

## St. Gregory Nazianzen, *bishop & doctor* (†390)

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### EPISTLE 77

*(excerpts)*

I hear that you are indignant at the outrages which have been committed on us by the Monks and the Mendicants. And it is no wonder, seeing that you never yet had felt a blow, and were without experience of the evils we have to endure, that you did feel angry at such a thing. But we as experienced in many sorts of evil, and as having had our share of insult, may be considered worthy of belief when we exhort Your Reverence, as old age teaches and as reason suggests. Certainly what has happened was dreadful, and more than dreadful,— no one will deny it: that our altars were insulted, our mysteries disturbed, and that we ourselves had to stand between the communicants and those who would stone them, and to make our intercessions a cure for stonings; that the reverence due to virgins was forgotten, and the good order of monks, and the calamity of the poor, who lost even their pity through ferocity...

...But perhaps it would be better to be patient, and to give an example of patience to many by our sufferings. For argument is not so persuasive of the world in general as is practice, that silent exhortation.

But as things are, consider that all the poor and those who support them, and all the Monks and Virgins are falling at your feet and praying you on their behalf. Grant to all these for them this favor (since they have suffered enough as is clear by what they have asked of us) and above all to me who am their representative. And if it appear to you monstrous that we should have been dishonored by them, remember that it is far worse that we should not be listened to by you when we make this request of you. May God forgive the noble Paulus his outrages upon us.