

Aude, Wife of Guillaume Fauré, of Merviel

Translated by Dareth Pray
SJSU Fall 2006
English 180

CONFESSION OF AUDE, WIFE OF GUILLAUME FAURE OF MERVIEL

Year of our Lord 1318, the Saturday before the holiday of Saint Mary Magdalene (July 15th 1318). As it reached the knowledge of Revered Father in Christ My Lord Jacques, Bishop of Pamiers by divine Providence, that Aude, the daughter of the late Guillaume de Maucasal, of Lafage in the diocese of Mirepoix , and the spouse of Guillaume Fauré of Merviel, in the diocese of Pamiers, was suspected of heresy, and even strongly so, by reason of certain words and declarations uttered, as it has been said, by her in the presence of certain people against the Catholic Faith, and that moreover, as it has been said, this Aude was publicly slandered, My Said Lord Bishop, wishing thus to take the responsibility of investigating into the truth of these events with the said Aude and others, had her brought into his presence, wishing, as he has said, to investigate with her into the truth of these above-mentioned accusations.

My said Lord Bishop, having summoned the venerable and discrete persons My Lord Pierre du Verdier, Archdeacon of Majorque; master Hugues de Bilhères, appellate Judge of Pamiers; master Guillaume de Saint-Julien, jurist of Pamiers; master Bernard Gaubert, jurist of the diocese of Narbonne; and Guillaume de Pardailhan, public apostolic notary, to assist him in this investigation, physically swearing them in, ordered them under the faith of the oath in virtue of holy obedience to keep the secrets of this investigation and to bring him help and council, all things which they promised to do according to the conventions of law hereabove.

After which My Said Lord Bishop requested one day the said Aude in the name of simple information if she had fallen into error on the articles of faith and the sacraments of the Church, and on which of them, as it had been reported to My Lord the Bishop. She responded immediately¹:

I believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the flesh of the Holy Virgin Mary, and that he suffered, and was crucified for the human race, that he was resurrected, and ascended to heaven, and that he will return to judge the good people and the bad people; I profess and believe the faith and the sacraments as they are observed by the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

Interrogated subsequently, she nevertheless said:

About eight years ago, I contracted a marriage with Guillaume Fauré, my husband, and I was taken to his house in Merviel around All Saints'. As I had never received the body of the Lord, even though I was 17 or 18, I confessed my sins to a priest, but at the following Easter, I did not receive the Body of Christ. My husband asked me why and reproached me for it. I told him that in Lafage, where I am from originally, young men and women did not usually receive the body of Christ.

Then, the following year, again on Easter Day, I received the body of Christ. And as I had omitted to confess a serious sin that I had committed before marrying my said husband, I was completely terrified and upset because I had received the body of Christ without having confessed this sin.

Finally, after the following three years had gone by, I fell into the following error: I did believe that God was all-powerful in heaven, but I did not believe that God was in the sacrament on the altar, or that by virtue of the holy words spoken by the priest, it became the body of Christ. I was in this error and persisted in it without interruption until now that I have been taken to My Lord Bishop for it².

In the presence of which she said that the Holy Virgin Mary had inspired her in her heart to again believe that the flesh and the blood of Christ are the in sacrament on the alter, and that she believed that which a good Christian must believe.

—Did anyone, man or women, lead you to this error?

No, but it came to me, I believe, from the persistence of the sin I spoke of because I had not confessed it.

—Have you met any of the heretics or spoken with them?

No, to my knowledge, I have never seen a heretic.

—Have you confessed this error to a priest or to anyone else?

No, until recently, when I was gravely ill. In the grips of that sickness, I revealed this error to Guillaume Fauré, my husband, and to Ermengarde Garaud, of Merviel. And first to my husband in these terms: “Sir, how is it possible that I cannot believe in our Lord!” My husband said to me, scolding me: “What, damn woman, are you saying this in your right mind?” I responded: “Yes.” My husband told me then that if I had not confessed, I had better, because otherwise I could not stay with him, and he would send me away.

—When you said these words to your husband, were you in your right mind?

Yes, and even now I remember all that very well.

In this same sickness, I sent for Ermengarde Garaud of Merviel. When she had arrived in my house, I told her: “Osta, tia³, how can it be that I cannot believe in our Lord, and that I cannot believe that the host that is raised on the alter by the priest is the body of Christ?” Then Ermengarde reprimanded me strongly and suggested many things to encourage me to believe, among them, the following example:

“A long time ago, there was a Goodwoman who made a loaf of bread, which was then consecrated by the priest on the altar. This consecrated loaf was then made into the body of Christ. The priest used it to give Communion to the congregation. The woman who had made it began to laugh when she saw this. The priest noticed, and when she approached to receive the Communion, he told her, ‘You, stay behind,’ and asked her why she had laughed. She responded: ‘Sir, the body of Christ can be made out of the loaf that I kneaded! That’s what I’m laughing about.’ Immediately the priest began to pray with the congregation so that God might work a miracle on it. Once this prayer was done, when he tried to give this consecrated bread to this woman, the consecrated bread that he offered to her for Communion looked like the finger of a child, and the consecrated wine in the Chalice like coagulated blood. Seeing this, the frightened women began to pray. The priest and the congregation did the same. After this prayer, the women was thus converted, believing that the body of Christ was in this sacrament, and this finger and this blood regained their first appearance of bread and wine as before, and this women received Communion devoutly.”⁴

After that story, I said, “O tia, your words are so good, and you have comforted me so much!”

—*Have you confessed this error to a priest?*

I don’t remember.

After which, the Monday before the holiday of Saint Mary Magdalene, the 17th of July, 1318, the said Aude appeared in person before My said Lord Bishop in the Episcopal House of Pamiers, in the presence of My said lords Pierre du Verdier, Archdeacon of Majorque; master Barnard

Gaubert, and me, Guillaume de Pardailhan, aforementioned notary, the assistants of My said Lord Bishop. The which Aude swore on the Gospel of God, touching it physically with her right hand, to tell the whole and pure truth and to respond truthfully to the questions that she would be posed. Interrogated about all the aforementioned events and about each one separately under oath, she persisted in her previous confession, except for the following corrections and rectifications, to the effect that during the first year that she came to her husband's house, she received the body of the Lord at Easter, and after having received it, she fell immediately, so she says, into the said error; because she had not confessed a serious sin that she had committed before having contracted marriage with her said husband.

And from that moment until last Saturday, she had persisted without interruption in that error. Not long ago, however, so she says, she had abandoned it and firmly believed all the articles of faith and all the sacraments of the Church, these having been explained to her one by one by My said Lord Bishop.

She also said that she had recently confessed this error in her illness, one month ago, to the priest of the Holy Cross and that he had imposed a certain penance on her; she herself offered, so she says, to accomplish this penance, and even an even bigger one at that; this priest estimated that that penance was too severe, so he imposed a certain gentler penance.

Diligently interrogated, she said nothing more of pertinence.

After which, the aforementioned Monday, My said Lord Bishop being assisted by the persons previously named, Guillaume Fauré of Merviel in the diocese of Pamiers, the husband of the said Aude, was brought into the presence of My Lord the Bishop and interrogated, after having

physically sworn the oath to tell the whole and pure truth about that which precedes, in the principle capacity as well as about the said Aude as witness:

—How long ago was it that you contracted marriage with the said Aude?

It was about seven or eight years ago around last All Saints' day.

—During this time, have you known or believed that your wife was a heretic or a suspect of heresy?

No, by the oath that I swore. I believe quite the opposite, and I've always believed that she was a good Christian and a good Catholic, until the time of that illness, for I noticed that during this time, among other qualities that she had, she was a great giver of alms, to the point that if I had listened to her, there would not have been anything left in the house, or not much, because she would have given everything in alms for the love of God.

—Did she ever reveal to you the error contained in her confession, that she didn't believe that the body of Christ was in the sacrament on the altar?

No, until recently, at least a month ago, around the last Saint John the Baptist day, a day or two before or after, my wife Aude had an illness during which she received the body of Christ. She called me to her before and told me: "By the Virgin Mary, sir, how is this possible? When I'm in church and they raise the body of Christ, I can neither pray to it nor look at it, and when I think about looking at it, a kind of *anbegament*⁶ [obstacle] comes before my eyes." When I heard that, I asked her how that had happened to her, and she asked me then if there was anyone else in the room. I told her no. She told me then that she wanted to confess something to me, her husband. I asked her what it was that she wanted to tell me, and she said to me: "By God, sir, since the first time I communed and received the body of Christ, since our marriage, because of a sin that I

had committed the year before I married you, a sin that I never confessed before receiving the body of Christ, I have not believed that the Lord could forgive my sin or help me.” At these words, I was afraid, as it were, and I told her: “What is this? Are you speaking in your right mind?” She responded yes, and I told her: “A curse on you, you are lost! The devils will take you away, body and soul, and I, I’ll send you away, if you are what you say. Confess quickly!” She responded that she was ready to do so, and I had a priest come for her, to whom she confessed, and she stayed with him a long time.

—*Why didn’t you denounce this talk to My Lord the Bishop or to the inquisitor?* Because I believed that, when she made these remarks, she was out of her senses because of the illness that she had come down with. Because in this sickness she had said a lot of senseless and horrifying things, like a raving man or woman; and also because I had sent for a priest, to whom I believed that Aude had confessed this sin. For these reasons, I felt I was excused and without reproach.

—*Do you know if, or have you heard that, Aude has revealed these words or this error to anyone else?* No, except for what I have just testified.

—*Are you aware if anyone, man or woman, led Aude to this error?*

No.

—*Have you heard or do you know if the parents of the said Aude were suspected of any heresy?*

No.

—*Do you know if or have you heard that the said Aude had in friendship, association, or liaison with one or more persons suspected of heresy?*

No.

—Do you yourself have, or have you ever had, any doubts about the articles of faith or the sacraments of the Church?

No, quite the opposite, I believed them as our holy mother the Church observes them.

—Have you seen any heretic, or have you been linked to any heretic, or had a friendship with one?

No.

Next, the same Monday, My Lord the Bishop being assisted by the same, to supplement the inquiry and the obtaining of the truth on that which precedes, he had Ermengarde Garaud of Merviel brought before him, who swore on the Gospel of God physically touching it with her right hand to tell the pure and entire truth on that which precedes, in the principle capacity and as witness. She said and testified as follows:

That year, around the last day of Saint John the Baptist, I do not remember the day, Aude was very ill in her husband's house in Merviel. She sent someone to find me. When I arrived near her, she asked me if there was anyone else in the room. I told her there was not. She told me then that she wanted to confess something to me; I asked her what it was that she wanted to tell me, and she said: "Tia, how can it be that I cannot believe in God, and that when the body of Christ is raised on the altar, I can neither pray to it nor believe that it is the body of Christ?" I responded to her: "Co, na traytoressa no sia⁷, for this country and this house have always been pure from all evil and all heresy. Take care to not bring it from elsewhere and spoil our country." Aude said to me then: "Tia, what might I do to believe in God, and to believe that the body of Christ is really on the altar, when the priest performs the Elevation of the Host?"

I told her to believe strongly that the Lord and the body of Christ were really above the alter when the priest performs the Elevation, after he speaks the words prescribed by the Lord, and that she mustn't doubt it in the least. Otherwise she would be lost.

Later, she asked me again: "Tia, how do you pray to God, and what words do you say during the Elevation of the body of Christ, when the priest raises it above the alter?" I told her: "Personally, here is how I pray to God, and the prayer that I say: 'Senher, veray Dieus e veray hom, tot poderos, que naquestz del cors de la verges Maria ses tot peccat, e presetz mort e passio sus l'aybre de la veray crostz e fosz per las mas e pels pes clavelatz e per le cap de espinas coronat, e pel costat de lansa nafrat, don esshic sanc e ayga, don tostz em rezemitz de peccat, Senher, trametetz me una lagrema de aquela vostra ayga que lave le mieu cor de tota legesa e de tot peccat⁸. Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit; You have redeemed me, the one true Lord God.'"

Aude told me again: "Tia, what words do you say, in the morning when you get out of bed?" I told her that I said the prayer: "Senher Dieus tot poderos, a vos coma l'arma e'l cors; Senher, vos me gardastz de peccar e de falhar e de l'otra peccada, e de la mieua meteysha e de fals testimoni, e m'amenastz a bona fi⁹." After which Aude said: "Osta, tia, ta be m'avestz coffortada¹⁰! You have such good words and you know how to pray to God so well! Without you, I was lost, and if I were to die, my body would rot in the Church of Saint Christopher¹¹, and devils would take away my soul." At that I repeated to her again: "Na traytoressa, take care to believe strongly in God, and believe that the body of Christ is in the sacrament on the alter, and listen to the example that I am going to tell you.

(And she recounted the example placed above in the confession of Aude.)

And, continuing:

Then Aude began to strike her face with her hands and cried; she told me and asked me, for the love of God, to come see her often to comfort her.

As a result of the terror that I felt when she revealed her error to me, I fell very seriously ill and I still am at the present time; during that illness, I revealed what she had told me to a priest, my lord Guillaume of the Infirmary, to clear my conscience, and so that no one could reproach me in anyway. I believe that it was this priest who revealed me to My Lord Bishop.

(Interrogated about herself, she said:)

I strongly believe in all the articles of faith and sacraments of the Church as the Holy Church of God keeps and observes them. Never have I seen or heard any heretic or any suspect against the faith, nor have I frequented any of them.

—Have you given this deposition for favor, affection, hatred, or fear?

No, only because it is the truth.

—Are you a relative of Aude?

No.

And she said nothing more of any pertinence.

After which, the Tuesday before the holiday of Saint Mary Magdalene (the 18th of July), My said Lord Bishop, wishing to investigate more fully into the truth of the preceding events, wrote to my lord Guillaume of the Infirmary, priest, a patented letter in the following terms:

“Brother Jacques, by divine commiseration Bishop of Pamiers, to our dear priest in Christ Guillaume of the Infirmary, salvation in our Lord Jesus-Christ.

We firmly instruct you to appear before us in person tomorrow at the hour of prime in our Episcopal seat of Pamiers in the proceedings of the inquisition of the heretical deviation opened against Aude, wife of Guillaume Fauré, of Merviel, to give testimony of the truth, and to moreover summon those who seem to you to be possible witnesses in this proceeding, so that they may bring testimony of the truth on the same day at the same hour.

Dictated at the above said seat, the Tuesday before the holiday of the blest Mary Magdalene, the year of our Lord 1318. This letter to be returned.”

On the day indicated in the letter, the Wednesday before the holiday of Saint Mary Magdalene, My said Lord Bishop, attended by My Lord Archbishop of Majorque; by master Hugues of Bihères; and by Bernard Gaubert, priest, wishing to pursue his enquiry regarding the events that precede, received as witnesses my lord Guillaume of the Infirmary, priest of the diocese of Pamiers hereabove named in this letter; master Geoffroy Escribe, residing at Ventenac; Bernard de Quié of Merviel; Jean de Monteventoux, of the said place; and Jean Garaud of Merviel, who swore on the Holy Gospel to tell the pure and simple truth regarding the events that precede, and they testified as it is recorded below in their depositions.

My lord Guillaume of the Infirmary, priest of the diocese of Pamiers, witness sworn and required to tell the truth:

Ermengarde Garaud came to confess to me her sins in her sickness in my capacity as the vicar of Merviel; last Thursday morning I went to see her to tell her that she must rejoice in having fully confessed her sins and having soothing her conscience; and that thus, since she had

done it, she might consider if it would not be best for the salvation of her soul to make a declaration in the presence of some other people who would hear her. She agreed. Immediately, with her agreement, I called master Geoffroy Escribe, Bernard de Quié, Jean de Montventoux, and Jean Garaud, the son of this Ermengarde. When they had entered the house and were in the room where she was lying, sick, she told them to promise in my hands to never reveal to anyone without my consent what she was about to say, which they did. And she said then that Aude, having fallen ill, had send for her one day, that she had gone to her, and that Aude told her: “Tia, do you believe that the host that the priest raises above the altar is the body of Christ?” Ermengarde said and responded yes, she did, strongly, adding, “Co, na traytoressa, don’t you believe it?” Aude responded that she could not believe and that she did not believe that this host, when it is raised by the priest, was the body of Christ. Then Ermengarde told her: “You are lost if you do not become a believer in the Lord and do not confess quickly.” And, she said, she cried then before the said Aude: “Via fora, a foc, a foc!¹²”

—*Where were you when you heard Ermengarde say this?*

In her house in Merviel.

—*What day was it?*

Last Thursday.

—*At what time?*

In the morning before prime¹³.

—*Who was present?*

The said Ermengarde, myself, and the four witnesses above named, whom I had called. No one else.

Diligently interrogated, he said nothing more of pertinence.

Master Geoffroy Escribe, inhabitant of Ventenac, witness sworn and carefully required to tell the truth regarding the events that precede, declared:

Last Thursday, in the morning before prime, I was called by my lord Guillaume of the Infirmary, priest, vicar of Merviel, who told me to come to the house of Ermengarde Garaud of the said place. After coming there and entering the house, I saw that Ermengarde lying sick in her bed.

This priest then, in the presence of Bernard de Quié, Jean de Montventoux, and Jean Garaud, the son of the said Ermengarde, said to this woman that she must greatly rejoice in having confessed, and that if she had something to say, she should unburden herself. The said Ermengarde said then to this priest that she feared that those who were there would reveal what she would say. The priest told me then, as well as the others above named to promise in his hands by our faith to not reveal without his consent that which the said Ermengarde would say. We did this, myself and the three others.

This done, Ermengarde said that recently, around the last holiday of the birth of Saint John the Baptist, Aude, the wife of Guillaume Fauré of Merviel send for her one day, and that then she, Ermengarde, came to the house of Guillaume Fauré, where that Aude was lying, sick, in bed, in a bedroom. Aude told her then: “O tia, what am I to do? I cannot believe that when the priest, at mass, raises the host above the altar, the body of Christ is inside it.” Then the said Ermengarde began to shout, “Via fora, via fora!” and said to the said Aude: “Co, na traytoressa, you are lost, convert to God, believe firmly in God and confess carefully and completely, for otherwise you are lost.”

—Did the said Ermengarde say anything else?

No, but when she had said that, we left the house, myself and the others.

—Who was present during these events?

Those who have been named, no one else.

—Where did this take place?

In the house of this Ermengarde, in Merviel.

—Do you know if or have you heard that the said Ermengarde had been discovered with persons suspected of heresy?

No.

—This Aude, did she have a reputation for being a heretic in Merviel, or elsewhere, to your knowledge?

Not that I know of or have heard tell, until the time of her arrest, that's to say, six days ago.

Since then I have heard in Ventenac and Merviel that she had been arrested and locked up in the prisons of My Lord Bishop because she had been reputed a suspect of the faith.

—Do you know if or have you heard that any heretics or any suspects of the faith have ever gathered in the house in of the parents of the said Aude in Lafage?

No.

—Do you know if or have you heard that Guillaume Fauré, her husband, was a heretic or had met with heretics or suspects of the faith?

No.

—Have you thus testified for favor, affection, hate, or fear; have you been corrupted, suborned, or indoctrinated?

No.

Diligently interrogated, he said nothing more of pertinence

Bernard de Quié, of Merviel... (identical deposition and interrogation, Ermengarde cried: “A foc, a foc!”)¹⁴.

Jean de Montventoux, de Merviel... (identical deposition and interrogation: Ermengarde said: “Co, na traytoressa, heu cridare a foc! »)^{14 15}.

Jean Garaud, son of Ermengarde Garaud of Merviel... (identical deposition and interrogation. Ermengarde said : “I am going to cry fire, via fora, by God, you are dead and lost !...”)¹⁴

After which, the Friday before the holiday of Saint Mary Magdalene (the 21 of July), My said Lord Bishop, to supplement the investigation of Aude regarding that which precedes, had her brought before him, attended by My Lord the Archbishop of Majorque; by master Hugues de Bilhères; and I, Guillaume de Pardailhan, notary. Under the faith of the oath by her sworn, she corrected her prior declaration that she had said that she had fallen in this error approximately eight years previously, and that this had come from the thought and the persistence of the sin of which she spoke. She now says that she has been in this error for only approximately four years, and this for a different reason:

One day, I was going to the Church of the Holy Cross to hear mass, and I heard some women, whose names I no longer remember, saying that the night before a woman had given

birth to a girl in the street, inside the walls of Merviel, before she was able to get home. Having heard that, I began to think about the disgusting things that women expel when they give birth, and when I saw the body of the Lord raised above the altar, I thought that it had been defiled by this dirtiness. This is how I fell into this error of belief that the body of Christ was not there.

NOTES

6. anbegament = obstacle; impediment; snag; hitch