for the Lord never overlooks them that hope in Him--the next day his acquaintance came bringing him the loaves. And having opened the door and seeing him lying on the ground as though dead, he lifted him up and carried him to the church in the village, and laid him upon the ground. And many of his kinsfolk and the villagers sat around Antony as round a corpse. But about midnight he came to himself and arose, and when he saw them all asleep and his comrade alone watching, he motioned with his head for him to approach, and asked him to carry him again to the tombs without waking anybody. He was carried therefore by the man, and as he was wont, when the door was shut he was within alone. And he could not stand up on account of the blows, but he prayed as he lay. And after he had prayed, he said with a shout, Here am I, Antony; I flee not from your stripes, for even if you inflict more nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ. And then he sang, 'though a camp be set against me, my heart shall not be afraid.' These were the thoughts and words of this ascetic. But the enemy, who hates good, marvelling that after the blows he dared to return, called together his hounds and burst forth, 'Ye see,' said he, 'that neither by the spirit of lust nor by blows did we stay the man, but that he braves us, let us attack him in another fashion.'⁶⁵

Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

⁶⁵ Antony *Letters* 6 p. 19 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See

The manifestations of evil in Antony's battles were not limited to any one form, but rather all forms. The struggle is eternal and so too it would seem are the manifestations of evil.

But changes of form for evil are easy for the devil, so in the night they made such a din that the whole of that place seemed to be shaken by an earthquake, and the demons as if breaking the four walls of the dwelling seemed to enter through them, coming in the likeness of beasts and creeping things. And the place was on a sudden filled with the forms of lions, bears, leopards, bulls, serpents, asps, scorpions, and wolves, and each of them was moving according to his nature. The lion was roaring, wishing to attack, the bull seeming to toss with its horns, the serpent writhing but unable to approach, and the wolf as it rushed on was restrained; altogether the noises of the apparitions, with their angry ragings, were dreadful. But Antony, stricken and goaded by them, felt bodily pains severer still. He lay watching, however, with unshaken soul, groaning from bodily anguish; but his mind was clear, and as in mockery he said, 'If there had been any power in you, it would have sufficed had one of you come, but since the Lord hath made you weak you attempt to terrify me by numbers: and a proof of your weakness is that you take the shapes of brute beasts.' And again with boldness he said, 'If you are able, and have received power against me, delay not to attack; but if you are unable, why trouble me in vain? For faith in our Lord is a seal and a wall of safety to us.' So after many attempts they gnashed their teeth upon him, because they were mocking themselves rather than him. Nor was the Lord then forgetful of Antony's wrestling, but was at hand to help him. So looking up he saw the roof as it were opened, and a ray of light descending to him. The demons suddenly vanished, the pain of his body straightway ceased, and the building was again whole. But Antony feeling the help, and getting his breath again, and being freed from pain, besought the vision which had appeared to him, saying, 'Where wert thou? Why didst thou not appear at the beginning to make my pains to cease?' And a voice came to him, 'Antony, I was here, but I waited to see thy fight; wherefore since thou hast endured, and hast not been worsted, I will ever be a succour to thee, and will make thy name known everywhere.' Having heard this, Antony

arose and prayed, and received such strength that he perceived that he had more power in his body than formerly.”⁶⁶

The events described in the Life of Saint Antony although not contradictory, do present a very different view of combat with the devil. Whereas in his letters, Antony speaks of demons being all around us at all times, and the battleground is within our own heart, without the direct physical manifestation of the demonic, rather, the physical manifestation through our actions alone. In the Life of Saint Antony, the demonic are most definitely in physical form, attacking Antony directly, as well as mentally and spiritually.

Once a demon exceeding high appeared with pomp, and dared to say, "I am the power of God and I am Providence, what dost thou wish that I shall give thee?" But I then so much the more breathed upon him, and spoke the name of Christ, and set about to smite him. And I seemed to have smitten him, and forthwith he, big as he was, together with all his demons, disappeared at the name of Christ. At another time, while I was fasting, he came full of craft, under the semblance of a monk, with what seemed to be loaves, and gave me counsel, saying, "Eat and cease from thy many labours. Thou also art a man and art like to fall sick." But I, perceiving his device, rose up to pray; and he endured it not, for he departed, and through the door there seemed to go out as it were smoke. How often in the desert has he displayed what resembled gold, that I should only touch it and look on it. But I sang psalms against him, and he vanished away. Often they would beat me with stripes, and I repeated again and again, "Nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ," and at this they rather fell to beating one another. Nor was it I that stayed them and destroyed their power, but it was the Lord, who said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heavens; " but I, children, mindful of the Apostle's words, transferred this to myself, that you might learn not to faint in discipline, nor to fear the devil nor the delusions of the demons.

⁶⁶ Antony *Letters* 6 p. 19 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

'And since I have become a fool in detailing these things, receive this also as an aid to your safety and fearlessness; and believe me for I do not lie. Once some one knocked at the door of my cell, and going forth I saw one who seemed of great size and tall. Then when I enquired, "Who art thou?" he said, "I am Satan." Then when I said, "Why art thou here?" he answered, "Why do the monks and all other Christians blame me undeservedly? Why do they curse me hourly?" Then I answered, "Wherefore dost thou trouble them?" He said, "I am not he who troubles them, but they trouble themselves, for I am become weak. Have they not read, "The swords of the enemy have come to an end, and thou hast destroyed the cities?" I have no longer a place, a weapon, a city. The Christians are spread everywhere, and at length even the desert is filled with monks. Let them take heed to themselves, and let them not curse me unreservedly." Then I marveled at the grace of the Lord, and said to him: "Thou who art ever a liar and never speakest the truth, this at length, even against thy will, thou hast truly spoken. For the coming of Christ hath made thee weak, and He hath cast thee down and stripped thee." But he having heard the Saviour's name, and not being able to bear the burning from it, vanished. 'If, therefore, the devil himself confesses that his power is gone, we ought utterly to despise both him and his demons; and since the enemy with his hounds has but devices of this sort, we, having got to know their weakness, are able to despise them.'"⁶⁷

It could be argued that a 'Warrior of God' is someone who does battle for God.

Since God is all that is good, a 'Warrior of God', it could be argued does battle for good.

In essence, those who fight for what they believe to be right and good and true are essentially 'Warriors of God'.

⁶⁷ Antony *Letters* 6 p. 19 paragraph 3, in *Life of Antony*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xxvi, 835-976; translated by R.T. Meyer in the series *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. X, Westminster, Maryland; 1950 See Also: Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Gregg, Robert. New York: Paulist Press. 1980

Chapter IV:

Martin as Warrior of God

Battle With the Arians

According to Severus' account in the *Vita*, Martin was a key figure in the defense of the church against the Arian heresy. The belief in Christ is the one immutable factor that unites all Christians. One of the definitive characteristics of Christ is his divinity. Arius argued against the divinity of Christ and the question of begotten versus unbegotten swayed many people to Arianism, and the complex nature of the argument made it difficult for proponents of Trinitarian doctrine to convince the swayed of their heresy. Martin, as a disciple and friend to Hilary, believed fervently in the divinity of Christ and the Trinitarian of God, Father, Son and the Holy Ghost.

After this, when the Arian heresy had spread through the whole world, and was especially powerful in Illyria, and when he, almost single-handed, was fighting most strenuously against the treachery of the priests, and had been subjected to many punishments (for he was publicly scourged, and at last was compelled to leave the city), again betaking himself to Italy, and having found the Church in the two divisions of Gaul in a distracted condition through the departure also of the holy Hilarius, whom the violence of the heretics had driven into exile, he established a monastery for himself at Milan. There, too, Auxentius, the originator and leader of the Arians, bitterly persecuted him; and, after he had assailed him with many injuries, violently expelled him from the city. Thinking, therefore, that it was necessary to yield to circumstances, he withdrew to the island Gallinaria, with a certain presbyter as his companion, a man of distinguished excellences. Here he subsisted for some time on the roots of plants; and, while doing so, he took for food hellebore, which is, as people say, a poisonous kind of grass. But when he perceived the strength of the poison increasing within him, and death now nearly at hand, he warded off the imminent danger by means of prayer, and immediately all his pains were put to flight. And not long after having discovered that, through penitence on the part of the king, permission to return had been granted to holy Hilarius, he made an effort to meet him at Rome, and, with this view, set out for that city.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of

It was through perseverance and the unwavering faith of men like Hilary and Martin that the Arian heresy came to an end. Much harm befell those that would stand against Arius and his followers.

Battle against Satan

Of all the conflicts described by Severus between Martin and the forces of Evil, and even the legends and stories concerning the subject, two specific contests stand out. First, the conflict where Martin is less standing against Satan, and more standing for the true Christ, and the other where Martin preaches repentance even to the Devil.

For, on a certain day, prayer having been previously offered, and the fiend himself being surrounded by purple light, in order that he might the more easily deceive people by the brilliance of the splendor assumed, clothed also in a royal robe, and with a crown of precious stones and gold encircling his head, his shoes being too inlaid with gold, while he presented a tranquil countenance, and a generally rejoicing aspect, so that so that no such thought as that he was the devil might be entertained – he stood by the side of Martin as he was praying in his cell. ‘The Saint being dazzled by his first appearance, both preserved a long and deep silence. This was first broken by the Devil, who said: “Acknowledge, Martin, who it is that you behold. I am Christ; and being just about to descend to earth, I wish first to manifest myself to thee.” When Martin kept silence on hearing these words, and gave no answer whatever, the devil dared to repeat his audacious declaration: “Martin, why do you hesitate to believe, when you see? I am Christ.” Then Martin, the spirit revealing the truth to him, that he might understand it was the Devil, and not God, replied as follows: “The Lord Jesus did not predict that he would come clothed in purple, and with a glittering crown upon his head. I will not believe that Christ has come, unless he appears with the appearance and form in which he

suffered, and openly displaying the marks of his wounds upon the cross.” On hearing these words, the devil vanished like smoke, and filled the cell with such a disgusting smell, that he left unmistakable evidences of his real character.⁶⁹

It could be argued that the primary message of this story is not concerning the evil of Satan, or our often easily fooled senses. It appears that the real message of this encounter is Martin’s understanding of the nature of Christ. Beyond the superficial clothing and lack of wounds showing Christ as he suffered, Martin seems to understand the nature of Christ as love, therefore Christ as representative of anything but Love, and all that that entails (forgiveness, redemption, self sacrifice etc.) is simply not Christ. That is the divine nature of Christ, and by extension the divine nature of our soul. To stand up for Christ in this way may be to stand up for oneself. In this representation, Satan is only able to create a perverted concept of the image of Christ, which Martin was able to see through.

In all representations of Martin, he is always compassionate, forgiving and believes in the tolerance of others, despite any philosophies or traditions he may disagree with. He loved his fellow soldiers, he offered his neck to an assassin, he offered half his cloak to a naked beggar when others offered nothing, and he made no mention of judgment on them for their inaction. His father remained a pagan, despite Martin’s spirituality, and his conversion of his mother. But perhaps the best example of Martin’s forgiving nature, and adamant belief in the redemption of all souls is his attempt to preach repentance to the Devil himself.

⁶⁹ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 7

...by-past sins are cleansed away by the leading of a better life, and that through the mercy of God, those are to be absolved from their sins who have given up their evil ways. The Devil saying in opposition to this that such guilty men as those referred to did not come within the pale of pardon, and that no mercy was extended by the Lord to those who had once fallen away. Martin is said to have cried out in words to the following effect: "If thou, thyself, wretched being wouldst but desist from attacking mankind, and even, at this period, when the day of judgment is at hand, wouldst only repent of your deeds, I, with a true confidence in the Lord, would promise you th mercy of Christ." O what a holy boldness with respect to the loving kindness of the Lord, in which, although he could not assert authority, he nevertheless showed the feelings dwelling within him!⁷⁰

One can plainly see that he can draw the parallel between what he knows to be true of the nature of the love and forgiveness of God through himself. He forgives as he knows God forgives. He preaches forgiveness to all, even Satan, as he believes the power of the forgiveness of God is without limit, as is His love, and no one, not even Satan is beyond the reach of the love and forgiveness of God, the same love and forgiveness that rests within the soul, and that carries with it a great responsibility. If the law of love, the original good, was bestowed upon man at his creation, then that same law is in his very nature, and should govern his every action.

⁷⁰ Excerpt from the Vita, by Sulpicius Severus, as translated by Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*: Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland P. 14

Conclusion

To Be Ever Vigilante

Conclusion

Martin sought out and confronted evil in all forms. But it was not his opposition to evil that made him stand out amongst his contemporaries, but rather his loyalty to his belief in the divine nature of the soul, the forgiving and redemptive nature of Christ, and his drive to live his faith, not out of fear, or direction, but because it was his nature to do so, and he lived his faith with relentless conviction as the prayer to continue the fight for God (Saint Martin's prayer) implies.

As exemplified by Martin, to help others is the finest example of confronting evil. It is in our nature to love, since God implanted original love at the moment of creation, and through helping others, we help Christ, and by extension, ourselves. It is our responsibility to follow through with what is already in our nature.

His life was an inspiration to all who knew his stories, and although Severus may not have been impartial in his descriptions of the events of Martin's life, I believe it was Paulinus of Nola that said it best

It certainly would not have been given to thee to draw up an account of Martin, unless by pure heart thou hadst rendered thy mouth worthy of uttering his sacred praises. Thou art blessed, therefore, of the Lord, inasmuch as thou hast been able, in worthy style, and with proper feeling, to complete the history of so great a priest, and so illustrious a confessor. Blessed too, is he, who in accordance with his merits, who has obtained a historian worthy of his faith and of his life; and who has become consecrated to the divine

glory by his own virtues, and to human memory by thy narrative regarding him.⁷¹

Despite any questions as to the impartiality of Severus, Martin was truly unique among his contemporaries. Martin is a wonderful example of what it means to be a Warrior of God. His example shines as brightly now as it did in the fourth century, and hopefully will continue to shine upon us for centuries to come.

In terms of Martin as Warrior of God, the emphasis placed on his unrelenting confrontation with evil is indicative of one thing above all: Responsibility. Martin lived his life according to his beliefs, and lived his faith through his actions. He exemplified eternal vigilance, and unyielding determination to confront evil in all its forms, whether it had been in the nakedness of a beggar, the corruption of scriptural interpretation, the absence of knowledge of the message of Christ, or even demons.

Martin led by example, and was not prone to judging others for their action or inactions. He defended everyone, including those whose beliefs directly conflicted with his own. Although he was a contemporary of many great church fathers, such as Antony, Athanasius, Hilary, and Augustine Martin was unique, in that he wielded the weapons of love, compassion, empathy and forgiveness with an unparalleled grace and understanding. In this way, Martin is in every respect a true Warrior of God.

⁷¹ Excerpt from the *Vita*, by Sulpicius Severus, English translation provided by Alexander Roberts D.D. Professor of Humanities, St. Andrews, Scotland. P. 2

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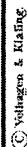
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