

**Sermon VI: Respexit Humilitatem**  
(“He has regarded the humility ....”) <sup>1</sup>  
[July 2, 1431; preached perhaps in Koblenz]

[1] “He has regarded the humility of His handmaiden.”<sup>2</sup>

The Virgin Mary is most worthy of all praise, being of such great loftiness that none of the languages suffice to express praise for her. For suppose it could happen that all of the following were languages: the sand of the seashore and the waves [of the ocean], the droplets of water, a rose, gem-stones, lilies, flames, the currents of air, the occupants of the heavens, snow, hail, both sexes, the wings of the winds, and every kind of flying-thing and of cattle, etc. These could scarcely express who you are and how great you are, O Virgin Mary, O Queen Mary!

[2] However, because Mary was athirst with deepest desire for the salvation of the human race and because she besought God in deepest humility mercifully to make available to the human race the goal of salvation, she said: “My soul has clung to the pavement. Enliven me in accordance with Your word.”<sup>3</sup> In the name of human nature she also said: “I was completely abased. Enliven me in accordance with Your word.”<sup>4</sup> For human nature fell into evil; but as completely dead it was destined for life, etc. Mary said: “See my abasement, and deliver me .... Look upon me, and have mercy on me,” etc.<sup>5</sup> “See that I have loved Your commandments; enliven me in Your mercy.”<sup>6</sup> The Lord heard His handmaiden’s most devout prayer and regarded her humility and did great things through her, [causing] Israel to receive a child through her, as was [fore]told to our fathers, etc.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, I am going to say something about the foregoing matters and about the praises for the Virgin, etc.

[3] [I will speak], first of all, about the cause of the fall of human nature, which was exalted through the Virgin Mary. And [I will speak of] what kind [of person] this Virgin was, who through grace deserved to be the mother of our Savior. And here [I will speak] of this [theme]: “He regarded ....” for “the eyes of the Lord are upon the just ....” etc.<sup>8</sup> And at this point let the Gospel-story first be set forth very concisely. Secondly, because the Lord did have regard for Mary and her humility, some things must next be mentioned about the virtue of humility and about its contrary, viz., pride. And because after God looked with regard upon Mary and her humility and saw that she was His hand-

maiden, He heard her [prayer] and did great things for her: something will be mentioned about our being God's servant and about our serving Him through prayer. And thereupon I will conclude agreeably [by taking up the topic of] how the soul's union with God, and God's union with the soul, arises out of a pleasing harmony between God's regard, man's humility, and man's subservient devotion.<sup>9</sup>

#### PART ONE

##### *Man's Original Justice, His Fall, and the Virgin Mary's Grace*

[4] God created man for Himself. And so, among other things He gave him original justice, by means of which he was originally just because of freely-given grace. Man lost this grace because of his original sin, and he could not fully rise up again except by means of a Savior. Mary, who was full of the Holy Spirit, knew this fact. Hence, she most humbly besought [God] to send the Savior who was promised to be sent. And God regarded her, and hearkened to her, in her humility.

[5] Now, original sin is the sin which, according to the Catholic Faith, each one of us commonly contracts, by virtue of the fact that he descends from Adam by means of seminal propagation. Romans 5: "Through one man sin entered into this world."<sup>10</sup> Actual sin is a fault that each [of us] contracts through his voluntarily doing something or failing to do something. Original [sin is contracted] from one's parents, apart from one's own willing, etc. Certain men say that original sin is a blamable stain that the soul contracts from its union with flesh that has been lustfully propagated. And, hence, what is *material* with regard to [original] sin would be the habitual concupiscence in the soul—[concupiscence] resulting from the soul's union with shameful flesh; what is *formal* [with regard to original sin] would be the absence of original justice. Similarly, what is *material* with regard to actual [sin] is a turning toward creatures; what is *formal* is a turning away from God.

[6] Original justice was the fixed disposition (*habitus*) that was divinely conferred on our first parents and that kept the sensitive appetite subjected (without any rebellion) to the spirit. It was present in the soul's essential being, and it redounded to all the soul's powers, but primarily to the will. Anselm in *On the Virgin Conception* says that original sin is "the absence of original justice together with the obligation to have original justice."<sup>11</sup> Every sin is the privation of an opposed justice. Thus, original [sin] deprives of original justice. (In adults, what is owed is, and was, remitted through faith, through baptism, and (in the

Old Testament) through circumcision. Now, that deprivation is a fault; and the penalty [of original sin]—viz., concupiscence—remains. And so, original justice is not restored; rather, something else [is given] in its place, viz., grace that makes one pleasing [to God]. And so, although there is present in us, by fixed-disposition or by aptitude, a spark [of concupiscence], and although there is found in our members another law (viz., the removal of original justice), warring against the law of our mind, nevertheless no harm [therefrom] is done to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh.<sup>12</sup>

[7] This sin [viz., original sin] is, with respect to blame and penalty, passed on to offspring who are begotten by propagation. For when Adam sinned and lost original justice, which he was supposed to keep and to pass on, all those who were in his loins potentially, and who were going to exist through a seminal cause, lost this very justice. And so, because the whole of human nature was in a certain way present in Adam potentially, it follows ..., etc.—even as the blamable defect of someone's will passes over unto his members. And, thus, those who existed in the power of Adam's loins lost original justice when Adam lost it. Therefore, if individuals would have been born at that time or even later, but not by being propagated from Adam, they would not have lost [original justice]. Moreover, it is said apropos of Adam that if Eve alone had sinned, there would have occurred no transmission [of original sin], because the father is the moving principle of begetting and is the principle that transmits to his posterity.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, if Adam alone had sinned, we *would have* contracted [original guilt]. Furthermore, original sin is not present in the soul by way of propagation, because it is not propagated; nor is it present in the flesh, for the flesh is not capable of virtue or of vice. Rather, original sin is present in a man potentially with respect to his soul, because of divine punishment. In particular, when the soul is conjoined to the flesh, then at that moment the soul lacks original justice and divine grace. And so, the remission of Adam's original sin was of no benefit to us, because [Adam's sin] was remitted not as a *natural sin* that concerned the whole of human nature but as a *personal sin*. Accordingly, baptized parents still beget a child who has original sin. [Consider] the example of a grain that is planted free of [chaff]: it begets a grain that is on an ear. Furthermore, one who is circumcised begets another who is uncircumcised. The pure soul contracts from the flesh concupiscence and original guilt, even as good wine in a contaminated vessel becomes contaminated and as a handsome man becomes soiled when

he falls into the mud.

[8] Moreover, concupiscence, the penalty of original sin, is not extinguished by means of grace, except in the case of the Blessed Virgin, who alone had this particular [trait], etc. Accordingly, it happens that the nature is corrupted by the person and that [thereupon] the corrupted nature corrupts, daily, the person.<sup>14</sup> One's lustful desire transmits sin to one's offspring; and because of the spirit's disobedience to God, the flesh is made to be disobedient to the spirit. Hence, the lustful desire that remains in the flesh is opposed to the spirit,<sup>15</sup> etc., because we are all born as children of wrath on account of this [residual desire].<sup>16</sup> And so, we incur multiple defects: viz., the defect of the loss of our vision-of-God, the defect of our loss of glory, the defect of death. Consequently, in the case of unbaptized infants, in whom no actual sin has been [incurred] through a turning away [from God], original sin results in the penalty of condemnation, not, however, in the penalty of the senses. For [after death] they do not experience pain. For they do not grieve—because they are rational spirits they do not grieve—over the fact that they do not have glory.<sup>17</sup> For they know that they were never made fit [for glory] by means of the grace that makes one pleasing. (Similarly, someone who is rational does not suffer because of the fact that he cannot fly, given that he has no wings ..., etc.)

There are other penal effects [of original sin]: e.g., ignorance, proneness to sinning, sickness, etc.

[9] This most blessed Virgin knew that unless we are incorporated into Christ our Savior (1) through the grace that makes one pleasing and (2) through the merits of Christ, who is the veritable Truth and the veritable Way,<sup>18</sup> no one would ever arrive at the Heavenly abode. Because Mary was most holy and because, having been exalted, she saw, and recognized, in a beatific vision, man's end: she most humbly prayed to God for human beings' salvation. Wherefore, "He regarded the humility of His handmaiden." [10] And over against this general and universal death the Lord planted a tree of life in the midst of Paradise. ("For the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning"; in this paradise [He placed] a tree of life in the middle ..., etc.<sup>19</sup>) The Lord God separated the waters from the dry land;<sup>20</sup> i.e., He separated the eternal Heavenly abode from the earth, which was desirable and was ever flowing with the milk and honey of His promise. At that time the earth was unknown and was covered over with the watery coldness of disordering sin. By means of the separating, God

intended to show that regeneration would occur with respect to many generations and many fruits, as Genesis 2 states.<sup>21</sup> Thereafter—before God formed all other things, before He formed even man (i.e., before He recreated him)—God first of all made a very temperate and very agreeable place, very high up in location and reaching all the way up to the lunar globe. It was of such height that even the waters of the Flood—waters which covered all the mountains—did not touch this place. And God adorned this place<sup>22</sup> with herbs, trees, plants, and shrubs, by means of which man, whom He was going to place into this very location, would be delighted and nourished. And in Greek this place is called *paradisus* [i.e., παράδεισος]; but in Latin it is called *hortus*. And it is situated where the sun begins to shine in the East. Now, this story from Sacred Scripture recounts one thing and produces another thing, viz., a mystery—as Blessed Gregory states in Book 15 of his *Moralia*; “By its manner of expression Sacred Scripture transcends all forms of knowledge. For when it recounts a deed, then by means of one and the same word it produces a mystery.”<sup>23</sup>

[11] “Paradise” is construed in many different ways. At one time it is construed as signifying the empyrean heaven; at another time, as signifying the church triumphant; at another time, as signifying man; at another time, as signifying Christ. But in the present case it will be taken to stand for Christ’s mother. For “my sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up. Your plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard, cyprus with spikenard. Spikenard and saffron [are present]; sweet cane and cinnamon, with all the trees of Lebanon, [are present]. As cinnamon and balsam . . . , etc. The sweet smell of perfumes [is present]. Arise, O north wind!”<sup>24</sup> This paradise<sup>25</sup> is a very temperate place, i.e., [it is characterized] by very virtuous and very lovely devoutness, by loftiest love. It extends unto the lunar globe. It is beyond all corruptible nature. The waters of the Flood, i.e., sins and temptations, have not reached its lofty level. In Paradise [i.e., in Mary] the vegetative power is adorned with the many flowers of the virtues; [also ornate are] the life of the senses and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, viz., reason . . . , etc. Thus, the Second Adam, i.e., Christ Jesus, having been made into a living soul took delight therein, etc.

[12] And so, O Mary, Your Beloved “descended into His garden, to the bed of aromatical spices, in order to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies.”<sup>26</sup> This Paradise [symbolizing Mary] was adorned with marvelous and amazing flowers, and trees, of aromatic scents and of

virtues, so that the man whom God was going to place there—viz., [the one who both is] God and man—would take delight, and would feed, [in it]. The Tree that is in the midst of Paradise—viz., the Tree of life, which extended into the heavens<sup>27</sup> because of its height—this Tree of life signifies Christ Jesus, our Savior, who was carried in the womb of the Virgin. The whole of Paradise [viz., Mary] magnified this Tree by giving provisions to it and by flowing into it, so that it would flourish into something better and something best. For “my soul has magnified the Lord”; and the spirit, attaining this Tree, has rejoiced<sup>28</sup> in God its Savior. For this Tree in the midst of Paradise was rooted in humility and chastity and love, for God regarded [Mary’s] humility.<sup>29</sup>

[13] O the wondrous nourishment that this Tree drew from the most pure blood of the Virgin! O the wondrous grace that flowed from the Tree into its root, because the Most High sanctified His tabernacle! Anselm in *On the Virgin Conception* 18 [says]: “It was fitting that the Virgin was resplendent with a purity than which none greater (except for God’s) can be conceived. The most pure Son of the eternal God was deservedly so given to her as a son that He was the common Son of God and of the Virgin.”<sup>30</sup> O such wondrous grace flowed into the tabernacle of God—grace that makes one pleasing and that sanctifies! For the Sun of Justice<sup>31</sup> situated this Paradise at the point of its rising; and He elevated it above all mortal things that exist under the moon—exalted it through grace. And he brought His tabernacle [viz., Mary] into the sun. (“He placed His tabernacle in the sun . . .,” etc.<sup>32</sup>) He sanctified His tabernacle with such great grace that she never fell into any sin—not even venial sin (free of which no one [else] has ever lived) and, as is fitting, not even original sin, etc.

[14] Moreover, according to St. Augustine this Paradise [viz., Mary] is of such great pleasantness and beauty that she is the “brightness of eternal life and a spotless mirror of God’s majesty . . .”<sup>33</sup> Never was anyone greater in grace, purer in virtue, more ardent in love, more steadfast in faith, more strong in hope, more untroubled in peacefulness, more full of joy in the Holy Spirit, more modest in word, more holy in deeds! If we would speak with the tongues of men and of angels,<sup>34</sup> who would be able worthily to praise you? You, [O Mary], are the joyous shout, and desired proclamation, on the part of the prophets. You are the stillness of all the wise and of all the scribes. You are the glorious offspring of the patriarchs and of the kings of Israel. You are greater than all these and than all the angels. You are a woman becloaked with the sun and treading the moon under your feet.<sup>35</sup> You

are indued with light that serves as your garment. You everywhere by the brilliance of Your splendor cause to turn away even the angels' gazes. As regards the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Paradise—i.e., as regards the rational faculty and the intellectual faculty of the most blessed Virgin—how [amazingly] this Tree had the very tasty fruits of meditating on the fourteen articles of the divinity and the humanity [of Jesus]! Nevertheless, [these] fruits are not tasted and eaten by means of arguments and human reasoning but by the very deep faith by which Mary believed. For she asked, “How can this occur?”<sup>36</sup> And the angel responded: “The Holy Spirit . . .,” etc.<sup>37</sup>

[15] Lo, by the grace of faith [the Son of God] descended from Heaven into Mary. And, furthermore, she did not question how [it was done] but said [to the angel]: “Let it happen to me in accordance with your word.”<sup>38</sup> Take note of the maximal faith that is symbolized by this Tree located in Paradise. For through faith's contemplation one ascends unto a knowledge of good and evil and unto conformity to God and unto the highest theophany. But present in this Paradise are (a) trees of the Holy Spirit's gifts and (b) trees of the forms of happiness, and (c) exceptional trees that are found nowhere else. “And a river went out from the place of pleasure to water the Paradise.”<sup>39</sup> That is, a superabundance of the grace that makes one pleasing immediately flowed forth into Mary's soul from that river of living water that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb, who is an unailing Fount. To this river and its moisture all the trees of Paradise send forth their roots in order that the trees' leaves may be continually green and that the trees may always bear fruit. And [the river] is divided into four heads<sup>40</sup>—i.e., into the [four] cardinal virtues, by means of which Mary's grace flowed outwardly in a certain manner, so that she was best prepared, and most excellent, in all her moral and virtuous deeds. From these four [cardinal virtues] all the [other] moral virtues flow as streams from which the earth has its being watered with the water of virtue. And so, Paradise is a well of living waters and an enclosed garden. It is a sealed up fount that is never made bitter by foreign waters. In Paradise [i.e., in Mary] there was never any sin or any inordinate motion, etc.<sup>41</sup>

[16] With respect to gifts of nature Mary was most comely. And she was most seemly with respect to the source of her spiritual life. She manifested outwardly what she was inwardly—[manifested], viz., her humility, chastity, etc. Accordingly, no one was ever tempted by the sight of her; rather, each one was motivated toward the virtues. Now,

as concerns the beginning of human nature, Eve was also very beautiful in accordance with her destined-end, as was also Adam. So also was Christ in regard to His destined-end. (“Learn from me, for [I am] meek . . .,” etc.)<sup>42</sup> “The wisdom of man shines in his countenance . . .,” etc.<sup>43</sup> “You are all-fair, O my love, and there is not a blemish in you.”<sup>44</sup> “Behold, you are lovely, O my love. Behold, you are lovely. Your eyes are [as those] of doves.”<sup>45</sup> [All her glory] was inward, with golden borders and clothed round about with varieties.”<sup>46</sup>

There are two kinds of virtues: natural and adventitious. A natural [virtue] is one’s *natural industriousness* with respect to works of prudence or of skill or with respect to acts that display wisdom or knowledge. (This has to do with cognitive virtue.) In addition, a natural virtue is a *natural inclination* toward moral deeds—[deeds] of justice, of temperance, of courage, and of gentleness, etc. Adventitious virtues are usually not acquired apart from natural virtues. However, by means of adventitious virtues there is a development of the natural virtues, because natural virtues are a tool for investigating what, in particular, is true or false; but this [judgment about the true and the false is what] the adventitious virtues teach. Now, natural [virtue] tends only to one [of a pair] of opposites; [but] moral [virtue tends] now to the one [alternative], now to the other—in accordance with what right reason dictates. Hence, the stronger a natural [virtue] is, the more dangerous it is, unless it is governed by reason. An example: natural gentleness always tends toward not being angry; but moral gentleness sometimes tends toward being angry and sometimes toward not being angry, according as right reason dictates. Something similar holds true of justice and other things.

[17] From the spark (contracted from Adam) by means of which our sensuality—in accordance with a fixed-disposition [*habitus*] or an appetite—is inclined toward something outside the domain of reason, we contract two things, according to Augustine in Book 22 of his *City of God*: viz., ignorance and concupiscence.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, since “the flesh lusts against the spirit,”<sup>48</sup> then because of the different proportions of the body’s mixture-of-components and because of the different degrees of harmony [between body and soul] and of inflow [of soul into body], one [man] is [naturally] inclined toward one thing, and another [man] is [naturally] inclined toward another thing. One man is more talented with respect to one body of knowledge; and another, with respect to a different art . . ., etc. One [man] is obtuse; another is prudent; another is adept . . ., etc. This Paradise [viz., Mary] has the fol-



lowing disposition: in all her members the Holy Spirit placed, as a vessel and a sacristy for Himself, a best-ordered and very fecund natural virtue. There was no trace of resistance. [Mary] came the closest to the state of innocence—more closely than all other begotten women, etc.

[18] Now, adventitious virtue is twofold: either it is acquired from frequent acts or it is infused from on high. From frequent prudential deliberations a fixed-disposition of prudence is produced in the intellect. And the case is similar as regards other [adventitious virtues]. It is natural to all things that are reserved for the soul's power that a fixed-disposition is inwardly produced as a result of frequent acts; [this *habitus*] inclines one to [additional,] similar acts. Thus, it is exceedingly useful to have, frequently, the intent to act rightly and to avoid sins. Theological virtues and graces that make one pleasing are infused from on high. And according to Augustine a theological virtue is “a good quality of mind by means of which one lives rightly, which no one uses evilly, [and] which God works in us without us.”<sup>49</sup> And so, acquired [virtue] directs, in public affairs, toward human things; infused [virtue] directs, theologically, toward supernatural things. Moreover, the naturally acquirable [virtues] are conjoined in prudence; the infused [virtues] are conjoined in love. Love, according to the Apostle, is the bond of perfection.<sup>50</sup> He who has love has all the moral virtues, and he who does not have love has no moral virtue. When love increases, the other virtues increase, each in its own manner. By way of comparison: when the hand grows, the fingers grow; however, the little finger always remains smaller than the other fingers, etc.

Thus, since infused virtue cannot be present without love, it is incompatible with mortal sin; but acquired [virtue is] quite [compatible therewith]. Because of one act of lasciviousness the entire *habitus* of chastity is not suddenly corrupted, with the result that one is no longer inclined [toward chastity]. Accordingly, the one who has reverted [from the wanton act] suffers grievously. Secondly, infused virtue is compatible with a bad *habitus*. God can impart love to one who still has a *habitus*, a very strong inclination, toward vice. The case is otherwise with acquired [virtue]. Thirdly, infused virtue, with respect to its own material, is compatible with inordinate passions and with temptations; but acquired [virtue], which has subordinated the sensitive appetite to reason, is not [thus compatible]. And yet, infused [virtue] is still more excellent [than is acquired virtue], because it directs one unto a higher end. Mary was in every respect very beautiful ..., etc.

*PART TWO**The Virtue of Humility and Its Contrary, viz., Pride*

[19] Pride is the primary spiritual vice, and it is the root-vice. (There are five vices, as well as two carnal [sins], viz., gluttony and licentiousness). And humility, which is most virtuous, is in opposition to pride. Therefore, “He has regarded her humility.” For He looked from Heaven unto earth at the humility of His handmaiden. He does not say “nobility” or “loftiness,” because “He looks at things lowly, and He knows from afar things lofty,”<sup>51</sup> [and] He has deposed the mighty ..., etc.<sup>52</sup> The Psalm [says]: “Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwells on high and looks [favorably] upon things humble in the heavens and on earth?”<sup>53</sup> He regarded her humility, inasmuch as virginity without humility is of no benefit; however, humility without virginity is of great benefit. Augustine: “A humble married woman is better than is a proud virgin.”<sup>54</sup> Our very humble Savior [said]: “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart.”<sup>55</sup> Therefore, God regarded His humility. For, being humble, Christ made for Himself—[made] from a very humble, a very pure, a proven and purified virgin—a vessel and receptacle conformed to His own humility.

[20] Consequently, God dwells only in a humble heart. Accordingly, He resists the proud.<sup>56</sup> For pride destroys all the virtues. Humility is the eagerly awaiting vessel of the grateful, but pride is not receptive. Hence, a certain man said to haughty Alexander [the Great]: “God is ready to offer wisdom, but you do not have the wherewithal to receive it.” “Into a malicious soul ...,” etc.<sup>57</sup> Pride defiles and mars all things. Ecclesiasticus 13: “He who acts pollutingly with the proud will put on pride.”<sup>58</sup> All vices arise from pride. The angels fell because of pride. According to Augustine every sin results from either a commission or a transgression.<sup>59</sup> A transgression does not occur apart from disobedience; disobedience does not occur apart from pride. Consequently, pride is the most grave vice. The reason that pride affects in this way the one who has it is that it inflates.<sup>60</sup> Wisdom 4: “The Lord destroys the inflated.”<sup>61</sup> [Pride] renders a man unhappy, because from the seed of God’s grace, [the man] reaps unhappy pride; he turns day into night and light into darkness. But, for the humble, night will be as bright as day.<sup>62</sup> [The proud man] makes a very bad sale of his possessions, because he sells things precious for a small amount of vanity.

A proud man is deceived, is blinded, and is stultified. All dan-

gerous heresies [arise] from pride, according to Augustine.<sup>63</sup> A gloss on Jeremiah 49 [says]: “Your arrogance and the pride of your heart have deceived you.”<sup>64</sup> Pride is detestable to God and to man, because it does injury to God and to man: to God, because it usurps from Him that which is *His*, viz., to govern; to man, because he aims to subject to himself one whom nature has made his equal. Moreover, a proud man is detested by his likes; [and] he detests another who is proud, although they both are sons of one Devil. God came into the world humbly, in opposition to pride; and the day of the Lord of Hosts will come upon all the exalted and the arrogant ....<sup>65</sup> Very beautiful Lucifer became the Devil. A man who desired to be knowledgeable became unknowing.<sup>66</sup> Saul, when he was humble, was made king; when he became proud, he lost [the kingdom] ....<sup>67</sup> Jeroboam lost the headship over the ten tribes.<sup>68</sup> Nabuchodonosor became a brute animal.<sup>69</sup> Judith slew [proud] Holofernes.<sup>70</sup> The Publican was preferred to the haughty Pharisee.<sup>71</sup> He who is pleased with himself is foolish; a proud man is pleased with himself; therefore, .... Moreover, so much folly is present that he who is pleased with himself is displeasing to all others. Pride is a most dangerous weakness, because it is easily incurred, it is difficult to remedy, [and] it is quickly fallen into again.

[21] [Pride] is likened to the wind. Augustine [writes]: “So that your lamp not be extinguished, let it not be exposed to the wind of pride.”<sup>72</sup> It is likened to smoke, because the more it rises up, the more it vanishes. The Psalm [says]: “As soon as the enemies of the Lord will have been honored and exalted, they shall disappear as does smoke.”<sup>73</sup> It is likened to foam, which passes away quickly. [It is likened] to a small crow that is said to have stolen its wings from other birds; and after it itself was plucked, it remained most shameful, etc. Something similar is said of the ass that wrapped the hide of a lion around [itself], etc. [Pride] is likened to an air-filled bubble that, when pricked with a thorn, is reduced to nothing; such, too, is a proud man who has died. [Pride] is like straw, because of its unsteadfastness. Gold occupies the lowest place but is the most noble; the case is similar with humility, etc. [Pride] is like a spider, a bier, a hen.

[22] Pride is distinguished into inner pride that is twofold: of intellect and of feeling. [Pride] of intellect is a pride that has four forms. [Remember] the verse:

Of itself, in proportion to one's merits,  
[pride], more than<sup>74</sup> all other things, falsely inflates.

Pride of feeling is distinguished into presumption of one's own excellence and craving for one's own excellence. There is a threefold excellence: of governance, of mastery, of simple outstandingness. Outer pride is something external that proceeds from, and manifests, inner pride. It is either pride in body or in attire, in family, in one's horses, buildings, books, singing. Moreover, at times pride arises because of goods of nature, at times because of goods of fortune, at times because of goods of grace. Certain *goods of nature* are goods of the body; others are goods of the soul. Goods of the body are the following: health, strength, mobility, beauty, nobleness, freedom. Goods of the soul are these: soundness and alacrity of intelligence, goodness of memory, ability to exert oneself, a natural disposition toward the virtues (i.e., natural virtue). The *goods of fortune* are external goods that are in the power of men and that can be taken away: e.g., luxuries, riches, praise, glory, human favor. *Goods of grace* are knowledge and the virtues.

[23] Pride does five harms to a man. It desiccates men, so that they are more easily burned; i.e., it causes them to be without the moistness of grace and without compassion. Ecclesiasticus 6: "Do not praise yourself," etc., "so that you not be left as a dry tree in the wilderness" (i.e., in Hell, where the proud will be burned).<sup>75</sup> Secondly, pride consumes a man and destroys his goods. Thirdly, it disgraces and deceives. Jeremias 44: "Arrogance and your heart's pride have deceived you."<sup>76</sup> Fourthly, pride elevates, so that it especially casts down. Luke 14: "He who exalts himself shall be humbled."<sup>77</sup> Fifthly, pride renders a man altogether unhappy: from good seed the man reaps a bad harvest; he harvests bad things from the good seeds sown; from life he reaps death; from medicine he reaps wounds, etc. There are seven daughters of pride: viz., presumption, ambition, disobedience, irreverence, shame, contempt for what is good, the mocking of good men, vainglory, and hypocrisy.<sup>78</sup>

[24] According to Augustine pride is "a desire for illicit exaltation."<sup>79</sup> Pride [i.e., the proud man] looks askance at all others: he looks askance at his superiors because he is not equal to them; he looks askance at his inferiors because they are not equal [to him]; he looks askance at his peers because they *are* equal [to him]. And if [this ill-will] is internal, it is pride; if it is outward, it is vainglory. Vainglory takes [the following] forms: viz., disobedience (because it does not wish to seem inferior), contention, boasting, hypocrisy, opinionatedness, disagreement (always maintaining the opposite), presumption of originality.

There are twelve stages of pride ..., etc. [25] Remedies for pride: ascend by means of humility. The first stage of these [remedies] consists in man's truly knowing that he is weak, is lacking in the good, is evil, etc. However, two kinds of pride—viz., carnal pride and spiritual pride—attempt to draw a humble man away from his humble state. *Carnal pride* suggests to a man that he is better than he is—[better] with respect to knowledge, to wealth, to dignity. And it does not permit him to know of his baseness. According to Cassian the signs of pride are: “in conversation, boistrousness; in silence, bitterness; in gladness, loud and profuse laughter; in hardship unreasonable sadness; in reproof, rancor; glib in speech ...,” etc.<sup>80</sup> [If] you wish to vanquish pride, engage prolongedly in humble works [and] in lowly tasks with regard to your neighbor: by sweeping the house [as does] a woman, by washing dishes, by appearing in humble garment, etc. Use plain words; select the hintermost seat;<sup>81</sup> be not called “Rabbi.”<sup>82</sup> Etc. Do not vaunt yourself; think of death and of the hour of death. Accustom yourself to these [acts], and you will acquire humility.

[26] The other [form of] pride is more endangering: [viz.,] *spiritual* pride, which causes the mind to become puffed up and which elevates the mind above itself, for one glories in his virtues and his merits. There is no vice [other than pride] that so removes [humility and] all other virtues and that so despoils a man of all justice and holiness. In resistance to pride, always think the following: “Not I but the grace of God with me”;<sup>83</sup> “by the grace of God I am what I am”;<sup>84</sup> “it is God who works [in me] to will and to accomplish in accordance with His good will.”<sup>85</sup> You ought carefully to consider your own baseness and the fact that (1) the goods of your mind are [of] God's [doing], not yours, and that (2) you are going to render an account for [your use of] them, and that (3) your failings are yours and are numerous and are worthy of Hell's punishments. In addition, (4) the good that you have is not yours and is not pure but is imperfect, full of carelessness, of lukewarmness, of vainglory, etc. Likewise, you ought always to heed your betters and superiors—and especially Christ Jesus, who said: “Learn from me, for I am meek ...,” etc.<sup>86</sup> And so, abase yourself in relation to others. Then you will begin to know yourself, and as a result of persistent and loving exercise you will put on the garment of humility. And wish to be esteemed as humble by all others. And, at length, as regards your great and sublime gifts, you will not exalt yourself but will ascribe everything to God, from whom are all things ..., etc.

[27] And, thus, note that the ascendancy over pride is, properly

speaking, [constituted by] a knowledge of oneself. “We ourselves who have been tried, know ourselves ....”<sup>87</sup> And so, Augustine at the outset of his *Soliloquies* prays that he may know himself. Bernard in his thirty-sixth homily on the Canticles [says]: “This knowledge [viz., self-knowledge] does not inflate but rather humbles.”<sup>88</sup> Isidor, in his *Definitions*, [writes]: “Philosophy is self-knowledge ....” etc.<sup>89</sup> On the front of the temple of Apollo [are inscribed] the words of one asking by what route he can arrive at happiness. The Delphic Oracle answers: “Would that you knew yourself!” ... Augustine in Book 4 of *On the Trinity* [writes]: “Superior in knowledge are those who prefer to know themselves. A mind that knows its own weakness is more praiseworthy than a mind that, with its own weakness unexplored, explores the pathways of the stars ....” etc.<sup>90</sup> Gregory, in Book 31 of his *Moralia* [states]: “Unless a soul humbly draws near to the Light, it cannot know itself, because it is not present to itself as a whole.”<sup>91</sup> And in Book 14 of the *Moralia* [Gregory further says]: “He who wishes to make a judgment about the darkness ought to look at the light.”<sup>92</sup>

[28] From this knowledge of oneself arises true humbleness. “For humility is the virtue through which each one becomes lowly to himself by means of very true self-knowledge ....”<sup>93</sup> Anselm in his *Similitudes*, Chapter 37, enumerates the seven steps of humility: The first step is self-knowledge. [Then comes] sorrow over wrongs committed, confession of sins, a willing sense of conviction that, indeed, one is a sinner, the admission that one is despicable, patience in sustaining injury, the love by which he loves his being humiliated and despised.<sup>94</sup> Gregory, [writing] about the humility of Constantine, [states] ...: “A certain man heard many things about Constantine’s fame. He came and saw [him and] said: ‘I previously thought him to be a tall man ....’ etc. Constantine, [hearing this], thanked him and said ‘You alone are the one who has opened my eyes.’ The man: ‘Constantine loved more greatly one who despised him.’ ”<sup>95</sup> Etc.

[29] Many men have a feigned humility and a semblance of humility. Jerome in his Epistle 87 [writes]: “Many men attain unto a semblance of this virtue; few attain unto its true nature.”<sup>96</sup> Let all verbal fictions be removed! Let simulated behaviors cease! Tolerance of injury reveals the humble man. Augustine in Epistle 38 [notes]: “There is no other way for grasping the truth than humility ....” etc.<sup>97</sup> And there follows: “A very noble rhetorician, when asked what ought first of all to be observed with regard to the rules of eloquence, replied ‘Pronunciation.’ ‘What second?’ ‘Pronunciation.’ ‘What third?’

‘Pronunciation!’ ” A similar answer ought to be given regarding humility, when someone inquires about the precepts of the Christian religion.”<sup>98</sup> In Book I of the *Lives of the Fathers* [there are] examples of humility. [Consider the example] of him who never spoke during distress. When asked why not, he answered: “I said to my mind: be you and an ass one [and the same] thing.”<sup>99</sup> (Psalm [72]: “I have become as a beast before you.”<sup>100</sup>) In the same place [we read] about another man, who was thrust out; and, when recalled, he said that he had thought himself to be like a dog.<sup>101</sup> Cassian in Book 4 of his *Conferences* [speaks] of Abbot Phinuterus, etc.<sup>102</sup> In the book entitled *Paradise* [we read] of Marcarius, etc.<sup>103</sup> [Reflect] on the humility of Jesus Christ, who was made a man, etc.<sup>104</sup> “If you do not wish to imitate a humble man, imitate your humble God” ....<sup>105</sup> Gregory in Book 34 of his *Moralia* [says]: “O how great is the power of humility. In order truly to teach humility, He who is great without measure became very small, even to the point of suffering.”<sup>106</sup>

### PART THREE

#### *Servitude, Prayer, Devotion*

[30] “... of His handmaiden.”<sup>107</sup> The soul becomes God’s handmaiden by serving Him most devotedly; and this service consists in devotion and prayer. First of all, humility must precede [the other two], because devotion does not arise unless a man prostrates himself humbly, in true confession, before the omnipotence of God. God first looked unto Abel and then at his offerings ....<sup>108</sup> That which is offered with affection of heart, is accepted ....<sup>109</sup> “For to pray truly is not to recite contrived words ... [but] to utter loving groans in remorse” while turning the heart away from the lips and turning it toward God.<sup>110</sup> “Prayer is devotion of mind, i.e., is [the mind’s] turning toward God through pious and humble affection, underpinned by faith, hope, and love ....<sup>111</sup> A devout man ought to lift himself above himself ... by justly praying for just things.<sup>112</sup> For “prayer is an ascent unto God and an asking for fitting things.”<sup>113</sup> [31] And such an asking is threefold: a morally pure asking for the forgiveness of sins; a still more morally pure asking for the Bridegroom’s gifts; a very morally pure asking for the Bridegroom ....<sup>114</sup>

Augustine in Epistle 47 [writes]: “Pray for a happy life, which all long for and desire.”<sup>115</sup> “One thing I have sought from the Lord ...,” etc.<sup>116</sup> Augustine adds: “This [seeking] is done more with groans than with words, more with weeping than with speaking. Let lengthy utter-

ance be absent from prayer. However, let not frequent and fervent prayer be absent. Let the intent persist. To pray much is to importune Him to whom we are praying—[to importune Him] with daily and pious arousing of our heart.”<sup>117</sup> Job 31: “Who would grant me an aid, so that the Almighty may hear my desire?”<sup>118</sup> Concerning this [verse] Gregory [writes]: “A true request is made with words not of the mouth but of the heart; with Him words [alone] do not avail but rather desires [avail].”<sup>119</sup> Matthew 6 “Enter into your chamber and pray with the door closed . . .,”<sup>120</sup> etc. Luke 18: “It is needful always to pray and not to faint.”<sup>121</sup> I Thessalonians 5: “Pray without ceasing.”<sup>122</sup> Psalms: “Praise of Him [shall be] always in my mouth.”<sup>123</sup>

Now, prayer is said to be the entire regulation of holy desire, and, hence, it is considered as a good work. Moreover, we read that until the fifth hour the apostle engaged in manual labor, and from that hour until the tenth hour he preached. Thereafter, he attended to the needs of the poor, the wayfarer, and himself. [And] he spent the night in prayer. And in this way he was constantly praying.<sup>124</sup> I Corinthians 1: “always giving thanks . . .”<sup>125</sup> Moreover, prayer is like a beam of light or like a rope-chain hanging from a rock—[a rope-chain] by means of which a man ascends upward unto God. Therefore, we must be vigilant in our prayers, in accordance with the command of our Savior . . .<sup>126</sup> John 4: Our Savior spent the night in prayer.<sup>127</sup> And on the mountain Moses [prayed] with raised hands . . .<sup>128</sup> The extent to which prayer avails [is shown by] the example (in the *Lives of the Fathers*) of [evil] Julian, who sent a devil [on a mission], and the devil was hindered for ten days by the prayer of a monk. Etc.<sup>129</sup> Raise questions about prayer. As [it says] in the Gloss of Clementine “*Si Dominum*”: “[Ask] what prayer is, why it is called prayer, how it is distinguished into divisions, to whom it is offered, through whom [it is offered], to what end [it is], of what kind [it is], where [it is offered up], and what is its effect . . ., etc.”<sup>130</sup>

[32] According to St. Thomas “devotion is a certain willingness to give oneself readily to the things that pertain to serving God.”<sup>131</sup> Devotion is benevolent readiness, or a ready benevolence, by which the mind actually, duly, and rationally is influenced with respect to serving God. It is the act by which the mind devotes itself to God when it gives itself readily to worshipping and serving God. And [devotion] takes its name from devout readiness: “Unto the Lord the multitude of the children of Israel offered, with a devout and very ready mind, their first-fruits . . .,” etc.<sup>132</sup> [Devotion] is an act inferred immediately from *latría* [i.e., from worship owed to God alone]. And it is the foremost of



all the moral virtues and is the closest to love. For it directs all other virtues unto the End, viz., God, because it ordains all the virtues to the end of worshipping God.

[33] Furthermore, [devotion] is of two kinds. A certain kind is rational, or spiritual, without noteworthy influence on the sensual nature, which, indeed, is not yet calmed and is not yet readily subject to the spirit; rather, it rebels, as Paul complained: “I see another law in my members, warring . . .,” etc.<sup>133</sup> Thus, on account of the [residual] spark [of inordinate desire] it happens [even] to others [than Paul] that the “flesh lusts against the spirit.”<sup>134</sup> “The spirit is ready; the flesh is weak.”<sup>135</sup> The second form of devotion overflows into a submissive sensual nature, etc. According to Damascene and the philosophers the sensual nature is not like the lower powers, although it is not rational. For it can obey reason, in accordance with its partaking [of reason]. Reason controls various other brute things, etc. Spirit can do nothing outwardly unless the sensual nature in the organs consent and obey, etc. Otherwise, we could not understand how the spirit could be overcome by the sensual nature, etc. With regard to what is outer, the sensual nature needs to consent to the spirit; indeed, a sailor casts his cargo into the sea in order to save himself, etc. But when such consent occurs without resistance or murmuring, the devotion is called devotion of the senses: “My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in God.”<sup>136</sup> “My soul has thirsted for You. In how many ways my flesh [thirsts also]!”<sup>137</sup> And, at times, this calming occurs as a result of the intellect’s strong intent and the will’s fervent inclination. In these cases the stronger movements expel the weaker ones. Secondly, [this calming] occurs because of the perfect fixed-dispositions of the moral virtues—[dispositions] acquired either from practice or from infusion. These [dispositions] restrain the passions of the sensual nature. Hence, those [individuals] who are exercised in the virtues are less troubled by the sensual nature. Thirdly, [this calming of the sensual nature] comes as a result of God’s special grace.

[34] However, three stages of virtue are posited in accordance with the [following] three stages: (1) of beginners, (2) of continuers, and (3) of finishers—[i.e., the stages] *from which* [beginning], *through which* [middle], and *unto which* [end]. Similarly, devotion is [of three kinds]: (1) eager devotion, (2) delightful devotion, and (3) fierce devotion. The first [kind of devotion] is present in beginners, where the sensual nature obeys the spirit readily [and] in harmony with the worship of God, but [does so] without relish. And God often grants this [kind

of devotion] to those who serve Him. Delightful [devotion] is present when the sensual nature is submissive to the spirit in a higher degree, and more readily, and when this [state] is profuse with a certain spiritual sweetness and consolation. When this devotion is increased to such an extent that the heart is quite delighted, it is called spiritual gladness. And [when] it is increased to such an extent that the heart cannot contain [it], then it is called spiritual intoxication. This inward, tasty pleasure [both] delights and reflects both body and soul more than does any carnal pleasure. And such [inner pleasures] detest worldly consolations, and frequently they are brought to diverse inward affections and to bodily actions—now by weeping, now by singing—in accordance, oftentimes, with the saporific motion and the constitution of the body.

Devotion is spiritually fierce, or spiritually feverish, when the sensual nature in a still higher way—above all consolation temporally granted to it, or able to be granted to it—seeks God’s honor and glory with such great fervor, and endeavors to serve Him so insistently, that in a certain manner it seems to rage spiritually. And because it seems to itself not to be able to accomplish at will its intent, it begins to languish. And [the devotion] is called spiritual languor. “Prop me up with flowers; compass me about with apples, because I languish with love.”<sup>138</sup> [The devotion] is also called the wounding of love. “My sister, you have wounded my heart.”<sup>139</sup> And this weakness also arises from intense delight, to which the heart clings excessively and [by which] it is weakened and made ill. Common to all passion is that it is something distinctly able to be felt, etc. With such a degree [of devotion] the saints saw wondrous things, and they worked with a sufficiency of this [fierce devotion].

[35] All true devotion proceeds from divine love, which, according to Thomas, has four effects: melting (i.e., softening) of a hard heart; enjoyment (i.e., delight), languor, and fervor.<sup>140</sup> If these effects are considered with respect to the sensitive appetite: by reason of melting, the devotion is given the name *eager devotion*. (In the case of eager devotion [the devotion] melts the heart from its state of frozenness: “My soul became melted . . .,” etc.<sup>141</sup>) By reason of fruitfulness—insofar as [the soul] now possesses that which it desires—the devotion is given the name *delightful devotion*. By reason of languor and of fervor—insofar, that is, as the sensual nature endeavors fervently to obtain that which it desires (and becomes languid-like because it cannot, at will, obtain that which it desires)—the devotion

is given the name *fierce devotion*.

[36] The aforementioned effects can be considered with respect to spirit. But [the following] must be known: it is not the case that every sensible [effect] is much better than is a rational [effect]; nor is it the case that every more greatly sensible [effect] is better than is a less greatly sensible [effect], although, perhaps, this [excelling] can occur, all other things being equal. The perfection of devotions depends on the intent to serve God most perfectly. Devotion is not the sensual nature's *savoring* [of God] or *taking delight* [in God] but is the *intent to serve* [God]. This intent is considered, conceptually, by reference to the service in which it occurs. For example, [it is present] more perfectly and more extensively in the case of counsels than of precepts, because it [relates] to more services. [It is present] more extensively with regard to many [services] than with regard to few. Thirdly, [it is present] more intensely<sup>142</sup> according as there is the aim to serve God more intently. Now, many who have stronger devotion and stronger intent come more slowly, than do the less devout, to devotion having to do with the senses. The reason, perhaps, has to do with their rigid constitution. Accordingly, women come to sensory devotion because they are gentler, etc., than men; and men of one country [come to such devotion] more quickly than do men of another country. Nevertheless, [people] are not holier because of this [softness or quickness]; for, oftentimes, one who cries quickly also laughs quickly; and one who is of tougher nature remains standing, whereas the other falls.

Behold, greater devotion is of lesser sensuality! Those living criminally are often moved to weeping solely because of a reprimand or because of what they are told. At times, strong temptation and indisposition of the body keep the sensual nature from devotion. At times, grace of this [devotional] kind is especially removed from one; for God removes from His friends<sup>143</sup> that pleasantness, [doing so] because of what is better for them, in order that the [grace] received may be safeguarded more carefully and sought more desiringly. Therefore, devotion of this sensory kind is not always in our power. We ought not for this reason to be sad; nor ought we to be impatient, saying "our soul is disgusted with . . .," etc.<sup>144</sup> Rather, we ought to say to ourselves: "For our sake He does not give, lest we be haughty and misuse the gifts and cling to that pleasantness rather than to service to God, thus falling into spiritual lasciviousness while aiming at our own delight, contrary to the precept: 'Delight in the Lord!' " <sup>145</sup>

## NOTES TO SERMON VI

1. Luke 1:48. The word “regarded” (“*respexit*”) has not only the sense of *looking upon* but also the sense of *having regard for* and of *taking favorable notice of*.
2. In the calendar of the Church, this day commemorates the day of the angel’s visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as recorded in Luke 1.
3. Psalms 118:25 (119:25).
4. Psalms 118:107 (119:107).
5. Psalms 118:153 (119:153). Psalms 118:132 (119:132).
6. Psalms 118:159 (119:159).
7. Luke 1:49 and 1:55.
8. Psalms 33:16 (34:15).
9. Here I skip over the repetitive section entitled by the editor of the printed Latin text “*Exordii et divisionis perscriptio prima*,” since it is not a part of the sermon but is Nicholas’s initial sketch of the beginning parts of the sermon.
10. Romans 5:12.
11. *De Conceptu Virginali* 3 and 27.
12. Romans 7:23 and 8:1.
13. The present view is taken over by Nicholas from Anselm of Canterbury’s *De Conceptu Virginali*.
14. See n. 13 above.
15. Galatians 5:17.
16. Ephesians 2:3.
17. Here (at 8:17-19) there is a manuscript problem. I am construing the text as “Non enim dolent de hoc—quia sunt sapientes spiritus, ideo non dolent—quod gloriam non habent . . .,” etc.
18. John 14:6.
19. Genesis 2:8-9.
20. Genesis 1:9-10.
21. Genesis 2:4-6.
22. The pronoun “*eam*” stands for “*paradisum*,” which Nicholas treats as a feminine noun.
23. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Libri* (= *Expositio in Librum B. Job*), IV, Chap. 1 (*PL* 75:633). Not meant by Nicholas to be an exact quotation.
24. This passage is a composite of Canticle of Canticles 4:12-14 and 1:3 and 4:16 (Song of Solomon 4:12-14 and 1:4 and 4:16). Ecclesiasticus 24:20.
25. See note 22 above, re the gender of “*paradisus*.”
26. Canticle of Canticles 6:1 (Song of Solomon 6:2).
27. Hebrews 4:14.
28. Luke 1:46-47.
29. Luke 1:48.
30. Anselm, *De Conceptu Virginali* 2. Not meant by Nicholas to be an exact quotation.
31. Malachias 4:2 (Malachi 4:2).
32. Psalms 18:6 (19:4).
33. Wisdom 7:26. Note also Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, VIII, 1, 1-2

(PL 34:371-372).

34. I Corinthians 13:1.
35. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1.
36. Luke 1:34.
37. Luke 1:35.
38. Luke 1:38.
39. Genesis 2:10.
40. Genesis 2:10.
41. Note Romans 7:5, which, in the King James' Version, speaks of the "motions of sins."
42. Matthew 11:29.
43. Ecclesiastes 8:1.
44. Cantic of Canticles 4:7 (Song of Solomon 4:7).
45. Cantic of Canticles 1:14 (Song of Solomon 1:15).
46. Psalms 44:14-15 (45:13-14).
47. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII, 22, 1 (PL 41:784-785).
48. Galatians 5:17.
49. See Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, Book II, Distinctio 27, numeral 1 (PL 192:714).
50. Colossians 3:14.
51. Psalms 137:6 (138:6).
52. Luke 1:52.
53. Psalms 112:5-6 (113:5-6).
54. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, LXXV, 12, 16 (PL 36:968).
55. Matthew 11:29.
56. James 4:6.
57. "Into a malicious soul wisdom will not enter ...." Wisdom 1:4.
58. Ecclesiasticus 13:1. Here (at 20:9) Nicholas has "*coinquinaverit*", whereas the Vulgate has "*communicaverit*".
59. Cf. Augustine, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, II, 4, 13 (PL 34:1077).
60. Daniel 5:20.
61. Cf. Proverbs 16:18.
62. Psalms 138:12 (139:12).
63. Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, II, 8, 11 (PL 34:202).
64. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 49:16. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Interlineari, Ordinaria, et Nicolai Lyrani Postilla, eiusdem Moralitytibus, Burgensis Additionibus, et Thoringi Replis. Vol. IV* (Venice, 1588), f. 171<sup>r</sup>.
65. Isaias (Isaiah) 2:12.
66. The reference is to Adam.
67. I Kings 15:12-23 (I Samuel 15:12-23).
68. III Kings 12:1-18 (I Kings 12:1-18).
69. Daniel 5:20-21.
70. Judith 13:8-10.
71. Luke 18:10-14.
72. Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium*, XXIII, 3 (PL 35:1583-1584).
73. Psalms 36:20 (37:20).
74. Here (at 22:5) I am reading "*plus*" in place of "*post*".

75. Ecclesiasticus 6:2-3.
76. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 49:16 (not Jeremias 44).
77. Luke 14:11.
78. Nicholas here lists nine (not seven) products of pride.
79. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 13, 1 (PL 41:420).
80. John Cassian, *De Coenobiorum Institutis*, XII, 29 (PL 49:471A).
81. Matthew 23:6. Luke 14:8-11.
82. Matthew 23:8.
83. I Corinthians 15:10.
84. I Corinthians 15:10.
85. Philippians 2:13.
86. Matthew 11:29.
87. Cf. II Corinthians 13:5.
88. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum*, XXXVI, 5 (PL 183:969C-D).
89. Not Isidor of Seville but Isaac Israeli, *Liber de Definitionibus*. See f. ii<sup>va</sup>, lines 12-13 of his *Omnia Opera* (Lyon, 1515).
90. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IV, Prooemium, 1 (PL 42:885).
91. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, XXXI, 12, 18 (PL 76:583).
92. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, II, 20, 36 (PL 75:573).
93. Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Gradibus Humilitatis et Superbiae* 1.2 (PL 182:942B).
94. *Liber Anselmi Archiepiscopi de Humanis Moribus per Similitudines*, 101-108. [See p. 81 of R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt, editors, *Memorials of St. Anselm* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).]
95. Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum Libri*, I, 5 (PL 77:180).
96. These words are not found in Jerome's Epistle 87.
97. Augustine, *Epistolae*, CXVIII, 3, 22 (not Epistola 38) (PL 33<sub>2</sub>:442).
98. *Loc. cit.*
99. *De Vitis Patrum*, V, 15, 30 (PL 73:960B).
100. Psalms 72:23 (73:22).
101. *De Vitis Patrum*, V, 15, 64 (PL 73:964).
102. John Cassian, *Collationes [Conferences]*, XX, 1 (PL 49:1149B). *De Coenobiorum Institutis*, IV, 30 (PL 49:190B-192B).
103. *Paradisus Heraclidis Eremitae [Appendix ad Vitas Patrum]*, Chap. 6 (PL 74:273).
104. John 1:14.
105. Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium*, XXV, 16 (PL 35:1604). Cusa wrongly writes "Homily 15 on John."
106. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, XXXIV, 22, 54 (PL 76:748B).
107. Luke 1:48.
108. Genesis 4:4. (Nicholas writes, mistakenly, "Genesis 3.")
109. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, XXII, 14, 28 (PL 76:230A). (Nicholas writes, mistakenly, "Gregory in [Book] XI of his *Moralia*.")
110. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, XXXIII, 22, 43 (PL 76:701B). Nicholas writes "*amorosos*", but Gregory's text has "*amaros*".
111. Hugh of St. Victor, *De Modo Orandi*, Chap. 1 (PL 176:979A).

112. Cf. Lamentations 3:28.
113. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Chap. 24 (PG 94:1089C-D).
114. See, for example, Thomas Gallus (Abbot of Vercelli) *Super Cantica Cantorum Hierarchice Exposita*. In particular, see p. 70 (of the second commentary) in *Commentaires du Cantique des Cantiques*. Text and notes by Jeanne Barbet. Paris: Vrin, 1967. Note also the expression “*castissimis precibus*” in Pseudo-Dionysius’s *De Divinis Nominibus (Dionysiaca)*, Vol. I, p. 123).
115. Augustine, *Epistolae*, CXXX, 4, 9 (PL 33<sub>2</sub>:497). Nicholas wrongly alludes to Epistola XLVII.
116. Psalms 26:4 (27:4).
117. Augustine, *Epistola* CXXX, 10, 20 (PL 33<sub>2</sub>:502).
118. Job 31:5. Here the Vulgate has “*auditorem*”, whereas Nicholas (at 31:14) writes “*adiutorem*”.
119. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, XXII, 17, 43 (PL 76:238C). Nicholas does not mean this to be an exact quotation.
120. Matthew 6:6.
121. Luke 18:1.
122. I Thessalonians 5:17.
123. Psalms 33:2 (34:1).
124. Haymo Halberstatensis, *In Epistolam I ad Corinthios*, Chap. 1 (PL 117:510B-C).
125. I Corinthians 1:4. Ephesians 5:20.
126. Matthew 26:41 (not Matthew 16, as Nicholas inserts into the text).
127. Luke 6:12 (not John 4).
128. Exodus 17:9-12.
129. *De Vitis Patrum* VI, 2, 12 (PL 73:1003A-B).
130. *Glossa in Clementinas*, section “De Reliquiis et Veneratione Sanctorum”; sub-section “Si Dominum” (Venice, 1488).
131. Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, IIa-IIae, 82, 1, corpus.
132. Exodus 35:20-21.
133. Romans 7:23.
134. Galatians 5:17.
135. Mark 14:38. Matthew 26:41.
136. Psalms 83:3 (84:2).
137. Psalms 62:2 (63:1).
138. Canticum of Canticles 2:5 (Song of Solomon 2:5).
139. Canticum of Canticles 4:9 (Song of Solomon 4:9).
140. Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, Ia-IIae, 28, 5, replies.
141. Canticum of Canticles 5:6 (Song of Solomon 5:6).
142. Here (at 36:15) I am reading “*intensive*” in place of “*extensive*”.
143. Cf. John 15:15.
144. Numbers 21:5.
145. Psalms 36:4 (37:4).

**Sermon VII: Remittuntur Ei Peccata Multa**

(“Many sins are forgiven her ....”)

[July 22, feast day of Mary Magdalene, 1431;  
preached perhaps in Koblenz]

[1] “Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved greatly.”<sup>1</sup>

Of Mary the sinner, enveloped by much uncleanness of sin and darkness of sin, there was made a very pure tabernacle of the Holy Spirit; and in most glorious triumph Mary was conveyed, on today’s date, unto the joys of Heaven, because she loved greatly, etc. For love covers a multitude of sins ....<sup>2</sup> [This] public sinner, as Luke calls her on account of the enormity of her sins—[this sinner] who was scorned by the proud Pharisee—is received into the grace of Christ because she loved ..., etc.<sup>3</sup> [This] woman—from whom, according to Mark,<sup>4</sup> Christ cast out *seven demons* (i.e., according to Gregory in a homily,<sup>5</sup> cast out *all kinds of sins*)—was reconciled to God because she loved. Wherefore, Christ, the true [Good] Samaritan, washed wounded Mary with wine and oil and restored her to health.<sup>6</sup> Ezechiel 16: “I saw that you were trodden under foot [and lying] in your own blood. And I said to you while you were [lying] in your blood: ‘Be alive.’” And a few lines later: “I spread my garment over you and covered your shame. And I washed you with water and cleansed away the blood on you. And I anointed you with oil, and I clothed you with embroidery ...,” etc.<sup>7</sup>

*Mary Magdalene, “the sinner.”* First of all [I will speak] of sin and its effect.

“*She loved.*” Secondly, [I will speak] of love.

“*Her sins are forgiven her*”: here [I will speak] about the grace of forgiveness.

[I will speak] briefly about three things: about sin, about love, and about forgiveness.

*PART ONE*

*On Sin—especially on Licentiousness*

(a) *What sin is; and about its effects.*

[2] According to Ambrose sin is a transgression of the divine law and is disobedience to the Heavenly commandments.<sup>8</sup> According to



Augustine [to sin] is to cling to a mutable good after having spurned an immutable good.<sup>9</sup> “Sin is the desire to obtain or retain that which justice forbids,” according to Augustine.<sup>10</sup> Sin, according to Augustine in Book 22 of his *Against Faustus*, “is that which is done, spoken, or desired contrary to the eternal law.”<sup>11</sup> That is, it is the commission or the omission of a deed, of something said, etc. But in and of itself sin is nothing. For with respect to the *act* sins pass away; and they remain [only] with respect to the *effect*.

[3] Now, there are many effects of sins. At present, let some things be said briefly but decidedly about these effects. [Sin] exceedingly displeases God—to such an extent that, because of sin, He drowned almost all of His works (viz., almost all men and [other] creatures) by means of the Flood (Genesis 7). Indeed, [He hates] whatever sin touches. He hates not as do men, who hold onto vessels and pour out the bad wine, etc.; rather, together with the sin He hurls into Hell the vessels of sin (viz., the rational soul, [which is] His own image). Wisdom 9: “The wicked and his wickedness are hateful to God.”<sup>12</sup> God hates sin to such an extent that, on account of [sin], He gave His innocent Only-begotten [Son] over to death. God first cast out sin from Heaven; and because it remained in the world, He descended in order to drive it away. Matthew 8: “He will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea.”<sup>13</sup> Sin pleases the Devil. For he loves nothing else—neither gold nor silver—but says: “Give me the souls; let [him] take the other things.”<sup>14</sup> To that end Satan always works. Job 1: “I have gone around the earth ...,” etc.<sup>15</sup> The Devil has an insatiable appetite for sin. “He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”<sup>16</sup> ... Job 40: “He will drink up a river and will not wonder; and he trusts that the Jordan may run into his mouth ...,” etc.<sup>17</sup>

[4] Sin is a weakness by which the world is destroyed. It is a *tertian fever* caused by threefold lust. I John 1: “All that is in the world ...,” etc.<sup>18</sup> Sin is a *quartan [fever]*, because it is characteristic of the heart, of the mouth, of the deed, and of the habit. “Return, return, O Sulamitess. Return, return.”<sup>19</sup> Lo, “return” is said four times. Sin is a *daily fever* because of pride, which is present in every sin. Sin is like the rotteness in an apple, because the rotteness removes the color, the value, the taste, and the fragrance. Similarly, sin removes the adornment of life, the fragrance of a good reputation, the value received from grace, and the taste of glory. Sin is like a bodily wound which, when it is fresh, permits itself to be touched and pressed against—but scarcely does so after three days. Likewise, in the case of

sinners ..., etc. And there are three days—viz., the committal, the habituation, the obstinate persisting—after which the sin does not admit of being touched. Proverbs 1: “The sinner, when he comes into the depths of sins, despises.”<sup>20</sup> [See] Isaias 30.<sup>21</sup> “Their malice blinded them.”<sup>22</sup> Hence, “they have hated him who rebukes at the gate.”<sup>23</sup> Sin is like a flaw that is in a garment. Just as the merchant displays only the top side, so the Devil shows only [sin’s] titillation, not its end-result. Sin is like a game played with *con*-men, who in the beginning allow one to win but who in the end take everything, etc. Sin is like a net in which a fish entangles itself all the more in proportion to its movements, etc. It is like a bond by which a cow is led to the slaughter, a falcon to the perch, and an ape to the tree-trunk, etc. Proverbs 7: He does not know that he is being drawn as is a fool to bonds, etc.<sup>24</sup>

[5] There are two effects of sin: stain and guilt. The stain [of sin] is the privation of beauty in the soul because of a forbidden act. Just as the body is soiled from contact with what is unclean, so the soul is stained from its affection for what is forbidden. Thereupon it loses the gleam of the divine light and the adornment of grace. Moreover, God is the life and the cleanliness of the soul, which, in sinning, falls very far away from God. And mortal sin is just such a stain; it turns [the soul] away from God, and it deprives of love and of the grace that makes [one] pleasing [to God]. Venial [sin] stains only lightly and does not in the foregoing way altogether transform and mar. Accordingly, it removes the act of love and the fervor of love—but not the *habitus* of love, etc. Guilt indicates deservedness of punishment. Now, these effects [of sin, viz., stain (*macula*) and guilt (*reatus*)] are usually called punishment (*poena*) and blame (*culpa*). According to Thomas<sup>25</sup> he sins in one way (contrary to the equal measure of friendship) who sins against God (in that he does not pay the affection that is owed) and does so either by loving creatures more than God (as happens in the case of mortal sins) or by loving creatures less than God, nevertheless inordinately (as happens in the case of venial sins). And he sins in another way (contrary to the equal measure of justice) in that he either does not pay to God, or he takes away from God, a thing that is owed to God—viz., honor, reverence, and service. By virtue of the first [debt] guilt and stain are contracted from the disorderedness of the will; and love is lost (in the case of mortal sins), or the fervor of love is lost (in the case of venial sins). By virtue of the second [debt] a man is made deserving of eternal punishment (because of mortal sins) or deserving of temporal punishment (because of venial sins) and is made

deserving that there be taken from him, through punishment, that which he unjustly took from God through disobedience.<sup>26</sup>

[6] One's delighting in created things less than one's delighting in God is a venial sin if the delight is greater than it should be. However, due delight is without sin insofar as it is natural—as [is true of] the eye in its seeing what is verdant, the sense of taste in regard to what is sweet. Moreover, sometimes delight in created things is meritorious: [viz.,] when it is referred to God. The Psalmist [says]: “You have delighted me, O Lord, by Your works . . .,” etc.<sup>27</sup> The preferring of creatures to the Creator is a mortal [sin] because of the turning away [from the Creator] and the contempt [for Him]. And because of the incurring of guilt, death comes to the soul, because [in that case] the soul's works are dead works. Augustine: Just as no medication heals the wound unless the iron is first of all extracted, so benefits are of no avail unless the sin is forsaken. Likewise, neither fasting nor praying is of benefit unless one is recalled from iniquity, etc.

[7] Sin is committed *in the heart* in four ways: by the instigatory thought [of it], by taking pleasure [in it], by consent [to it], and by the brazenness of one's defense [of it]. The first [of these is done] by the Devil; the second, by the flesh; the third, by the spirit; the fourth, by taking-pride-in. In these same ways [sin] is accomplished *in deeds*; first [the sin is committed] in secret; then the guilty one acts openly before the eyes of men; next, there comes the habituation; finally, there comes the obstinate persistence or the false hope. According to Jerome we are born of the Devil as often as we sin mortally.<sup>28</sup> Hugh [states]: The Devil works destabilization in those minds which, inwardly, are without ardor from the heat of God's love but which, outwardly, now rejoice in the delight that has come from carnal pleasures and do not foresee what bitterness will resultantly follow [from them], etc.<sup>29</sup> The Serpent induced; Eve was pleased; Adam consented, etc.<sup>30</sup> Sin as habit has bound one with bonds as many times as the habit has been exercised; and so, the habit is broken only with the greatest of difficulty. Hence, the Lord resurrected the girl at home and Lazarus in the sepulcher.<sup>31</sup> [Symbolically speaking]: A dead man lies at home; i.e., sin, at its first stage, is done secretly. Secondly, the sin is subsequently entombed through habit. And when the tongues of those who eulogize the man condone [the sin], it is removed only with very great difficulty. Take note of this [consequence], because a sin that is supported by the tongues of the depraved is removed only with difficulty. We must take care to safeguard, above all, the eye. From sight arises the illicit

thought and, as a result, the sin. Take note of this [fact]! For the ordering is such as follows: from sight comes the thought; from the thought comes the taking-pleasure-in; from the taking-pleasure-in comes the consent; from the consent comes the perverse deed. Later there comes the bad habit, from which a necessity follows; from this necessity comes stubborn persistence, from this persistence comes hopelessness, from which comes eternal damnation.

(b) *Licentiousness: what it is like; and its varieties.*

[8] Licentiousness is a mortal sin that is contrary to the precept “Do not commit adultery.” The lust of licentiousness is distinguished in seven ways. *In the first way*, at the time when the lust consists only in its initial motion, it is a venial [sin]. There follows, *secondly*, the consent to the titillation (although there is no wish to proceed to the act); and so, [the sin] is mortal. *Thirdly*, there is consent to the deed, were it to occur; and this [sin] is also mortal. *The fourth way* occurs when the lust is not only had in the heart but is also fed by sight; [this is a] mortal [sin] because “he who looks upon a woman ...,” etc.<sup>32</sup> For at that time he fully consents to the inordinate desire. Because of the fact that if someone were to look upon a woman as a thing of beauty, it would not be a sin, there is added [in the Scriptural verse] “... to lust [after her].” *The fifth way* occurs in the case of foolish chatter<sup>33</sup>—as when someone woos a woman or has intimate conversations with her; [this is a] mortal [sin]. *The sixth way* has to do with turpitude—for example, with regard to kisses, embraces, and lascivious touching. It is a mortal [sin], and the sin is greater the more the inordinate desire is kindled by such things—[kindled] on account of one’s very nearness to the fire. And so, the non-lustful touching of a woman is not an evil; but the lustful touching is a mortal [sin]. *The seventh way* [occurs] when the deed itself ensues; the deed is a mortal [sin], unless marriage excuses it. The initial motions of sensuality are not classified as sin. However, the retention of the receipts [of this motion]—[the retention] with lingering pleasure but without consent—is a venial [sin]. But the consent [thereto] is mortal, etc.

[9] Licentiousness is like Gehenna. For in licentiousness there is the fire, viz., of lust; there is the worm, viz., remorse of conscience; there is the brimstone, [viz.,] the stench of ignominy. Licentiousness is like a foolish merchant who takes something worthless (Proverbs 6: “The price of a harlot is scarcely one denarius.”)<sup>34</sup> in exchange for something precious: he frivolously sells to the Devil the thing that

Christ has purchased at great price. Even the poorest licentious man will be condemned, because he has done harm to everything: to God, to the saints, to his soul, his reputation, his substance, to [God's] glory and grace. Licentiousness is like a crow that hangs around corpses; and it is like a foolish warrior who takes no precautions against women who are the Devil's weapons. Licentiousness is like a large net that ensnares all fish, because licentiousness envelops the entire world. It is the Devil's fish-hook. (Habacuc 2: He lifted them all with his hook.)<sup>35</sup> It is like a Greek fire,<sup>36</sup> like a horse that is not directed without reins and spurs. It is like a ship<sup>37</sup> that is not being steered amid the waves. It is like mud, etc. Licentiousness leads to very dire poverty. It is like the Prodigal Son.<sup>38</sup> It casts one into servitude; it causes a man's baser part to dominate; it makes a man, created in the image of God, to be like the beasts. Licentiousness makes one foolish, as in the case of Solomon (III Kings 6: His heart was condemned because of women<sup>39</sup>). Licentiousness kills by means of death from guilt, death from ignominy, and death in Hell. (Ecclesiastes 7: "I have found a woman who is more bitter than death . . .," etc.)<sup>40</sup> Anguish is present in this sin [of licentiousness]. Oftentimes a five-[hour]<sup>41</sup> sleeplessness precedes a festival of one hour. There is a thing most vile: a damsel who allowed herself to be corrupted, believing the episode to be wondrous, wanted to kill herself when she [later] appeared [to herself] so vile. Shamefacedness is present in this sin [of licentiousness]. (Job 23: "The eye of the adulterer watches for darkness.")<sup>42</sup> Stench [is also present in this sin. Consider] the example of the angel, etc.<sup>43</sup> By means of this sin [of licentiousness] the Devil acquires pairs of human beings, etc.

(c) *The eternal punishments of mortal sin.*

[10] Mortal sin effects the soul's death. Now, we must first note the severity of infernal punishment; secondly, the variety; thirdly, the length; fourthly, the universality of the penalties, etc. (i) The punishments of the damned will be very severe, because, according to Augustine,<sup>44</sup> the world's most grievous punishment is less severe than is the punishment of Purgatory. As a sign of this severity, the Savior says there to be weeping and gnashing of teeth there.<sup>45</sup> Descend here, by means of comparisons, to the [consideration of the] harshness of the punishments. For in Scripture there are nine punishments [mentioned]: *fire*,<sup>46</sup> which burns the flesh; the *worm*,<sup>47</sup> which consumes the mind; *stench* (fire, brimstone, winds, etc.)<sup>48</sup>; *cold*, very intermittently;<sup>49</sup> *hunger* and extreme *destitution* (because there is not even a drop of

water there for drinking ...);<sup>50</sup> *lack of a vision of God*<sup>51</sup> (this is the worst thing). Moreover, there is a huge punishment from the *Tormentor*.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, there is *horror* (because *there* there is “no orderliness but is everlasting horror”<sup>53</sup>). Furthermore, there is *darkness*. (Matthew 22: “with hands bound ...,” etc.<sup>54</sup> Gregory: “*That* fire has burning but no light.”<sup>55</sup>) Likewise, there is pain there.<sup>56</sup> Gregory in Book IX of his *Moralia* [says]: “The damned will be horrified. *There* there will be pain together with dread,<sup>57</sup> a flame together with darkness, death without dying, an unceasing end, an unfailling defect. For the death is a living death, the end is always beginning, and the defect cannot be remedied,” etc.<sup>58</sup> The reason is [the following]: Since the Devil and the sinner agree in guilt, it is *just* that [these] creatures be assembled together in the prison of the damned and join in [experiencing] together the punishment of the damned.

(ii) [In Hell] the pain is caused as a result of four factors: [The damned suffer] because they have lost the temporal goods of this world. Secondly, they have lost time, and they would gladly give the whole world in exchange for a single moment of time for doing penance. Thirdly, [they suffer] because they have lost eternal glory and the eternal vision [of God]. (Chrysostom: They have all been tormented in Hell by the lack of seeing God.) Fourthly, [they suffer] because they have gained the vileness of Hell, which is a place dark and needy. *There* there is continuous smoke and stench and the grotesque sight of demons.

(iii) In addition, thirdly, there is *there* continuedness and everlastingness of punishments; for the punishment is maximal and eternal.

(iv) [And, in addition,] there is *there*, fourthly, universality of punishments, because subsequent to the judgmental verdict the body and the soul and all their members suffer. And these punishments remain ever useless and fruitless, because [even] if one who is damned were to shed as many tears as there is water in the ocean, it would profit nothing.

[11] We need to know that there are four places to which souls go immediately after death: viz., the place of unbaptized children, where there is no sensible pain; another place is Hell; another, Purgatory; another, the Kingdom of Heaven. In these places souls are received according to merit or demerit; and these places are suitable for immaterial substances. Augustine:<sup>59</sup> as often as someone commits, not capital wrongs, but very small wrongs, he will arrive in glory by way of antecedent justice—[arrive] as one who has been purified,<sup>60</sup>

either here or there, either by means of fire or by means of intervening alms-giving and fasting. According to this same [Augustine] venial sins [occur] as often as someone takes more food and drink than is necessary, as often as he is impatient with God's chastisement, as often as he speaks more than is needful, is silent more than is expedient, as often as he entertains evil thoughts without consenting [to them], as often as he is careless with regard to the divine office, as often as he loves earthly things less than he does God [but inordinately]. There is no doubt that these and similar things pertain to very small sins. Although the soul is not damned because of these [sins], nevertheless it is marred as if by pustules and by an ugly scab, so that it is not at all admitted to God's embraces in Heaven, etc.

However, there are gradations both with respect to glory and with respect to punishment. St. Thomas: "No bodies are assigned to souls after death. (The souls would be the forms, and the prescribed movers, of the bodies.) Nevertheless, certain physical places are prescribed for these souls because of a fittingness that accords with their merits. Amid these places souls are, as it were, in a place (in the way in which immaterial things can be in a place) according as they come more near or less near to the First Substance, viz., God, to whom (by considerations of fittingness) a superior place is ascribed. (Scripture declares Heaven to be His abode.)"<sup>61</sup> And so, we say that souls that are enjoying God's presence are there [in Heaven] and that other souls are in the opposite place, etc.

Note an example of gradations in terms of the tree of blood-relationships—[note it] by making the main branch of the tree to be a man who through his demerits moves, by degrees, downwards, [farther away from God], and who through his merits moves, by degrees, upwards, [closer to God].<sup>62</sup> Augustine: As far different as a material fire is from a depicted fire, so different is Hell's fire from a material fire. Hell's flame is so ferocious that all the waters of the world would not diminish its heat in the least. Hugh: This fire, where there is the removal of all hope of salvation, does not need to be fed in order always to burn.<sup>63</sup> Thomas: Wherever the elect are [in the next life], they are amidst gladness and glory; wherever the damned are, they are amidst fire and pain, etc.<sup>64</sup> Either the physical fire burns in a consuming way what is combustible in the soul (because the dross, i.e., what is combustible, can be burned away in Purgatory), or else the defiled soul is as a whole forever being burned unconsumably in Hell.

(d) *Virginity, widowhood, and remedies for licentiousness.*

[12] *Stuprum* is the [extra-marital] deflowering of a virgin.<sup>65</sup> How great a sin it is is recognized from the fact that it is an occasioning of all subsequent fornications, just as he who first breaks down a barrier or breaks a lock is a cause of subsequent losses. ([Here give] examples.) “Virginity transcends the condition of human nature; by means of it human beings are like angels. Angels are alive without flesh; virginity triumphs over the flesh.”<sup>66</sup> For a virgin has [the opportunity] to reflect on things that are of the Lord ...<sup>67</sup> in order by means of inner and outer holiness to be without blemish, thinking on divine things, renouncing the things of the world, being sincerely earnest, having the oil of Heavenly grace. And, thus, a virgin becomes wise while resisting betrothal. [Virginity] is not commanded. According to Jerome,<sup>68</sup> [writing] to Eustochium, that which is not coerced but is offered [freely] is of greater value. It was very difficult to exercise coercion, in opposition to nature, and to wrest from men a life of angels. The Son of God, having entered into the world, instituted a new family in order that He who was adored in Heaven by angels would have angels (viz., virgins) on earth.

Let the speech of a virgin be prudent, modest, non-loquacious, full of decency. Let a virgin be calm, honorable in company-kept. (Keeping bad company causes many evils.) [Let her be] intent on useful prayers and useful works. (Leisure provides occasion for vices.) [Let her] abstain from gluttony, etc. Beware, O Virgins, [for] God, who can do all things, does not renew [the virginity of] a deflowered virgin.<sup>69</sup> Safeguard this treasure, which is greater than every treasure of the world. Take care not to talk about it; for if you proclaim your treasure publicly, you wish to be robbed.<sup>70</sup> Ambrose in *On Virgins* [tells] about that holy virgin who was at Antioch and was brought into a brothel. She prayed as a dove among hawks, etc.... [He tells] about the soldier who freed her by means of a changed garment; and when he was condemned to death, he was freed by her, etc.<sup>71</sup> [Consider] the example of St. Brigit, who asked that a deformity be produced in her.<sup>72</sup> [Consider] also [the example], from the Book *Paradise*, of the girl who wanted to be sundered into small pieces rather than to consent. [There is also the example] of another [virgin], who secluded herself for ten years in order not to be seen, etc.<sup>73</sup> [There is the story] of the beautiful damsel who secluded herself so that no one would be seduced by her beauty and in whose abode Athanasius hid.<sup>74</sup>

[13] How great this sin [of licentiousness] is in the case of reli-



gious virgins is evident. For it is fornication, adultery, *stuprum*, and incest. It is adultery because [the virgin is] the bride of Christ. It is incest because [the sexual relations are] with the wife of our Father, etc. Let [religious] virgins beware of idle time, of the immoderate consumption of food and drink, of disputes and strife, of procuresses (who oftentimes are, in this regard, worse than the Devil, because what he himself cannot do, the procuress accomplishes by her methods. [Consider] the example of the woman whom the husband escorted, and she fell into the mud, etc. The procuress is like a poisonous snake. And so, [procuresses] are cursed, as are serpents; and they are rightly avoided, because they transmit the fire of licentiousness, etc. Christ suffered in order to gain souls. A procuress hands over two souls to the Devil, etc. By the law of the Saxons it was decreed that a virgin who permitted herself [extra-maritally] to be deflowered would be [hung and [buried at her parents' house, and the perpetrator would be strung up above her burial place.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, the Vestal Virgins were entombed alive if they allowed themselves to be deflowered.

[14] Jerome greatly commends widows who are content with one [husband]. He offers examples of many [widows. He mentions] Cato's daughter, who was mourning [the loss of her] husband. When asked what the last day of mourning would be, she replied: "the last day of my life."<sup>76</sup> [Jerome tells] of another [widow] who, when it was recommended to her that she marry for a second time, said: "If I were to find a good [man] .... I already had one, whom I will never lose."<sup>77</sup> But if I [were to find] a bad [man], I would be unhappy. [Jerome tells also] of Porcia and Marcella, etc., and Valeria. Jerome greatly commends widowhood, enumerating—in his letter on widowhood—the many troubles of the second marriage. There [he speaks] about this present [topic]: "Let a widow who does not desire to retain [her widowhood] take a husband rather than taking the Devil."<sup>78</sup> Let a widow beware of bad company, of actors, of singing, of banquets, etc. Let her garments and her life-style agree with her [state of] widowhood, etc.

[15] Let married women beware of adultery, for it is against the sacrament of God, against God, [and] against the law of nature: [viz., "Do not do unto others] that which you do not wish to be done to you."<sup>79</sup> By divine law and by human law adultery is punished by death. Disinheritance of the offspring results. From adultery there also results incest. [Consider] the example of a brother and a sister who had sexual relations with each other and who loved each other very passionately.<sup>80</sup> A lustful mind pursues quite ardently dishonorable things;

it reckons as quite pleasant that which is quite revulsive to God, etc.

[16] The remedies for licentiousness are, [first of all,] to flee what occasions it, e.g., the sight of a woman. David saw [a woman] washing [herself], and he lusted, etc.<sup>81</sup> The wife of Pharaoh cast her eyes upon Joseph ....<sup>82</sup> From the sole of a woman's foot to her head, there is no place that is not full of snares. [Remember] Solomon.<sup>83</sup> "Many have perished because of the comeliness of a woman."<sup>84</sup> [A woman's comeliness] is a fiery sword sending forth arrows from all sides. The eyes are the soul's very swift ravishers. Hence, in Arabia women are veiled, etc. The eyes are to be bound and put into stocks, as are robbers, etc. The eyes are archers that shoot arrows from afar. The eyes are the gateway of the camp: he who controls the gateways controls the camp. And so, if you, O mother, wish to know by whom your daughter is captivated, determine where her eye is, because where one's eye is, there is one's love, etc.<sup>85</sup>

Secondly, [if one is to remedy licentiousness], one must abstain from conversation with women. Ecclesiasticus 9: "Her conversation burns as does fire."<sup>86</sup> It is like a sword that is doubly sharp. [Thirdly,] touching is especially to be avoided. Gregory in his dialogue about the priest who—situated at the point of death and having a concubine who touched him, while the others standing nearby did not know whether or not he was alive—said: "Depart, O Woman, because the small flame is alive. Take away the straw."<sup>87</sup> [Fourthly,] the hearing of lascivious songs and words must be feared. "Depraved communications corrupt good morals."<sup>88</sup> [Fifthly,] dancing must be avoided, because at dances many souls are weakened and captivated as a result of sight and touch, etc. Now, licentiousness is a fire (which is extinguished [or rendered ineffective] either by the removal of the logs or by the application of cold water or by the removal of the cauldron from the fire). Therefore, when you are tempted in thought and deed, inflict on yourself punishments and vexations, just as does he who has burned his fingers. [Sixthly,] remove from your presence food and drink.

One must fight against this vice [of licentiousness] by fleeing. For fire burns straw that has come close. [Licentiousness] is an unclean vice; and so, at the very least, it pollutes. One is better off not to be near the danger, etc. "He who touches pitch shall be polluted from it ...."<sup>89</sup>

Three things usually deceive: women's holiness, self-confidence, and blood-relationship. Love with your mind, not with frequency of physical presence, the woman whom you see living uprightly. Never, [or rarely, let women's feet step into] your guest-chamber ..., etc.<sup>90</sup>

For you are not holier than David or wiser than Solomon or stronger than Sampson. Lust conquers minds of iron, because in the fire even iron melts. Flee blood-related women! Tamar was defiled by her brother.<sup>91</sup> See to it that a man alone not be with a woman alone.<sup>92</sup> For Pharaoh's wife, being alone with Joseph, was tempted, etc. Prayer is effective, as are both study and virtuous activity. If you love a knowledge of letters, you will not love the vices of the flesh. Alms-giving and reflection on death are effective [against licentiousness].

A NOTE ON SIN

[17] Rational creatures were created to understand the Supreme Good [and] by understanding it to love it, by loving it to possess it, by possessing it to enjoy it. But when the will departed from the First Beginning—inasmuch as, by nature, the will was to be guided by the Supreme Good, *in accordance with* the Supreme Good, and *for the sake of* the Supreme Good—then because every sin is a disordering of the mind, actual sin<sup>93</sup> is a disordering. (With respect to the ordering of the mind, virtue and vice came to be.) Either such a disordering destroys the orderedness of justice (and is called a mortal [sin] because it separates from God, by whom the just soul is enlivened), or it does not destroy the orderedness of justice, but [only] disturbs it, and is a venial [sin]. Forgiveness of this [latter kind of sin] can be obtained quickly, because grace is not lost because of this sin, nor is God's enmity incurred. Now, the orderedness of justice ... [stipulates] that an immutable good be preferred to a mutable good, that what is honorable be preferred to what is useful, that God's will be preferred to our will, and that reason's judgment rule over the sensual nature. And since the law of God prescribes this orderedness and forbids the opposite, one who acts against these [decrees] sins mortally. For according to Ambrose "mortal sin is a transgression of divine law and of Heavenly commandments by disobedience."<sup>94</sup> And a sin against the divine law is either a sin of commission or a sin of omission.

Now, if one loves a [given] mutable good more than is due, yet he does not prefer it to an immutable good (and similarly regarding other goods), this [act of love] is not directly against [God's] law; but it does not accord with His law and, thus, is a venial sin. Sensuality does not prevail over right reason unless reason consents to it. And so, mortal sin is not committed as regards reason's [ungiven] consent; but, nonetheless, sin results from the disordered motion of the sensual nature; yet, the sin is venial, because in some manner it does disturb

the order of justice. For because of the opposition between the sensual nature and reason, as a result of original sin: we have the necessity of committing some venial sin on account of the first motions [of the sensual nature]. For venial sins cannot [altogether] be avoided (although all those motions can be partially avoided), for venial sins are sins in such a way that they are also the penalty of sin. And so, for this reason, they are suitable for forgiveness. Reason is not constrained to consent—[constrained] by means of these motions [of the sensual nature]. However, if the consent and the actual deed result, then because the consent reaches “the *man*” (i.e., the highest part of reason), then the sin is a sin in the full sense. But if there is consent only to the delight and not to the deed, then the consent remains in the lower part of reason, and “the *woman*” sins. Accordingly, if reason, amid the sensual delight, obeys the judgment of the senses, then “the woman” obeys the Serpent,<sup>95</sup> and the mortal sin is less grave. Nevertheless, this sin is imputed not only to “the woman” (i.e., to the inferior part of reason) but also to the upper part of reason (i.e., to “the man”), because he ought to have prevented the woman from obeying the Serpent. And so, according to Augustine in Book XI of *On the Trinity* there occurs in every mortal sin an imitation of the first sin, etc.<sup>96</sup>

[18] The disorderedness that is present in a mortal sin has the form of everlastingness; and so, the punishment that corresponds to the sin has the absence of an end-point. Thus, just as man by sinning departed from everlasting life, and just as this sin remains everlastingly with the sinner because of his impenitence, so too everlasting death [remains with him]. And just as man in *his* perpetuity does not put an end to sin, so God in *His* perpetuity does not put an end to the punishment.<sup>97</sup> And just as man sinned against the Infinite, [so too] he is punished infinitely. And because on account of his incapability he cannot be punished infinitely in an *intensive* way, he is punished infinitely in terms of *duration*. And just as the will of him who has committed mortal sin always after death clings to evil without the undertaking of penance, so too God always punishes without change of sentence, since the perpetuity of the disorderedness requires this [punishment] in the case of the damned. In the case of mortal sin there is delight together with contempt [for God]; and so, the place of punishment is opposite to the place of glory: i.e., the [punishment takes place] in Hell, where [the soul] is punished by means of a material fire. Because of a divine infusion man is afraid of the Devil, to whom he is at that time sensually bound. Similarly, he fears the punishment, etc. The Judge

condemns men in different ways in accordance with the quality of the crime—just as by means of one and the same fire straw is burned in one way, wood in another. And because the sin always remains in equal degree, the punishment too remains equal and unchangeable. Because of the turning away from God there is punishment by means of the absence of one’s vision [of God]; because of the turning to creatures there is the punishment from the material fire; because of the battle between the will and reason there is the punishment from them both. Etc.

PART TWO

*The Grace of Justification [Expounded] by means of a Dialogue*

[19] “Why, O Mary, after having entered, do you throw yourself to the ground, and weep, at the feet of the Lord?” She answers: “Because I seek grace . . .,” etc. Four things are required for enlivening someone wicked: [viz.,] the infusion of grace; the expelling of guilt; contrition; and the movement of free choice. Guilt is expelled by the gift of God—yet, not without free choice. Through freely-given grace free choice is recalled from evil and is motivated toward the good. If [free choice] consents to the grace, and cooperates with the grace, then the grace that makes one pleasing is infused, etc. Sin was not created by God. And nothing is so contrary to God [as is sin], because (1) it turns us away from God by deforming free choice, (2) it destroys [God’s] freely-given gift, and (3) it makes one liable to eternal punishment.

The deforming of the image [of God in man] and the destroying of grace is an annihilation even unto death. And since the offense against God is as great as is God (who is infinite),<sup>98</sup> man does not by his own efforts rise up again unless he is re-created with freely-given life and unless his offense is pardoned. Therefore, only He who is the Creative Source—viz., the Word of the Father—is also the Re-creative Source. Nevertheless, the Word re-forms in such a way that He does not weaken the appointed laws. And so, He does not compel free choice, but, rather, its freedom remains. And so, for the expelling of guilt there is required not only the infusion of grace but also, in the case of adults, consent. [One gives consent] by (1) conforming oneself to the expelling of guilt—[doing so] by means of hatred of all sins. (This hatred we call *contrition*.) And [one gives consent] by (2) conforming oneself to the introduction of grace—[doing so] by means of accepting, and taking delight in, the divine gift. (This [acceptance] we call the *motion of free choice*.) When free choice is motivated by means of freely-given grace, and when it consents and cooperates for

the sake of the grace that makes one pleasing, it arrives in Glory. (Grace cooperates with free choice, even as the rider does with his horse.) Hence, Mary said: “I came as one sick unto the Physician without whom I could not be healed. And I succeeded in kissing His feet and in bathing them with tears.”

[20] “How, O Mary, did you enter?” She answered: “Intrepidly, because I very much needed a doctor. And with humility I ascended, in three stages, unto my Lord’s feet. When I was on earth a fear of being punished for sins imposed itself. I beheld the everlasting reward, and I began to love it. On the one hand, I determined to despise all the goods of the world by means of moderation; and, on the other hand, I determined to have patience amid adversity.

“I ascended to the first stage [of humility] by means of contempt for the world, to the second stage by means of self-renunciation, to the third stage by means of humble love for Christ. And, in this way, I found most assuredly, by the quickest route, that which I was seeking. I wailed and shed volumes of tears so that I might empty myself of water and so that there could enter into me fire—viz., the fire of love—and the firewood of compassion and the victim [to be sacrificed out] of devotion. I brought ointment that was precious, lovely, fragrant—because I was in search of something quite precious in value, quite fragrant in aroma, quite pleasing in loveliness. It was ointment of spikenard, because I humbled myself as a small, fragrant tree of spikenard at the feet of the master, so that my spikenard would yield up its fragrance. I bowed down at the feet of the Lord in order, later, to ascend; I reduced myself to ashes in order to emit my fragrance; I mortified myself in order to rise up again.

“When I mounted up to the first stage, I wept *with tears of remorse* in order to cleanse myself in the sight of so great a King. At the second stage I wept *with tears of compassion* when I stood at the tomb with soothing ointment. I wept at the third stage [*with tears*] *of devotion* when after the Resurrection I found what I had sought; thereupon, my soul was at ease amid the bath of tears. At the first stage I wept because I knew myself to be an unclean sinner, and ‘my eyes sent forth springs of water.’<sup>99</sup> I lamented the habitation of the present life: ‘Woe is me, because my sojourn is prolonged!’<sup>100</sup> I wept because I was afraid of Hell. ‘Weeping, I wept at night’<sup>101</sup> (i.e., amid my sin). At the second stage I wept because I knew that Christ had become incarnate in order to liberate me. And these tears were also my bread day and night.<sup>102</sup> I wept because I had compassion for human

wretchedness. I wept out of longing for our Heavenly home. I sat above the rivers of Babylon, treading under foot the transitory things of the world, and I remembered Sion, our Heavenly home.”<sup>103</sup>

[21] “Why, O Mary, did you not formerly weep? Why have you waited so long?”

Mary: “[I did not weep formerly] because the haughtiness of pride did not allow me to. The high mountains are quite dry, and only the valleys are moist. I was contaminated by earthly things; I had a hardened heart. I, who would not weep, was frenzied and foolish, being exceedingly occupied with other concerns that had to do with pleasures, being desiccated by their heat. My heart was frozen by a multitude of sins—[frozen] until this present day of the heat of the Sun of justice,<sup>104</sup> my Christ. I thought of Anna, ... who, when she had a bitter soul, prayed to the Lord, while weeping copiously; and her prayer was answered.<sup>105</sup> I thought of Ezechias’s [prayers] having been answered because of his weeping.<sup>106</sup> Isaias 28: ‘I saw your tears, and, lo, I have healed you.’<sup>107</sup> Likewise Tobias, likewise Sara, received answered prayers because of their tears. Thus too, Judith;<sup>108</sup> thus too, David: ‘You have placed my tears in Your sight ...,’ etc.<sup>109</sup> And so, I inferred that God is strongly moved by tears. Hence, I approached and wept.”

“O Mary, if this lamenting of yours was penitential, indicate what kind it was and how extensive it was.”

Mary: “It was loving and sorrowful, so that [my] sins displeased [me] by virtue of their being abominating and because of their offense against God. [My lamenting occurred] with such a great degree of sincere sadness that I have never had a greater degree and never could have had. And [my lamenting] was greater than one’s mourning for a lost only-begotten son, because it was mourning for a lost soul. Nothing in this world has displeased me as much as having offended against God; for I have ascended unto God, whom I purposed to love above all other things. My offense against Him was rightly graver to me than all other offenses.”

[22] “O Mary, what did you obtain?”

Mary: “... the forgiveness of sins, happiness, and the receiving of grace. I obtained a new Bridegroom, etc. For by means of my tears the grace of God washed away my soul’s stain and my soul’s unlikeness [to God]. It removed my guilt and punishment; it made of me a bride pleasing to God.”

“O Mary, how great a grace you have found! [It is so great] that

there was removed not only the guilt of, but also the punishment of, all your sins. Consequently, having been freed from [consignment] to Hell and to Purgatory, you expected only glory, in an immediate way [i.e., without intermediate sojourn in Purgatory]. O how great was your contrition! You approached boldly unto the feet of the Lord—of the God and the man—and you kissed them. Tell us for what reason.”

Mary: “I kissed His feet at the first stage of my ascent. I kissed His hands at the second stage—[i.e.,] at the time He was taken down from the Cross. I kissed His mouth in the wilderness.<sup>110</sup> And now, when apprehending Him as a whole, face to Face, I have joined myself to Him in Glory. I kissed His feet by means of a humble turning. While prostrated, I kissed the right foot of His mercy. And the Lord extended to me, in supreme friendship, the foot that up until then had been dreadfully opposed to me, viz., [the foot] of justice and of truth. And by the course of nature a deep love was kindled in me; and, at the same time, the Loving One infused into me love and grace; and He forgave me my many sins, because I had much love. Because of sins my rust-covered soul was greatly contaminated; and a huge fire of love instantly purified [it], etc. All the things that in me were vain have been turned to the worshipping of God. My eyes have shed a fountain of tears for washing His feet. My hair has wiped [His feet]. With the ointment of devotion and of remorse I have anointed [them]. And I—who was a sinner—have been reconstituted into God’s bride; and in me there was planted love, which for as long as I have lived has not ceased to increase very fervently in depth.”

The foregoing points [conclude] the second part.

### PART THREE

#### *The Dialogue Is Continued as regards Love*

[23] Now, [I will say] some things about Mary Magdalene’s great love [*dilectio*] and about love that is *caritas*.<sup>111</sup> In the text “because she loved ...” etc., there is indicated the fervent love (*dilectio*) on the part of Blessed Mary Magdalene. All the things that the Gospel-writer proclaims, in today’s text, that she did indicate nothing other than that she loved very fervently. Indeed, the forcefulness of the love extinguished in her all inordinate desire. For *caritas* is a divine fire that does not allow another fire to burn upon the altar of the Lord, i.e., within a contrite and humbled heart. And so, it has readily burned away all sin, which is contrary to God.

[24] “O Mary, why did the Lord say that you have loved greatly?”



Mary: “The Highest Good, because it is highest, is to be loved supremely. And it is to be supremely enjoyed as Highest Good, and supremely adhered to through love, and [supremely] rested-in as in one’s final goal. Now, then, right and orderly love (*amor*), which is called *caritas*, is directed chiefly unto that Good, which it enjoys and in which it finds rest. And this [enjoyment and repose] are the reason for loving it. Hence, it is that *caritas* chiefly loves that Good as a Good that makes one happy; and, consequently, it loves those things which are suitable to be made happy by that Good; for example, our neighbor and our body can be made happy, together with our spirit. Hence, God, our neighbor, our spirit, and our body are to be loved. But the following order is to be retained: first, God *above us* [is to be loved]; secondly, the spirit *within us*; [then] our next of kin *around us*; and [then] our body *below us* as subjected to us. God is to be loved for His own sake; our spirit is to be loved above all other things that revert unto God; and our neighbor is likewise to be loved; and, lastly, our body, as being the least good, is to be loved.

Now, love is the weight of the mind and is the source of all mental affection—[affection] which is easily directed toward [the mind] itself, is directed toward its neighbor with difficulty, and is elevated unto God with more difficulty. Hence, there is a twofold commandment: one commandment directs [our love] toward God; the other commandment [directs our love] toward our neighbor.<sup>112</sup> For all of the commandments have to do with God or our neighbor; i.e., [they direct us] unto the End or unto that which is a means to the End. And so, [Christ] commands that I love greatly, because *caritas* is the form and the end-goal of the virtues. It unites all the virtues with the Ultimate End, and it binds all things together in an ordinate way, because it has one principal object that is loved. This [object] is the reason for loving all the other things that are destined to be bound, by the bond of love, unto the one Christ, as the Head, and to His body, which contains within itself all of those who are to be saved.<sup>113</sup> For in our eternal Heavenly Homeland God will be all-in-all in assured eternity and in perfect peace. And through love all things will be ordained in a common community and will be indissolubly connected by [that] ordination and will be indissolubly ordered by [that] connection.”

[25] “O Mary, tell us: In what way did you enter into love?”

Mary: “*Caritas* for God was poured forth into my heart through God’s Holy Spirit,<sup>114</sup> for [this pouring forth] is the role of the Holy Spirit. I prepared a dwelling-place for my God, and He dwelt in me by

His very kindly grace, and He motivated me to love Him. He kindled my heart, He aroused my sleeping soul, and He illumined my darkness. I had the Holy Spirit, through whom I loved and without whom I was unable to love. For the [Holy Spirit] alone elevated my soul's affection unto being *caritas* for God. (Without the Holy Spirit this affection is *cupiditas*.)<sup>115</sup> By means of *caritas* the soul is moved unto the End toward whom it tends. All *cupiditas* was extinguished in me so that *caritas* could increase. My soul was moved, by *caritas*, toward enjoying God for His own sake and toward enjoying all other things on account of Him, my Beloved. At first, my soul was moved by *cupiditas* to enjoy all things—[to enjoy them] apart from God and for their own sakes, not for God's sake. Then by the glue of love I clung to God alone when I spurned all things for His sake. Love of the world expels *caritas* for God, and vice versa. It is necessary that he who endeavors to have *caritas* have God, because God is *Caritas* ...," etc.<sup>116</sup>

[26] "O Mary, I understand that earthly things cannot be mingled with love for God; rather, all these [earthly things] must be forgotten. And because the soul cannot exist without love, it was placed among creatures. The soul loves either in an upward direction in the course of being perfected, or in a downward direction, in the course of dying. Since love for the world is delicious, what kept you<sup>117</sup> from loving it?"

Mary: "After I had seen with the eye of the intellect that all created things are vacuous and that all pleasantness, joyousness, power, and wealth—regardless of how they affected me—did not satisfy, because they are mutable: I found that I was in error. And turning about, I sought God alone and found Him whom I have loved, in whom there is all fullness, in whom the inner man senses, without taste, everything delectable; senses, without color, all beauty; without quality, all delightfulness; without tangibility, His kiss and His embrace."

[27] "O Mary, at the second stage [of humility], when you kissed Christ's hand and wailed at His tomb, what experience of *caritas* did you have?"

Mary: "The strength of the Most High increased in me. I returned to recalling the benefits that God had given me, the works of His hands, the fact that He had given me [the gifts of] existing, living, and understanding, and the fact that for my sake He was made a man and gave Himself over to death. And above all else, I recalled that my Beloved gave me the love [*amor*] by which to love Him, so that He bound me to Himself by a very strong bond. 'And my soul melted.'<sup>118</sup>

I lamented very bitterly the times in my past when I was aflame in my filthy lust and did not know my God. I lamented my having squandered so much time. I lamented my being a very unhappy woman—[unhappy] by virtue of the fact that I did not know the Lord. And *caritas* for my God was strengthened in me (1) when I passed over to a knowledge of His existence, His goodness, power, truth, and glory, and (2) when in deepest humility I despised my entire self and recognized that to me, a most base creature, God had given so many goods. I wept with immense joy when I sensed His supreme delightfulness and graciousness—[sensed], viz., that I, a most despicable creature, was bound to Him, and strengthened, by bonds of love. *Caritas* was strengthened in me, in order, at length, to be perfected. I sensed that God is *Caritas*, because since *caritas* was in me, I loved the decrees, and the precepts, of God alone. No knowledge of the world entered into my heart. Whatever pleased God was pleasing [to me]; and whatever was displeasing to God was displeasing to me. When through *caritas* God dwelt in my soul, I loved Him with my whole soul and with all my strength.”

[28] “I know, O Mary, that *caritas* is God’s work and not man’s, even though man has the command to love God. Although of himself man cannot do this, nonetheless he can love in such a way that he loves nothing as much as he loves God or loves nothing more than he loves God. And he can bring it about that in every way possible he conforms himself to love and makes himself fit for love—in spite of the fact that each one does not always achieve that [required] degree of love with his whole soul, mind, and might. Disclose, then, O Consoler, the pathway to love.”

Mary: “Offer a contrite heart and your entire self to God, for God bestows on every living creature a blessing.<sup>119</sup> Let there be in you [both] sorrow for [sins] committed [and] good intent with regard to the future. Listen attentively to God’s word, just as I oftentimes sat at the Lord’s feet listening to His words. Be ready to do a good work. (Love is not idle ..., etc.) These, then, are the signs of the first stage of love.<sup>120</sup>

“But [the following are signs] of a robust degree [of love, i.e., of the second stage of love]: frequent<sup>121</sup> examination of conscience in regard to all mortal and venial [sins]; the reducing of lust; the vital exercise of the spiritual senses (just as the body is shown by the outer senses to be alive, so by the exercise of the inner senses<sup>122</sup> the soul is shown to be alive); the diligent keeping of the commandments; the

exhibiting of the divine truths (even as I, Mary, preached publicly the word of the Lord).”

[29] “O Mary, tell me the signs of the third stage of *caritas* and of the third kiss.”<sup>123</sup>

Mary: “I was dying daily for Jesus, my God, with incentives of love in my heart. The world held no taste for me. I was desirous of being dissolved and of being with Christ.<sup>124</sup> I sought out desert places because all things became worthless to me. I desired to die daily for God<sup>125</sup> or for my neighbor in honor of God. I loved my enemies, and I did good things for them for God’s sake. I underwent all adversities with gladness, and I bore them with patience. I renounced all things by following Christ. With a childlike fear<sup>126</sup> I feared God alone, lest I lose Him as Bridegroom. I emitted deep and intimate mental sighs when the recollection of my Beloved touched the inner recesses of my mind. My love sent forth sighs of love as messengers. My desires were lofty, because I desired only the Most High. My thoughts were languid, because where my treasure was, there was also my heart.<sup>127</sup> Because of the magnitude of my love all things except my Beloved were loathsome to me. I was languishing because I desired Him alone,<sup>128</sup> whom I did not yet have as I desired to. I loved at the first stage of the ladder, i.e., [the stage] in regard to the first kiss, [the kiss] on the feet. I loved fervently at the second stage, viz., with regard to the kissing of the hands; at the third stage I languished. Those who are beginners *love*; those who have advanced *love fervently*; those who have been perfected *languish*.

“I was awaiting in drudgery my dissolution and my being with Christ.<sup>129</sup> Wings of very lofty contemplation were given to me, and manna of Heavenly succulence was given to me for thirty years [while I was] in the desert. I was caught up unto God seven times a day, my body having been elevated from the earth by means of a maximal desire to be with my Beloved. I was expecting, with eagerness, to die for my Beloved and in my Beloved. For when love tends toward the object-loved, nothing else tends more swiftly, more pointedly, more penetratingly, more subtly; for by its nature, love does not rest until, supernaturally, it penetrates the entire depths of the lovable and passes over, as much as it can, unto the whole of the lovable. And so, when the course of this love is impeded or delayed in any way, the whole mind is perturbed and grows weary in waiting. Very frequently I fell into states of ecstatic affection, together with ecstasy of mind; for because of [that] very vehement love I did not belong to myself but

was my Beloved's. I sent forth my spirit so fervently to my Beloved that I was ecstatic in mind. For he who loves perfectly lives not for himself but for God, whom he loves; and he is directed, governed, and instructed, etc., by this Beloved."

[30] "O Woman, you were given two large eagle-wings—[a wing] of affection and [a wing] of intellect—so that you might fly into the desert of contemplation and of penitence, where you placed your nest on the cliffs and tarried among the rocks and the jagged stones. When [you did this], what did you have with you, O Poor one?"

Mary: "I was not poor—I who, in the company of angels, was elevated seven times a day unto contemplating Him whom my soul loved. I had gold that was tested by fire and had iron that was made malleable by fire; I had spiced-wine that was tasty, pungent, and strong, because I loved strongly, prudently, and perseveringly. I had birds of prey, which rarely (except when they prey) touch the ground. I had a large sea-ship that was propelled by the breath of the Holy Spirit. I had a mallet-of-death by means of which I mortified the flesh. I had a fountain, and a well, of living water—water [whose temperature] was opposite to that of the mundane air: the well was cold in the summertime and vice versa. And the bucket for the well's water hung on a tightly-twisted rope, which<sup>130</sup> is strong. I had a fine-specimen of a hunting dog that did not feel the thorns while hunting. My house was of well-baked brick; it was not broken apart by storms and rains. I had fruit-bearing trees—[trees] which had fruit of graciousness, blossoms of honorableness, leaves of truth. I had a wedding dress of wondrous texture and fabric; the dress was very shiny and was red in color; the fire of the Holy Spirit wove it from Christ's blood,<sup>131</sup> etc. I had the bread of angels and manna from Heaven ...," etc.<sup>132</sup>

[31] "O Mary, did you have things other than the aforementioned ones? You were still very impoverished, because for one-who-loves there is peacefulness only in the beloved."

Mary: "The Bridegroom of my soul was always with me. The Lord betrothed me with the remission of sins and with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And His left hand was at the base of my head, and His right hand embraced me. I joined myself to Him, and I pressed myself very closely against Him by the bond of love. And every day I was bound more closely to Him by the bonds of love; and by the fire of love I purified and adorned and illumined my soul's tabernacle, wherein would dwell the Most High, my Beloved. I burned my past filthy wrong-doings with fire, in order that the Most Pure One would find a

suitable place in me. I pondered and reflected on the beauty of my Beloved; and I reflected on the fact that He who is so great and who loved me before I loved [Him] wanted to be loved by me. And the fire of superabundant love burned; and, yet, I was languishing, because I was not loving as I wished to love. But out of the languor there grew love; and the more this fire of love increased, the more my Bridegroom apprehended me by means of a kindlier and clearer spiritual vision and embrace. And when He wanted my soul to be consoled by His love, He inflicted a deeper wound [of love]. And when He kissed me with the kiss of His mouth, the honey and milk beneath His tongue—and the dripping honeycomb of His lips<sup>133</sup>—called forth [in me] an inner desire for kissing more frequently and more deeply, etc.”

[32] “Tell us, O Woman: when seven times a day angels (i.e., desires and affections—flaming ones, very subtle ones, and very deep ones) elevated you upwards from earthly things and toward your Beloved, what were these very fervent affections?”

Mary: “When I turned totally to my Beloved, I asked my love to raise me gently unto a degree of great love.” And Love answered: ‘Consider the love on the part of your Beloved, and consider your Beloved’s nature, which is incomparable to all things because there is no comparative relation of the finite to the infinite.<sup>134</sup> And think of what the union of infinite love with finite love is. No [union is] higher and more wondrous [than the union] of a creature with the Creator.’ Lo, when my intellect and my affection lovingly reflected on these things and lovingly repositied them in my memory, then I ascended to the first stage [of love]. Having returned from this ascent without having been satisfied by it, I requested of Love: ‘Elevate me once again, even higher, to the second stage.’ And Love said: ‘Examine now all the things situated under Heaven—[examine them as to] what kind of things they are in comparison to your Beloved.’ And in viewing their transience, I fled [from them, and] through love of Heavenly things I was elevated unto the second stage [of love]. And I disdained loving any earthly, created things; and amid all created things I loved Him alone. And once again I asked Love to elevate me again—[this time] unto the third stage.”

“And Love said: ‘Reflect on the eternity of your Beloved and on the fact that you will possess Him eternally as your Bridegroom. And you will soon possess Him with all the more gladness, in proportion as the love by which you apprehend Him is the more fervent.’

“And I was elevated. Continual perseverance increased in me,

with the result that I increased continually in love. And, once again, Love elevated me by means of an inseparable love, for I was not able at any time fully to explore the goodness of my Beloved, etc. And I was ever contemplating [it]. And, once again, I asked that Love elevate me by means of a [still] higher degree [of love].”

“And [Love] replied: ‘God, your Bridegroom (who is a very subtle Spirit, who is omnipotent, and who is the Creator of all things) is united to one who loves Him—[united] with an embrace that is the tighter the more spiritual the one-who-loves has become. And the more the loving-one suffers for the Beloved’s sake, the more the Beloved reciprocates [that love].’

“And I was elevated unto the desire to be free from this present fleshly body and to be honored with martyrdom for the sake of my Beloved. Then I once again asked Love, a sixth time, to elevate me still more highly unto the delightfulness of love.”

“And Love said to me: ‘Do you sense that your Beloved is within you?’ And I replied: ‘I do, but only a little.’ And Love said: ‘Multiply your affection and your understanding, as regards the demands of your Beloved.’ And I did so, and I ascended; but, still, I was not completely filled with love—because the more I ascended, the more insatiable my love grew to be. And since I still was hungering insatiably much, I asked Love to elevate me still higher unto my Beloved. And this seventh time Love elevated me most highly of all. And after out of maximal hunger I had begun most avidly to taste, somewhat, the deliciousness of my Beloved: my desire was most fervently inflamed. For I was now much hungrier than before; and my Beloved wounded my heart, and I was languishing because I did not possess my Beloved as a whole, as I was desirous of doing.

“And all the senses of my body were paralyzed within me, because my soul was occupied with my Beloved, asking Him (to whom my soul was indissolubly bound) not thus to wound [me]. And my soul turned again, intermittently, to its work, so that [once again] it produced motion in [the body’s] members, without, nevertheless, having withdrawn from its Beloved. And it wanted to admit of no consolation, because all things were, as far as it was concerned, dead; and only its Beloved, who had wounded it, was, as far as it was concerned, alive. This love is like one who has extreme thirst, whose thirst would not diminish—no matter what portion of wine be given to him for drinking. Rather, he would thirst all the more; and his thirst would never be quenched—unless he were to imbibe the world’s entire sup-

ply of wine. In such a way I ascended daily; and I drank [of love] more and more; and more and more I thirsted. I went around wounded so that I might die from love; but I was unable to die. The more I sought to die of love, the more love was alive within me. I asked of Love that it would bring me to death rather than afflict me with so many wounds and with so much lack of strength.

[33] “And, lo, after Love had terrified me for thirty years and then, at last, had made me languid, it determined to grant my wish because I served it faithfully. And it led me, in spirit, throughout the whole world, in order that I might see how my Beloved is so little known and so little honored in the world. It led me throughout idolaters, blasphemers, the proud, the envious, etc. It led me—throughout all the places of the world—unto wars, schisms, hypocrites, adulterers, so that I envisioned only the gloom of dishonor and of baseness and of sin-against-my Beloved, so that I would die. I was greatly tormented, and I was languishing; but I still could not die. Love led me unto Hell, in order for me to see how many souls were there—[souls] created in the image of God but [now] eternally dead—and how relatively few souls were saved. And I was afflicted with very great sorrow; but I did not die.

“And my Beloved<sup>135</sup> asked me: ‘Do you fully wish to die in love?’ And I replied: I desire this only: that I may live in You alone. And He said to Love: ‘Lead my beloved to Jerusalem.’ And Love led me to Jerusalem, and there I beheld the holy city of Jerusalem and the very many holy lovers of God. I saw the glorious Virgin Mary together with many lovers of God. I saw Christ as having been born and as on the Cross. And after I had seen my Beloved on the Cross, a weakness-unto-death beset me, because I saw my altogether just, kind, pleasing Beloved, and Loving One, most abjectly hanging [on the Cross] and now exercising the will to die; and I thought myself unable to leave. And I asked Love (1) not to let me see my Beloved die, because I would die, but that (2) Love first of all feed me with the Beloved,<sup>136</sup> so that then I would die in my Beloved. And, lo, my Beloved arranged through a certain hermetic priest that Maximinus would transmit to me, in church, the Body of Christ, my Beloved. This Body I most eagerly received, being elevated, in mind and body, from the earth towards Heaven. And after I had received it, I asked Love<sup>137</sup> to transport me *from* that moment *unto* [the time of] Christ’s death. Love commanded: ‘Enter the tomb.’ And I entered.

“After I had entered, Christ’s Love led me, in spirit, unto [that]



most bitter death of my Beloved. And together with my Beloved, I died continually in love. And, straightway, Love buried me in my Beloved and together with my Beloved. But suddenly my Beloved—with whom my soul was united in love—arose. And He led me unto an eternal Heavenly Homeland, where now I eternally possess my Beloved in the full satisfying of hunger.”

May Christ Jesus, true God and true man, lead us unto this [Heavenly] beauty and enjoyment! Amen.<sup>138</sup>

## NOTES TO SERMON VII

1. Luke 7:47.
2. I Peter 4:8.
3. Luke 7:39 and 48.
4. Mark 16:9.
5. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, XXXIII, 1 (PL 76:1239).
6. Cf. Luke 10:33-34.
7. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 16:6-10.
8. Ambrose, *De Paradiso*, VIII, 39 (PL 14:309B).
9. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, I, 16, 35 (PL 32:1240).
10. Augustine, *De Duabus Animabus*, XI, 15 (PL 42:105).
11. Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, XXII, 27 (PL 42:418).
12. Wisdom 14:9 (not Wisdom 9).
13. Micheas 7:19 (Micah 7:19), not Matthew 8.
14. Genesis 14:21.
15. Job 1:7.
16. I Peter 5:8.
17. Job 40:18.
18. I John 2:16 (not I John 1): “All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ....”
19. Canticle of Canticles 6:12 (Song of Solomon 6:13).
20. Proverbs 18:3 (not Proverbs 1).
21. Isaias (Isaiah) 30:9-11.
22. Wisdom 2:21.
23. Amos 5:10.
24. Proverbs 7:22.
25. I have recast the syntax of this Latin sentence of Cusa’s so as to give it the intended sense and emphasis. See Thomas Aquinas, *In Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, Book IV, Distinction 14, Question 2, Article 1b, corpus [p. 499, column 3 of Vol. I of *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: F. Frommann, 1980 (Vol. I)].
26. This is Anselm’s view in the *Cur Deus Homo*. See Book I, Chapter 14.
27. Psalms 91:5 (92:4).
28. Jerome, *Translatio Homiliarum Origenis*, 6 (PL 637A). See also John 8:44.
29. Hugh of Folieto, *De Claustro Animae*, I, 2-3 (PL 176:1023A-B).
30. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, IV, 27, 49 (PL 75:661).
31. Matthew 9:23-25. John 11:38-44.
32. Matthew 5:28: “... he who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
33. Ephesians 5:4.
34. Proverbs 6:26 (not an exact quotation).
35. Habacuc (Habakkuk) 1:15, not Habacuc 2.
36. As defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a Greek fire is “a combustible composition for setting fire to an enemy’s ships, works, etc.; so called from being first used by the Greeks of Constantinople.”

37. Here (at 9:21) I am reading “navi” in place of “nautae”.
38. Luke 15:11-16.
39. III Kings 11:4 (I Kings 11:4), not III Kings 6.
40. Ecclesiastes 7:27 (7:26).
41. Here (at 9:33) I am surmising that “quinalis” is the intended meaning and the “quinquennalis”, found in the manuscripts and in the printed edition, is a mistake.
42. Job 24:15 (not Job 23).
43. *De Vitis Patrum*, VI, 3, 18 (PL 73:1014).
44. Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo* 104, 5 (PL 39:1947).
45. Matthew 8:12.
46. Isaias (Isaiah) 66:24.
47. Isaias (Isaiah) 66:24.
48. Isaias (Isaiah) 3:24. See also Psalms 10:7 (11:6).
49. Job 24:19.
50. Isaias (Isaiah) 65:13. Luke 16:24.
51. Matthew 22:13.
52. Matthew 18:34.
53. Job 10:22.
54. Matthew 22:13.
55. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, IX, 65, 97 (PL 75:912).
56. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, IX, 66, 100 (PL 75:914B - 915A).
57. Here (at 10:26) I am reading “formidine” in place of “fortitudine”.
58. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, IX, 66, 100 (PL 75:915A).
59. Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo* 104, 3 ff. (PL 39:1946-1947 and 1949).
60. Here (at 11:12) I am reading “purgatus” in place of “purgatis”.
61. See Thomas Aquinas, *In Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, Book IV, Distinction 45, Question 1, Article 1a, corpus [p. 651, column 2 of Vol. I of *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: F. Frommann, 1980 (Vol. I))].
62. See *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, edited by Aemilius Friedberg [Leipzig, 1879 (2nd edition of Vol. I), columns 1425-1426]. Note the diagram in the Appendix of the present volume of translations.
63. Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacramentis*, II, 16, 4 (PL 176:586B).
64. Thomas Aquinas, *In Sententias*, IV, Distinctio 44, q. 3, a. 3, q<sup>1a</sup> ad 8<sup>m</sup>.
65. “*Stuprum*,” sometimes signifying *rape*, here has the meaning that Nicholas explicitly assigns to it. The act of *stuprum* may or may not be accompanied by the consent of the maiden.
66. Re I Corinthians 7:26: see *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Interlineari, Ordinaria, et Nicolai Lyrani Postilla, eiusdemque Moralitatibus, Burgensis Additionibus, et Thoringi Replicis*, Vol. VI (Venice, 1588), f. 43<sup>va</sup>F.
67. I Corinthians 7:34.
68. Jerome, *Epistola* 22 (Ad Eustochium), n. 20 (PL 22:407).
69. Jerome, *Epistola* 22 (Ad Eustochium), n. 5 (PL 22:397).
70. Gregory the Great, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*, XI, 1 (PL 76:1115A).
71. Ambrose, *De Virginibus*, II, 4, 26-32 (PL 16:225C - 228A).
72. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, Chap. CCIII (De sancta Brigida). Edited by Johann Graesse (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1969). See p. 902.
73. *Heraclidis Paradisus*, c. 1 (PL 74:255A).

74. *Heraclidis, Paradisus*, c. 51 (PL 74:334C - 335B).
75. *Lex Saxonum* II, 26. See *Leges Saxonum*, p. 63<sup>b</sup> of Vol. V of *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hannover, 1889).
76. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, I, 46 (PL 23:288B).
77. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, I, 46 (PL 23:288C).
78. Jerome, *Epistola* 79 (Ad Salvinam), n. 10 (PL 22:732).
79. Tobias 4:16. Cf. Matthew 7:12.
80. II Kings 13:1-14 (II Samuel 13:1-14).
81. II Kings 11:2 (II Samuel 11:2).
82. Genesis 39:7 (not Genesis 29, which Nicholas writes).
83. III Kings 11:4 (I Kings 11:4).
84. Ecclesiasticus 9:9.
85. Cusa, *De Visione Dei* 4 (11:3). Cf. Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Minor* 13 (PL 196:10). Richard writes “ubi amor, ibi oculus.” By contrast, Nicholas writes “ibi amor, ubi oculus” (in *De Visione Dei*) and “ubi oculus, ibi amor” in the present sermon.
86. Ecclesiasticus 9:11.
87. Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum Liber*, IV, 11 (PL 77:336B - 337A).
88. I Corinthians 15:33.
89. Ecclesiasticus 13:1.
90. Jerome, *Epistola* 52 (Ad Nepotianum), n. 5 [PL 22:531: “Hospitiolum tuum aut raro aut nunquam mulierum pedes terant ....” Etc.]. See also PL 22:532.
91. II Kings 13:1-21 (II Samuel 13:1-21).
92. Jerome, *Epistola* 52 (Ad Nepotianum), n. 5 [PL 22:532: “Solus cum sola, secreto, et absque arbitro, vel teste, non sedeas.” ]
93. *Actual sin* is to be contrasted with *original sin*.
94. Ambrose, *De Paradiso*, 8, 39 (PL 14:309B).
95. The Serpent symbolizes the Devil. Apocalypse 12:9 (Revelation 12:9).
96. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XII, 12, 17 (PL 42: 1007-1008). Not *De Trinitate* XI, as Nicholas writes.
97. God’s perpetuity is eternity; man’s perpetuity is sempiternity, i.e., everlastingness.
98. This thought derives from St. Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo* but is different from Anselm’s view. See *Cur Deus Homo* II, 15.
99. Psalms 118:136 (119:136).
100. Psalms 119:5 (120:5).
101. Lamentations 1:2.
102. Psalms 41:4 (42:3).
103. Psalms 136:1 (137:1).
104. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
105. I Kings 1:10 (I Samuel 1:10).
106. IV Kings 20:3 (II Kings 20:3). Ezechias is Hezekiah.
107. Isaias (Isaiah) 38:5 (not Isaias (Isaiah) 28).
108. Judith 13:6.
109. Psalms 55:9 (cf. 56:9).

110. Cf. Hugh of Balma, *De Theologia Mystica*, the beginning of the section on the *via unitiva*. See p. 61 of J. Hopkins, translator and introducer, *Hugh of Balma on Mystical Theology: A Translation and an Overview of His De Theologia Mystica* (Minneapolis: Banning, 2002).

111. In general, Nicholas uses “*caritas*,” “*dilectio*,” and “*amor*” interchangeably. In this present section, however, he uses “*caritas*” to signify a higher kind of love (viz., love of God) that is contrasted with *cupiditas*. This distinction is reminiscent of Augustine. See n. 115 below.

112. Matthew 22:36-40.

113. Cf. Colossians 1:18.

114. Romans 5:5.

115. See Anders Nygren’s splendid exposition of Augustine’s distinction between *caritas* and *cupiditas*: *Agape and Eros*, translated by Phillip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953).

116. I John 4:8.

117. Here (at 26:7) I am reading “*retraxit*” in place of “*setraxit*”.

118. Cantic of Canticles 5:6 (cf. Song of Solomon 5:6).

119. Psalms 144:16 (cf. 145:16).

120. Here Nicholas uses (the genitive of) “*amor*,” even though in speaking of the third stage of love he uses “*caritas*.”

121. Here (at 28:19) I am reading “*frequens*” in place of “*fervens*.”

122. Whereas Augustine and Anselm speak singularly of one inner sense, Nicholas follows Aquinas in considering there to be more than one inner sense, just as there is more than one outer sense.

123. The third kiss is the kiss on the lips. See n. 110 above.

124. Philippians 1:23.

125. Cf. I Corinthians 15:31.

126. Cf. Psalms 33:12 (34:11).

127. Matthew 6:21.

128. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 5:8.

129. Philippians 1:23.

130. Here (at 30:21) I am reading “*in fune bene torto qui*” in place of “*in fune bene torta quae*”.

131. Here (at 30:30) there is a textual problem. I am reading “*quam ex Christi sanguine ignis Sancti Spiritus contexit*” in place of “*quam ex Christi glutino ignis Sancti Spiritus contexit*”. The Paris (1514) edition of the Latin text reconstructs it more intelligibly. In English translation the Paris edition would read: “... the fire of the Holy Spirit had fashioned the garment and had colored it by means of Christ’s blood.”

132. Psalms 77:24-25 (78:24-25).

133. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 4:11.

134. Cusa, *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 3 (9). Nicholas adopts this formula from Hugo of Strassburg (*Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, I, 16, beginning). Hugo’s *Compendium*, once misascribed to Bonaventure, is found in Vol. VIII of the printed edi-

tion *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* (Paris: Vivès, 1866).

135. The Latin word here (at 33:19) is “*amicus*”. But at 33:42 “*amicus*” (in the accusative case) denotes not Christ, the Beloved, but personified Love. See n. 137 below.

136. The allusion here is to the eucharist.

137. Here (at 33:42) “*amicum*” denotes love qua personified. See n. 135 above.

138. Here I omit translating the section (in the printed Latin text) entitled by the editors “*Memoriale*.” This short section consists only of a kind of outline that may have been of help to Nicholas when preaching. It adds nothing to the sermon but is, rather, thematically repetitive.

### Sermon VIII: Signum Magnum

(“A great sign ...”)

[August 15, 1431; feast-day of the assumption of Mary;  
preached perhaps in Koblenz]

[1] “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, the moon being under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” ...”<sup>1</sup>

Although from the beginning and origin of the world God made there to be signs and great wonders on earth, nevertheless on this day a great sign appeared in heaven—[on this day] (1) when the Queen of the world, the most blessed Virgin Mary passed from this wretched world into Glory, passed from exile into our Heavenly Home, passed from toil into rest, and (2) when in a marvelous manner, [and adorned] with a surely quite excellent and quite stunning wreath [of twelve stars], she was exalted from humble poverty and was caught up to the Throne of the everlasting kingdom. Indeed, *to the angels* [this] was a reverent sign, because (1) the daughters of supernatural Sion saw her and declared her most blessed and (2) the queens praised her<sup>2</sup> (rather, all the rich among the people adored her).<sup>3</sup> *To the demons* it was a sign of sorrow. For on this day (according to a simile in the Book of Kings) the Philistines (who symbolize those who fall as a result of drink)—i.e., the devils, who once were drunk with pride—fell as lightning from the sky.<sup>4</sup> When they heard that the Ark of the Testament had come into the camp of Israel, they were smitten with terror and they groaned, saying: “Woe to us!”<sup>5</sup> *To men* it was a sign of assurance. For now we can have the assurance of approaching more closely unto the throne of Christ’s grace; for Mary is the Mother of mercy, the mediator established by God between Christ and the sinner—just as Christ, her son, is the Mediator between God and men. And because this woman who is blessed among all<sup>6</sup> is exalted above all choirs and is all-lovely,<sup>7</sup> she is so great and so full of all grace and glory that if all created things under Heaven were transformed into tongues, they would not at all be able sufficiently to sing her praises. And so, in order that we may nonetheless apprehend something in accordance with our measure, let us invoke her with a pious mind for the sake of our salvation, etc.

[2] A great sign ..., etc. At this present time we see that the whole world is disposed toward wars. Hence, I will say a word about

war. The words of our theme [“A great sign . . .,” etc.] are customarily expounded in regard to the most blessed Virgin Mary and her glorification and in regard to God’s holy Church and its foundation. Hence, I am going to speak of two things, in accordance with a twofold exposition, in the following order: First, [I will speak] about the most blessed Virgin’s war against the world and about her military service (the life of man on the earth is military service) and about her victory and her reward. Secondly, [I will speak] about the war of the entire Church militant on behalf of its Bridegroom,<sup>8</sup> whom it will obtain in Heaven after its triumph. (In Heaven it will be perpetually united, as triumphant, to its vanquishing Bridegroom.)

*PART ONE*

*Mary’s War against the World and Her Victory and Reward*

(a) *The New Jerusalem is likened to Mary.*

[3] To begin with, I will take the Gospel-text “Jesus entered . . .,” etc.<sup>9</sup> This Gospel-text is written about two sisters, Mary and Martha, through whom two ways of life are signified. However, the Gospel writers say nothing about the glorification of the Virgin Mary; yet, [the Gospel-text] befits the Virgin Mary perfectly in a mystical sense, inasmuch as, more than all other holy men and women, she has chosen the best part. [It befits her] insofar as she is the Shelterer of the Lord and as regards her twofold life, [viz.,] active and contemplative. Hence, on this very high feast-day I have taken<sup>10</sup> this Gospel-passage in a mystical sense (1) in accordance with the excellence and the merit of our pilgrim journey and (2) in accordance with the superabundant grace and the reward of our Heavenly Home, both of which are signified in the Gospel-passage.

[4] Indeed, from the beginning of the world, when errant man was expelled from the state of Paradise into this present exile: Eternal Wisdom, wanting to lead man back unto His Holy City, first considered choosing an abode for Himself on earth—[an abode] in which to dwell. And in order that He might instruct these men in spiritual warfare and might bring—with a strong hand and as their Leader [and] by His own blood—[these] exiles back into His own Holy City, He sought for a long time a dwelling place suitable for His habitation. And He did not find a worthy place of lodging until He saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descending from Heaven as a bride adorned for her Husband<sup>11</sup>—i.e., [until He saw] most blessed Mary, adorned and



bedecked from on high with all virtue. [5] Therefore, when the fullness of the time of salvation came, He entered into this particular castle, chosen above all others. [It was a castle] small with humility, maximal in immensity of virtues and of graces—indeed, of such great magnitude that the measuring angel for holy Ezechiel was scarcely able to measure its size.<sup>12</sup> O if only someone would rightly describe for us the gates of this city—its moats, its walls, its towers, its fortifications, its bulwarks, houses, and palaces! Then we could see how lovely and becoming, how strong and fortified this holy Jerusalem was.

God looked upon the twelve stones of this city's foundation, viz., the twelve stages of humility. He looked upon the very deep [protective] moats, viz., obedience: "Let it happen to me in accordance with Your word."<sup>13</sup> He looked upon the wall, viz., the unassailable chastity that excluded every inordinate desire. He looked upon the outer wall, viz., moderation; upon the fortifications, viz., sobriety and modesty; upon the tower, viz., courage, by means of which she was altogether protected from all dreadful opponents and against all hardships. There were bulwarks: magnanimity, patience, long-suffering, grandeur, perseverance. By the "*streets* through which one proceeds" we understand justice. Hence, he who walks in the paths of justice ..., etc.<sup>14</sup> Through justice one rightly approaches God and one's neighbor. By "*consistory*" we understand practical wisdom. By "*gate*" [we understand] the faith by which the King of Glory enters. Elizabeth said: "Blessed are you, [Mary], who have believed ..., " etc.<sup>15</sup> By "*chamber*" we understand hope: "In peace—in that very thing—[I will sleep] ..., etc., since You singularly [have settled me] in hope."<sup>16</sup> By "*dining room*" we understand love; there Mary's soul is refected by the fruits of the Spirit, and there the Lord Himself is refected. By "*houses*" we understand the soul's powers, etc. The name of the castle is "Bethany," which means "house of obedience," "house of God's gift," and "house gratifying to the Lord." These three [labels] befit no created person as excellently as they befit Mary. Accordingly, "Bethany" is said *qua* *autonomasia*,<sup>17</sup> etc. According to Anselm some men think [the castle] to have been [named] "Magdalus," which means "largeness of tower."<sup>18</sup>

[6] Or [think of it] this way: For a long time [Eternal Wisdom] sought a worthy dwelling-place; but He found one only at the predestined time of salvation. At that time He saw the new city of Jerusalem, etc. And within this new and adorned city He saw a bride adorned for her Husband.<sup>19</sup> And from the Father's citadel He was sent to dwell

therein. Now, that new city was wonderful. It was strong by virtue of its very deep moats. It had, on the left, a valley of pathways descending from one side of the world and, on the right, the very lofty mountain of the Celestial City of Paradise. The [new] castle, or city, was situated on a hillside of that mountain, and it had thorn-bushes and rocks on the valley-side and had running water in front of its gate. Now, the valley was large and spacious, uneven, full of asymmetries [and] roarings; and because of strong winds of misfortune it did not offer a foothold. And there was in another part of the valley a downward-sloping pit; and into it slid many people, heedlessly, every day. For the descent to the pit seemed pleasant. And the inhabitants of the valley were attracted, by many pleasures and delights, toward descending in the direction of the bottomless pit. And after they had tasted just a little of the pleasantness, then in the [false] belief that they were on safe footing, they fell and perished forever.

[7] Now, the entire valley was on the pit's roadway. There was no sure way leading upwards from the valley; rather, the journey to the castle, which Solomon had built for himself, was through desert and rocks. And the wall that surrounded the castle was high, unassailable, and very strong. And [the castle] had an outer-wall with many bulwarks. And it had seven gates, the most outer of which was leaden; the next one was made of stagnum; the third, of iron; the fourth, of copper; the fifth, of bronze; the sixth, of silver; the seventh, of gold. And each gate had its own guards. And after the seventh gate there were four steps by means of which one reached the courtyard of the castle. And these four steps were made of precious stones, and the steps were guarded. And at each step those who were permitted access were outfitted and adorned with fitting armor, so that they would be worthy to approach the palace and the courtyard. And the courtyard was paved with a variety of precious jewels and was elevated upon seven pillars, because it belongs to the house of wisdom, which has hewn out seven pillars.<sup>20</sup> And above each pillar a banner was raised in the courtyard, and in the middle of the courtyard there was a very tall banner of the Cross. There were two bridges between this courtyard and the pathway of ascent unto the City of Paradise; and by way of the bridges one arrived at the pathway that led upwards to the City of Eternal Paradise that was situated on the mount; and there was no other pathway. By means of this pathway of love Jesus came down [from the Heavenly City] to the castle, viz., to Bethany, i.e., to the House of obedience and of God's gift, the House made pleasing to God. And this Bethany was

an edifice built on marvelous pavement in the middle of the courtyard beneath the banner of the Cross. This Bethany was adorned with all precious stones and was located, above the pillars and metallic gates, in the midst of the banners. And *this Bethany was the Virgin Mary*, all-lovely and as choice as the sun.<sup>21</sup>

(b) *By the example of the sisters Mary and Martha it is illustrated how contemplation and the active life are constituted.*

[8] Indeed, in this Bethany there were created two sisters—i.e., two supernatural powers freely given by God to the soul of Mary—viz., Martha and [Mary] Magdalene,<sup>22</sup> i.e., a practical, or active, power and a contemplative power. The first [sister was] Martha. This [name], in Hebrew, is the same as “calling forth” or “stimulating”; and in syriac it is the same as “giving.” For the active power has to summon all the powers (including corporeal powers) that are subject to it—[summon] them to obey it in the case of good deeds. Yea, rather, it often has to stimulate them at a time when these lower powers obey their own inclination and have a certain complaining reluctance, and melancholy disinclination, to obey reason. But [the active power] also has to give—in the case of works of mercy—whatever love for God or for neighbor requires. (But [the name] “Mary Magdalene” is understood as “illuminated tower.” For the lofty illumination of the contemplative life is given by God to the soul.) Martha, through the exercising of good works, has to remove all vices, if she finds any; and she has to aim at acts of moral virtue by means of which one is rightly ordered both to oneself and to one’s neighbor.

The second [sister, viz., Mary], having put aside all cares, is fervent with desire to see the Face of her Creator, according to Blessed Gregory.<sup>23</sup> It is important to her, as Gregory says, to retain with her whole mind love for God and neighbor and to adhere only to a desire for knowledge [of God]. Contemplation of divine truth pertains to [such] knowledge, which is, especially, the end of all human life. Secondly, a contemplation of divine operations pertains to this same thing, insofar as by means of those operations we are led to contemplate God, in that “the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood through those things which have been made.”<sup>24</sup>

[9] Now, the woman Martha received Jesus into her house; i.e., by means of a most devout power [the Virgin] Mary received Jesus, offering to Him an undefiled spirit, so that in it He might be nourished by her sacred affections—yea, rather, so that He might be delighted,

He whose delight is to be with the sons of men.<sup>25</sup> She presented a virginal womb in order that He might be incarnated within it. However, the other sister, [viz., Martha's sister] Mary, sat at the Lord's feet [and] heard His word. That is, through a contemplative power [the Virgin] Mary was most excellently devoted to divine contemplation, retaining all that she had heard outwardly about the Lord Jesus or had derived inwardly, gathering it into her heart.<sup>26</sup> In the foregoing words three things are touched upon that are requisite to contemplation: (1) [First of all is] rest, because Mary sat. But rest ought to be not only outer rest but also inner rest—[freedom] from passions and from the roamings of apparitions. For the mind must be tranquil; hence, there is said: "Be still and see that I am God."<sup>27</sup> "His place was made in peace."<sup>28</sup> For in finding rest the soul is made wise.

(2) Secondly, contemplation ought to be engaged in at the Lord's feet—i.e., by reference to the sacred *humanity* by which He made contact with earthly things. From the feet one must ascend unto contemplating the *divinity*, which, with Paul as witness, is Christ's head. Furthermore, by "right foot" we must understand *divine goodness*; and by "left foot" we understand *divine grandeur*, with regard to His governing and ordering perceptible and corporeal creatures in this lower world. And so, in our contemplation we must begin from earthly things. (3) Thirdly, [contemplation] ought to hear the word of the Lord; i.e., the one contemplating ought to rely not upon his own senses but rather upon divine, revealed faith. For there are many things to which weak and restricted reason cannot attain. They must be believed only by faith as being things revealed from [God's] mouth.

[10] "But Martha was busy about much serving"; i.e., [the Virgin] Mary<sup>29</sup> was quite occupied with often serving the Lord. First, she served up to the Holy Spirit (when she was fourteen years old) the very pure blood of her own substance, from whence would be produced a body altogether worthy of Jesus. She carried [Him] in her womb for nine months; and amid a very chaste womb He rested as does a king on his reclining couch. She nourished [Him] with her virginal blood, and she conducted Him to due growth until the time He proceeded from her as a bridegroom from his bridal chamber.<sup>30</sup> Thereupon the child-bearing Virgin fed with milk one who was crying for the bread of angels; she revived one who was hungering for the bread of Heaven on our behalf and who was thirsting because of His impoverishment. With her own garments she clothed [Him who is] the Jewel of the blessed, who was experiencing cold. With her consola-

tions she made glad [Him who is] the Gladness of all the saints, when He was crying and experiencing distress. She carried in her arms [Him who is] the Strength of God [but who was] made weak for our sakes. Fleeing, she carried into Egypt [Him who is] God, the King of all the earth, who was experiencing the persecution of Herod the Tyrant; [and] when Herod was dead, she returned. Hence, throughout the entire period-of-life in which the Lord Jesus was seen on earth and conversed with men,<sup>31</sup> [this] pious mother did not abandon Him. Rather, weeping when He wept, rejoicing when He rejoiced, suffering when He suffered, ministering as much as she could to Him in His need, she followed Him even to the gallows of the Cross—not leaving Him until the closing of the sepulcher separated her who was alive from Him who was dead. Let someone fittingly recount all that the most blessed Virgin did during her active life, including both before the Conception and after the Resurrection, until the day she was caught up unto Glory!

[11] But [Martha] persisted in this active life, rendering herself helpful and ready to serve. And she said: “O Lord, are You unconcerned that my sister leaves me to serve all alone?” [It is] as if she were to say: “O Lord, whom no creature suffices to serve fully, who worked all things for Your own sake so that all things would serve You! O Lord, while ministering by way of an active life, I am often disturbed because my sister, whom I see to be at leisure, does not help me. And my sister is pleasantly delighted in her leisure; so when I see this delight, I am perturbed amid my activity. Therefore, tell her to help me.” [It is] as if [Martha] were to say: “My soul’s activity is inclined more toward ministering than wishing to be directed toward contemplating divine secrets. And so, the activity desires that the soul be completely occupied with serving.”

But the Lord quickly settles this loving dispute. For He says, “Martha, Martha”—He says it twice because of the twofold works of mercy: spiritual works and corporeal works—“you are concerned and troubled about many things.<sup>32</sup> You do well, but you are troubled. Your work has an added perturbation. But [only] one thing is necessary<sup>33</sup>—that thing, namely, which is the final-goal of all those things regarding which you are troubled. And this one thing your sister Mary has chosen to obtain. She has chosen to cling to this one thing by *contemplating* and *enjoying*. Therefore, Mary has chosen the best part, viz., the contemplative life, since she is content with the one necessary, best, very pleasing, very sufficient, most final good. This part will not be removed from her.<sup>34</sup> For the contemplative life begins here below; but

it will be perfected in the future, when it will continue forever. But your [present] life of turmoil, which is not focused on the one necessary thing but on many transient things, will be removed.”

[12] And here below the contemplative life is said to be the best life, because, principally, it has to do with the Best Object [viz., God]; and, secondarily, it has to do with that Object’s works, insofar as in them God’s wisdom and goodness shine forth. Therefore, this [contemplative] life is exercised through the nobler power, viz., the intellect; and so, it perfects man in accordance with his noblest part. However, man is perfected in the eternal Heavenly Homeland, because there the God of gods will be seen face to Face in Sion.<sup>35</sup> In this Heavenly Home there is no one who is destitute, wretched, or poor; nor is there disquietude or strife. Hence, there is no exercise of the active life there. And although the contemplative life is unqualifiedly better than is the active life, nevertheless in certain respects the operation of the active life happens to be better; and in particular instances it is to be preferred because of the needs of the present life—as wine is unqualifiedly a better drink than is water, though sometimes water is preferred. Hence, Gregory [says]: “[As for] those who tenderly desire the citadel of contemplation: it is necessary that they prove themselves in the field of action by teaching, preaching, doing works of mercy,” etc.<sup>36</sup> For since the act of doing [good] works occurs with greater love than does the act of contemplating, no one doubts that the good works are better, because love is the measure of merit. Nonetheless, with respect to the goodness of the objects, contemplation is always better than action. Moreover, although the activity is sometimes of greater merit, nevertheless the act of contemplation is not for that reason of lesser perfection.

(c) *The active life and the contemplative life: what they are.*

[13] Therefore, “Mary has chosen the best part.” And she has placed the moon (i.e., the active life) under her feet; and by means of the contemplative life she has clothed herself with the sun of justice,<sup>37</sup> and now she appears in Heaven as thus clothed [and] as crowned with twelve glowing stars.<sup>38</sup>

At this point we must consider, first, Mary’s active life and her contemplative life; secondly, her death; thirdly, the glory of Paradise. On the feast-day of her nativity we must speak of her lineage, of the disposition of her body, and of her divine gifts. Right now [I will speak] a bit about the active life, about devotion, and about contemplation.

The active life is a life that diligently pursues *just* deeds. And, first of all, it keeps itself unstained from this world:<sup>39</sup> it guards, or keeps, the mind, the hand, the tongue, and the other bodily members, away from all pollution of tempting guilt; and it devotes them to everlasting divine service. Next, it attends to the needs of its neighbor by doing works of mercy. The blessed Virgin Mary had this [active] life in the highest degree, because she was free of all sin:<sup>40</sup> “The Most High sanctified His tabernacle.”<sup>41</sup> Moreover, as is evident, she performed works of mercy in the highest degree, more than all other pilgrims. Works of mercy have degrees—because of greater love or because [done] for one who is more needy, or for one who is more worthy and more needy, or because of their weightier, more necessary, and less superfluous effect. All of these works were in the glorious Virgin in the highest degree. In her, maximal love ministered to Him who was the neediest of all creatures, for no one among [us] pilgrims is poorer than was Jesus Christ. [Mary] ministered to a most-worthy, impoverished man; for no one who is in want is worthier than is God. A work of mercy done to an impoverished layman would be great; done to an impoverished clergyman, it would be greater; greater [still] to an impoverished monk; even greater to an impoverished bishop; greatest of all to an impoverished pope. Therefore, the work that was done to very needy God was incomparably great. Mary bestowed the greatest work of mercy because as a reward for us wretched captives she gave [birth to] God the Son; to us who are hungering she gave Him as a provision for the way; to us who are laboring, she gave Him as a recompense; to us who are weak she gave Him as medicine. And together with Him she gave the Kingdom of Heaven. She did works of mercy—for her son, who was very poor and a stranger—not superfluously but because of real need. She made [for Him] a tunic woven from her own blood; she housed [Him] in the center of her womb; she gave [Him] food and milk from her own body.

Let these points briefly suffice as regards her active life.

[14] As regards the contemplative life: it is present when someone—after having been taught through the long exercise of good actions, after having been instructed by the pleasantness of divine prayer, after having become accustomed through frequent and tearful remorse, after having found leisure from all earthly tasks, and after having learned to focus his mind’s eye only on love of God—(1) will have begun, in the present, fervently to foretaste in a desiring way the joy of perpetual happiness (joy that he will receive in the future life)

and (2) will also, at times, (insofar as it is permitted to mortals) be sublimely elevated, taking leave of his mind. Not every single individual can have that [contemplative] life; nevertheless, one can, without it, (according to Gregory)<sup>42</sup> [still] come to Glory if one does not neglect the good things that one can do. And, according to Gregory, in Book VI of his *Liber Moralium*,<sup>43</sup> the contemplative life befits quiet minds, whereas the active life befits restless minds. According to St. Bernard: for him who wishes to approach the contemplative life there must be refuge from secular life, there must be affliction of the flesh, contrition of heart, frequent and pure confession, [and] tears. And after all uncleanness has been cast out, let his meditation on our wonderful God elevate him. And [let there be] a viewing of undistorted truth; [let there be] undefiled prayer, joyous hymns of praise, and fervent desire for God. Hugh [of St. Victor, commenting] on Chapter 3 of [Dionysius's] *Angelic Hierarchy* [states]: “It is necessary that the contemplative mind first be purified, then illumined, and then perfected and consummated. And the more closely the contemplative mind approaches the Divinity, the more truly it contemplates.”<sup>44</sup> Gregory [writes]: “Between the delights of the heart and of the body there is the following difference: When bodily delights are not had, they kindle a strong desire for themselves; when they are had and partaken of, they satisfy and produce boredom. Spiritual delights are not had with [accompanying] boredom; when they are had they arouse one and cause one to hunger.”<sup>45</sup> And because Mary always had these [spiritual] delights, she ever hungered and was more and more [spiritually] aroused, etc. If spiritual delights are not had, they cannot be loved; their taste is not known. For who can love what he does not know?<sup>46</sup> Hence, “taste and see!”<sup>47</sup> He who at first tastes begins a bit later to see, because the taste was pleasing, etc.

(d) *The things that prepare one for contemplating. The stages of contemplation.*

[15] There are six preparations for the contemplative life: (1) exercise in the active [life]; then, (2) solitude; in addition, (3) humbleness of mind [and] (4) purity of heart. (“Blessed are those with a pure heart, for they shall see God ....”)<sup>48</sup> According to Augustine the Supreme Good is discerned only by very pure minds.<sup>49</sup> It is necessary that the eye that is fixed on that Brightness be exceedingly clear-sighted and strong. (5) There is, fifthly, fervor of love. (6) Stability of mind is sixth.

[16] There are also other factors that conduce to contemplation:



[There is] our consideration of creatures and our praising the Creator, who created all things in number, weight, and measure.<sup>50</sup> For “creatures are certain rays of the Divinity in a variety of forms ....”<sup>51</sup> And vestiges of the Creator shine forth in creatures, etc. According to Paul “the invisible things of God are clearly seen, having been understood through the things that have been made ....,” etc.<sup>52</sup> According to Hugh, God’s power is apprehended through the immensity of creatures;<sup>53</sup> their decorousness manifests His wisdom; their usefulness, His loving-kindness. Immensity is arrived at in and through multitude and magnitude; decorousness is arrived at in and through location, motion, appearance, and quality; usefulness is attained in and through what is pleasing, fitting, advantageous, and necessary. For the perceptible world is like a book written by God’s finger. And by this means beginners contemplate; but the perfected (as is the Blessed Virgin) persist in contemplation only of the Creator. The Creator is praised by reference to His creatures, even as an artisan is praised by reference to his artifacts. And just as the beauty of creatures turns a man away from God because of love of their beauty, so too by means of creatures a man is returned to the Creator through modes of understanding ....<sup>54</sup>

A second factor conducing to contemplation is a knowledge of oneself. Bernard: “To the extent that I progress in self-knowledge, I draw nearer to God.”<sup>55</sup> In accordance with the inner man there are in the mind three things that constitute the image of God, as far as concerns natural properties: viz., memory, intellect, and will.<sup>56</sup> And because of sin this image of the Trinity fell from the power, the wisdom, and the purity of the Supreme Trinity unto a shameful trinity, viz., weakness, blindness, and uncleanness.... Etc.<sup>57</sup> According to Bernard memory was the likeness of the Father; intellect, the likeness of the Son; will is like the Holy Spirit, who is Love.<sup>58</sup> Through memory man remembers; through intellect he beholds; through will he embraces. Do you wish to seek for things invisible by means of visible, created things? There is nowhere better [to do so] than in the image of God, viz., in yourself. But for knowing yourself there is required engagement in activity, in meditation, and in prayer. By what right does he who does not know how to enter into himself endeavor to ascend above himself by contemplating? Let us love inner things and spurn other things. When we will have directed all our thoughts and activities toward the inner, we [will] have built within ourselves a church for God ....<sup>59</sup>

[17] Thereupon you hear the Bridegroom-of-your-soul saying:

“Arise, make haste, my love, my fair one.” “Open to me, my sister.”<sup>60</sup> And after you have opened your heart to Him, all things except for your Beloved are dead for you; and your entire soul is attached to that Heavenly sweetness which it begins to taste. Then your mind, with its cares set aside, is fervent with the desire to see the Face of its Creator. First, the fire of tribulation and of remorse ascends into the heart so that all impurity may be consumed [and] so that all things are new, etc. Next, an inner brightness begins to gleam within the heart. Immediately, the mind is elevated beyond itself, and as from afar it glimpses a new and a bright-shining mansion, the likes of which it does not recall [ever before] having seen. Seeing [the mansion], it greatly marvels. It reproaches the past times of its ignorance; it is amazed at how it lay prostrate in the mire. And, again, it mounts up more highly, etc. All worldly things are set aside, and thoughts of the world become more fully dead. And through the grace of the Savior the light keeps increasing in these elect ones. It increases in proportion as the outer senses withdraw from things illicit and gather themselves into one. Man, by meditating on his reflow [to God], makes of his outflow from God into sin a kind of ladder of ascent and descent—a ladder that consists of a thousand advantages, etc. Here make a ladder of the way in which man, the final goal of creatures and the image of God, is a union of two natures—a spiritual nature and a corporeal nature. And within yourself ascend unto God by way of the elemental [rung], the perceptive [rung], the rational [rung]—and then by way of the heavens and the angels.

[18] And next, the soul wants to apprehend God and His glory; but in this lifetime the soul can do so only through a glass [darkly],<sup>61</sup> although by grace it has a foretaste thereof. According to Albert, Mary (who is of maximal grace) foretasted in this lifetime the sweetness of Glory not as a simple pilgrim. A pilgrim makes an inference from beautiful things to Infinite Beauty; from pleasant things, to Infinite Pleasantness; from light, to Infinite Light; from what is sweet, to Infinite Sweetness. And, yet, all the things that the pilgrim humanly imagines and sees with his intellect are as distant from that Heavenly glory of the Godhead as faith is from actual seeing [*veritas*], as time is from eternity—according to Bernard.<sup>62</sup> Gregory in his *Moralia* [writes] on the following [text]: “How long will You not permit me to swallow my spittle?...” etc.<sup>63</sup> The mind, which is our stomach, was desirous of swallowing the spittle of contemplation that descends from the Godhead, and it could not do so, because the body weighs down the soul.<sup>64</sup> And so, [the mind] cannot remain long in the light but can

remain only briefly; and it cannot swallow. For saliva [i.e., revelation] rightly flows from the head [i.e., from God] into the mouth with a certain pleasantness. But in this present life it does not satisfy the mental stomach [i.e., the mind], etc., but is discerned from afar. [The ultimate Truth] is neither altogether seen nor altogether not seen. According to Gregory it is seen by means of images, not in terms of [its own] nature. Contemplatives who are elevated unto God in the highest possible degree, in order to see Him, are ones for whom the world is dead and for whom [only] God is alive.<sup>65</sup> He who is alive to the world does not see God. But he who is dead to the world sees God in a certain manner through faith and through fervent desire ...<sup>66</sup> Then, for this mind, all things are possessed of tedium and are vain; and purity alone is pleasing to it. In humility [contemplatives] safeguard the mind, lest because of their pride they lose [the power of] contemplation.

[19] A higher contemplation is about the trine and one God, about His properties and the equality of His attributes, etc., about His power, about how He created all things, how all things were and are in Him and through Him, how He is everywhere and nowhere, how He attends to all things, gives being to all things, and conserves all things, etc. [Furthermore, it is contemplation] of the supercelestial, the celestial, and the elemental orders and of the principles of love that hold together the universe by means of harmony, etc. [And it is contemplation] of how the infinite God remains unknowable to us and ineffable for us—even though here on earth He is known [by us] with reference to the fact *that He is*, and in Heaven He is known [by us] *as He is*, but nowhere [i.e., neither here nor there] do we know *what He is*.<sup>67</sup> For that which God transcends all creatures' understanding. The Ineffable is not named when we call Him Being or Goodness. He is above all these things, according to Dionysius in *The Divine Names*. Nowadays, man's outer sense is repaired by contemplation of Christ's humanity; his inner sense is repaired by contemplation of Christ's deity. And so, God was made a man in order to beatify the whole man, so that man as a whole, whether he goes in or goes out, would find pastures.<sup>68</sup>

[20] The quality of contemplation is changed in three ways. First, [it is changed] by the expansion of the mind. When vices are banished from the chamber of the heart, love for God enters in with adorning virtues. "If anyone loves me ...," etc. I "and my Father ...," etc.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the fervent warmth of God's love expands the heart. And, according to Bernard, God is sensed by the soul to be present, and in

that way is spiritually seen, because the intellect is an eye, etc.

[21] Next, the second stage—[viz.,] the elevating of the mind—follows upon one’s desiring to see Him by whom one is so agreeably visited and consoled. And having been thus elevated, the soul begins to fall asleep a bit in the arms of its Beloved. As a result, it clings to Him not only pleasantly but also tightly, so that, as if by a certain force, it is so drawn away from the awareness and memory of all visible things that it has almost forgotten itself, in accordance with the text of the Canticles: “I sleep, and my heart watches.”<sup>70</sup> And the soul is like someone who is falling asleep, who, nonetheless, is still somehow aware of things that are done near by him but to which he does not pay attention because of his drowsiness. Accordingly, when love for God is seasoned with understanding, it intoxicates the mind and joins the mind closely to God once the mind is freed from outer things. And the stronger the mind’s love, and the clearer its understanding, the more soundly [God] raptures the mind unto Himself—until, at length, the mind abandons all things that are beneath God and remains dwelling in a gleaming light, for “the body weighs down the soul, and the earthly habitation presses down the mind that muses upon many things.”<sup>71</sup> For by its own power the mind can only weakly think a few things. But when elevated by means of its glimpse of Heavenly light it sees many things at once—in proportion to its being the more sublimely elevated above itself. But the corruptness of the earthly body and the tasks of the present lifetime press the soul<sup>72</sup> down and recall it to itself, so that, groaning with the Apostle, it cries out: “O wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?”<sup>73</sup> For straightway the contemplating soul returns to lower things and is fed from the memory of those things that it has agreeably seen. Thus, devout men attain, weakly and stealthily, something of the Uncircumscribed Light; and, sighing, they return unto their own darkness . . . , etc., according to St. Gregory. And at this stage different kinds of devotion manifest themselves, viz., a joyous shout, intoxication of spirit, [spiritual] melting, and spiritual enjoyment.

[22] Hereafter, one comes to alienation of mind, i.e., to the third stage of contemplation—[arriving there] at times because of the magnitude of the devotion, at times because of the magnitude of the wonderment, at times because of the magnitude of the exultation—so that the man’s mind does not apprehend itself but, having been elevated above itself, passes to a state of alienation. A flame that has flared up beyond human measure softens the man’s mind like wax, so that,

oftentimes, the mind is alienated by the stupefying power of the celestial beauty. It is alienated by the magnitude of the exultation when it tastes the intimate aspects of the Heavenly succulence; and [the man] is led into alienation of mind by an excess of joy. And as long as we do not experience these occurrences in ourselves, we love too little, for these occurrences come as a result of fervent love, etc.

[23] And more than all other human beings, as no one doubts, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who surpassed all riches,<sup>74</sup> ascended by means of this third stage of contemplation. Hence, in the Canticles the Beloved says of her who is his love: “Who is she who ascends by way of the desert?”<sup>75</sup> Etc. And “who is she who proceeds as does the rising dawn?”<sup>76</sup> Etc. And “who is she who ascends from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?”<sup>77</sup> Etc. Few men ascend to these stages of contemplation, although God is near to all these men; for the mind is filled with cares; and being beclouded with images because of its memory, it does not return unto itself, since it is enticed by its desires. Therefore, it does not return to itself through a desire for inner security. Therefore, man is thus situated and does not return [to God]. Nor was he able to return, because the ladder of return was broken by Adam [and remained broken] until the Restorer, Christ, came. And so, it is necessary to return through Christ, etc.

(e) *The Assumption; and Mary's eternal reward.*

[24] A certain pathway of contemplation has now been expounded. The Blessed Mary's contemplation surpassed all of the foregoing modes in a way that is ineffable to me, a sinner. For she has trod under foot all corruptible things, even the moon itself.<sup>78</sup> And she was clothed with the full brightness of the Sun of justice in such a way that she remained dwelling incessantly in the light of contemplation (1) in the loftiest manner, (2) in rapture, and (3) in ecstasy of mind, [and] (4) in accordance with the supreme mode of theophany and of deification. For crowned with twelve stars, she was [exalted] above all other purely human beings and creatures, in accordance with twelve prerogatives. And so, now on today's date, we must proclaim how she was rapt, and assumed, into Heaven and how she is exalted above all the choirs of angels, for she has appeared in Heaven.<sup>79</sup>

[25] And, to begin with, [let us] in conformity with the [Biblical] story [speak of] the time when she was assumed and of how she was assumed. And because [she was assumed] unto glory, [let us say] what glory is and to what degree of glory [she was assumed]. According to

the opinion of the doctors [of the Church] she was assumed in the sixteenth year after the ascension of Christ, i.e., [it occurred] in the sixty-third year of the glorious Virgin. And according to Albertus Magnus (in his book *On Praise for the Virgin*) and other doctors, five prerogatives accompanied her death. First, she foreknew her death. For even St. Martin and many other saints had from God this [prerogative]. Therefore, the Virgin Mary [had it more than did someone] lesser than she, etc. Secondly, Christ escorted His own celebrate mother, because [even] David escorted the ark [of God] into its house with drum and dancers ..., etc.<sup>80</sup> Christ ought to have been present at His mother's funeral procession, because it is a work of mercy, etc.

Thirdly, Mary was separated from the pain of death, because (as we read in the Prologue to [the Gospel of] John): "after a prayer was said, [John] was placed with the fathers and was as free from the pain of death as from the corruption of flesh."<sup>81</sup> Therefore, *a fortiori*, such was the case with respect to the Mother of God. Now, she suffered most grievously at the foot of the Cross when a sword pierced her soul.<sup>82</sup> Through equivalence of meaning this sword is ascribed to her in the sense of martyrdom. However, subsequent to martyrdom there is no pain; therefore, she no longer grieved. Moreover, she desired to be dissolved, as did Paul ..., etc.<sup>83</sup> Hence, her most fervent love drew [her] upwards to such an extent that her soul was separated, in love, from her body. And she died without pain, for she died through love. Fourthly, she ascended at once. Fifthly, she was at once assumed with both body and soul (although among the Ancients there were many doubts about this [fact]). But in St. Gregory's collect for today's feast, [we read]: "However, she could not be kept down by the bonds of death ..., " etc. [The phrase] "... by the bonds of death" [signifies], according to Albertus, "to become ashes." Accordingly, she arose immediately. For the Ark of the Testament was made of setim wood,<sup>84</sup> which worms never eat." Arise unto rest, O Lord—You and the Ark of Your sanctification,<sup>85</sup> viz., the Virgin Mary ..., etc.

The doctors [of the Church] claim, on the basis of a certain passage from Dionysius's *On the Divine Names*, that James, Peter, Dionysius, and Dionysius's teacher, Hierotheus, were present at the death of Mary and held a discussion after her death. And Hierotheus was caught up [to Heaven]. By the testimony of this same Dionysius and by appeal to Gregory, Augustine, and Bernard it is proven that Mary was taken up into Glory with both body and soul. But to me it [once] seemed to be the case that except for Christ no human being arises prior to the

general resurrection (as elsewhere I have briefly stated the reason).<sup>86</sup> And we may piously doubt whether Mary's soul returned to her body on the same day she died or on the third day [after her death], as we read in the apocryphal books, or on the fourth day (viz., September 23), as [we read] in the Revelations of Blessed Elizabeth, or on the fifteenth day, as St. Brigitte of Suecia says to have been revealed to her—[says there] where she also maintains to have been told her that the Virgin Mary lived twenty-five years after Christ). [Similarly, we may piously doubt] the claim of certain others that Mary was raptured only in contemplation but that her soul did not leave her body and that during the interim the proportion among the qualities [of her soul and body] was disrupted and corrupted, so that she was truly dead. And, thus, [it is claimed that] by means of contemplation here on earth Mary arrived at contemplation in Heaven. [Whether any of these accounts are true], God knows . . . , etc. I say: she died and was buried; her sepulcher is found today in the valley of Josaphat.

[26] Most blessed Mary obtained an eternal reward. Bernard in his treatise *On the Wretched Condition of Man* says the following:<sup>87</sup> “Our reward is to see God, to live with God, to be in God (who will be all in all), to have God (who is the Highest Good). In God there is supreme happiness, supreme delight, true liberty, perfect love, eternal security, and secure eternity. *There* there is true gladness, full knowledge, complete happiness and beauty, everlasting life, rest, and pleasant harmony. Thus, he in whose consciousness sin will not have been found will be happy in God's presence. For he shall see God at will; he shall possess God at his pleasure; he shall enjoy God in accordance with his delight. He will flourish amid eternity; he will gleam amid truth; he will rejoice in goodness. Just as he will have an eternity of abiding, so he will have ease<sup>88</sup> of knowing and security of resting. Indeed, he will be a citizen of the Holy City of which angels are citizens. O Heavenly City, secure Mansion, Homeland that contains everything that delights! Its people are without complaint; its inhabitants are at rest; its human occupants have no needs.

“ O what glorious things are spoken of you, O City of God. For in You is the dwelling-place of all those who rejoice.<sup>89</sup> All are glad in You, whose Countenance is beautiful and whose Face lovely . . . , etc.<sup>90</sup> In God the intellect is brightened—and the affection purified—for knowing and loving the truth. And this is man's entire good: to know and to love the Creator. We will wait and see how pleasant the Lord is and how great the multitude of His pleasantness is . . . , etc.

Many other things can be said about this glorious Homeland. Let there be made steps that ascend from the lovable, honorable, and pleasant goods of this world up unto that Homeland. And [these goods], in their comparative relationship [to the Homeland], will be like a comparison between the infinite and the finite. No human tongue can [adequately] express, nor human mind [adequately] conceive, the least delight of the Heavenly Homeland, etc. And although in the Heavenly Homeland there is no difference between all men as regards their essential reward (for the enjoyment of the Divine Being is common to all), nevertheless there are differences of degrees in accordance with the merits in the saints. The glory of the intellect consists in clear knowledge, and the glory of the affections consists in very fervent and very tender love. The light of glory is a certain quality of mind that disposes and elevates the mind beyond the limits of its own nature in order that it can see God face to Face. Perhaps [we can] rightly [say]: just as, if the eye of a night owl were to look at the sun, it would need a disposing that strengthened its nature (but would not need any changed appearance on the part of the sunlight, since the sun is sufficient for presenting its light to the owl): so God, who is of Infinite Light, flows unto all blessed spirits. And the more intensely this light of glory is given by God, the more clearly God is seen. Understand in a similar way the degrees [of glory] in the Heavenly Homeland. Now, this light of glory follows upon grace and merit . . . , etc.

[27] But because—of all holy men and women—the Mother of the Lord was of greatest and best merit, she will be eternally possessed of the best reward. And so, by means of a wondrous sign in the heavens she was seen in terms of her meritorious works of the active life (because the moon was under her feet), in terms of her contemplative life, which was perfected in Heaven (because she was clothed with the sun), and in terms of her very special prerogatives (because on her head was a crown of twelve stars).<sup>91</sup> She was privileged, foremostly, with a prerogative against evil, because *not only did she never sin but she was not even able to sin*.<sup>92</sup> She was privileged with respect to the good—(1) first *in accordance with predisposing corporeal features*. [She was predisposed] within herself because she was a virgin mother; [predisposed] with respect to God, in such a way that she was the Mother of God; [predisposed] with respect to her neighbors, in such a way that she was the Virgin of virgins. [She was also privileged] (2) *with respect to her soul's fixed intellectual disposition* (she was ignorant of nothing), *with respect to her soul's fixed affective dis-*



*position* (she had purity in the supreme degree, in the likeness of God), and *with respect to her neighbors* (she was the Mother of all). But in regard to her actions she acquired merit for herself by each of her acts; with respect to her neighbors she is, in an exemplary way, the Star of the sea; with respect to [rendering] aid, she is Heaven's gateway. If [it is a question of] suffering, then she is the sharing of suffering. But if the privilege concerns the reward, her exaltation actually exceeds that of all other creatures; and, in terms of [exalted] name, [she is called] Queen of mercy.

Now, the following are Mary's fourteen prerogatives. The first one is that *she never sinned*. The second one is that *she was not even able to sin*. And these prerogatives amount to the highest purity [possible] beneath God. And so, twelve prerogatives remain. [28] Since, then, she was so privileged, she was full of grace. For she had all the general and special graces of all creatures. She is full of graces that other creatures were empty of. Her grace was so great that as purely a creature she was not capable of greater grace. For she contained all uncreated grace in herself. She is like an aqueduct of graces, because she receives [grace] and gives [grace]. (Ecclesiasticus 24: "I came out of God's Paradise like an aqueduct . . .," etc.<sup>93</sup>) She was a wondrous vessel, because she contained what is greater than herself. She was the Virgin Mother of God. (He whom the whole world does not [suffice to] contain enclosed Himself in your bowels . . ., etc.) She was the wondrous vessel that at one and the same time contained the wine of deity and the water of humanity without a confused mixing of the natures or or of the properties. She was the wondrous vessel that, though closed, receives all things into itself and channels them forth.

The Virgin Mary was a fount full of grace and flowing forth into many waters:<sup>94</sup> viz., [into Him who is] the Price of redemption, the Water of cleansing, the Bread of refection, the Medicine of healing, the Weapons of assault, the Price of recompense. Wherefore, having now merited it, she is exalted above all the choirs of angels . . . The throne for the Mother of the King is placed next to the Throne of the King.<sup>95</sup> Augustine [writes]: "As ruler over the angels she is higher than the heavens . . .," etc.<sup>96</sup> Jerome [writes]: "This is the splendid day on which she merited to be exalted above the choirs of angels—[exalted to the place] where Christ, as Priest forever, entered in on our behalf.<sup>97</sup> And elevated on the Throne of the Kingdom, she was seated as the one [who is the most] glorious after Christ."<sup>98</sup> For it is believed that our Savior—the Savior of all, in and

through Himself (as best it can be understood)—hastened joyously to meet her and with joy gathered her unto Himself on the Throne; for He commanded: “Honor your mother . . .,” etc.<sup>99</sup> Jerome [stated] these things. And according to Albertus, Mary obtains a place in between God and creatures because she is the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, the Bride, the one who is the most God-loved of all creatures. But it would take too long to speak right now of the way in which the very blessed Virgin Mary had the properties of all the angels, orders, and hierarchies. No one doubts that because of her very great achievements of intellect, memory, and will, and because of her threefold triumph (over the world, the flesh, and the Devil), etc., the Virgin Mary obtained all the golden crowns of martyrs, virgins, and preachers.

[29] O Christian, contemplate here the Mother of the Lord—how after the prolonged troubles of this present life, after frequent sighs for her Son (out of love for whom she was languishing and desiring His face-to-Face presence), after she had dispatched many holy souls unto glory and had united them with other supernatural, holy souls: at length, after she had completed the work that her Son had given her, her prayer was answered. (“I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem: if you find my Beloved, tell Him that I am languishing out of love.”<sup>100</sup>) Thereupon the Son came with all Heavenly majesty and led her unto Heaven, etc. I saw [this] lovely Dove ascending over the brooks of waters,<sup>101</sup> whose fragrance in her garments was inestimable;<sup>102</sup> and rose-blossoms surrounded her as a spring day, etc.<sup>103</sup> For then the Queen stood at Your right hand in gilded clothing.<sup>104</sup> And the Ark—the Ark of the Testament—which up until now was situated under leather wraps: when the Heaven was opened, it was seen in its temple. [This] Ark of the Covenant was golden within and without; in it was a Golden Urn (i.e., Christ) that had in it manna (i.e., the word of God).

[30] O how great is the joy that today has come to all the saints! Who, I ask, can express it? The voice of the Father was heard: “Hear, O Daughter, and see, and incline your ear; and forget your people and the house of your father, and come.”<sup>105</sup> And the voice of the Son [was heard]: “Arise, hasten, and come, my Mother, my Love, my Dove, my Beauty.”<sup>106</sup> The voice of the Holy Spirit [was heard]: “Come, my Chosen One, my Temple, my Dwelling Place, my Sacristy, and I will establish my throne in you.” The entire Curia of Heaven [was heard]: “Come, our Queen; come our Mother; come our Governess; for the

King has desired your beauty.”<sup>107</sup> The Virgin answered very humbly: “I come to do Your will, O God ...,” etc.<sup>108</sup> All the Heavenly spirits shouted with a joyous shout: “Who is this who comes forth ...?”<sup>109</sup> Others could answer: “This is the Virgin, of the root of Jesse; [she is] the One expected by the patriarchs, the One proclaimed by the prophets ..., etc. This Queen of Saba carried into Jerusalem many spices previously unknown.<sup>110</sup> From her garments there arose vapors of myrrh, aloes, and cassia.<sup>111</sup> One [Heavenly inhabitant] said to the other: “Who is this who ascends by way of the desert of this world—[ascends], as a pillar of smoke, from aromatical spices of myrrh and frankincense? Others could reply to them: “She is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up ...,” etc.<sup>112</sup>

When Mary came to the first hierarchy, [the inhabitants] said: “It is not fitting that you remain with us, O Virgin; you are much lovelier than are we. Together with your comeliness and your beauty: set out; proceed prosperously.”<sup>113</sup> The inhabitants of the second hierarchy said: “O most lovely Form—lovely more than [all other of] the children of men—proceed!” And [the inhabitants] of the third hierarchy said: “Queen of Heaven, Governess of the world, proceed and reign over us; for you are more lovely than the sun; compared to the light of the stars, you are found to be superior to their entire arrangement ...,” etc. Mary thought, most humbly: “O what kind of greeting is this?” The individuals replied: “[It comes] because of truth and justice ...,” etc.<sup>114</sup> “You have loved justice ...,” etc.<sup>115</sup> Then Mary arrived in the presence of the King, who said: “Come, my Beloved, my Mother; come from Lebanon; come and be crowned.”<sup>116</sup>

[31] And then the Queen stood at [Your] right hand; and by every creature she is adored with the adoration of hyper-dulia—i.e., [with the adoration] of the most excellent servitude that creatures can exhibit. Nevertheless, she did not arrive at equal glory with Christ—i.e., at infinite glory, which is not conferrable on any creature. Hence, in accordance with our theme, the “great sign” is this: the Woman of Glory, clothed with the sun to a very excellent degree, has the moon under her feet (i.e., [has under her feet] all the citizens who are living in Glory; for just as the moon is illumined by the sun, so the saints in Heaven [are illumined] by the light of Glory). And Mary has a crown of twelve stars, i.e., a crown (more excellent than all other crowns) of the twelve individual prerogatives—a crown acquired in Heaven. Or [we may interpret as follows]: just as from the twelve signs of stars,<sup>117</sup> and by the influence of stars, there are produced gold, gems, and other

things, and just as other saints are said to have crowns of gold and of gems, [so] Mary was crowned with the *cause* of gold and of gems: viz., with the twelve signs. She is that Esther who today is brought to Assuerus (who symbolizes beauty)—[brought] clothed with royal garments and having on her head the diadem of the Kingdom.<sup>118</sup>

And these [remarks have now been made] concerning Part One.

## *PART TWO*

### *How the Church Militant, with Christ as its Head Is Led into the Heavenly Ark*

#### (a) *The ascension of the Church Militant.*

[32] In another sense, the narrated words [of our text] are said of the Church, which is the woman who is shined upon by Christ, the Sun of Justice.<sup>119</sup> At the same time, the Church is clothed with faith in-formed by love and is adorned with every spiritual gift. She treads the moon (i.e., the mutable world) under her feet (i.e., under her affections). She has on her head (i.e., at her origin) twelve apostles, designated by twelve stars shining upon the bedarkened world. And since this woman lives in the castle and since her name is “Bethany” and she has Mary and Martha as her sisters: we are supposed to recognize how we can cross from the valley of [this] world unto Bethany, so that after the weapons of war have come to be received in Bethany, then Jerusalem (situated on the mountain) may be reached in triumph.

[33] As was said already, Christ, whose going out was from the highest heaven,<sup>120</sup> entered into Bethany (viz., into the Virgin Mary) and from Bethany shouted into the valley: “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence.<sup>121</sup> Arise, take up arms and a shield, and come to her aid.<sup>122</sup> Do not love the world or the things that are in the world.<sup>123</sup> Beware of the works of the Devil, who is a Liar<sup>124</sup> and who seducingly leads you into the eternal fire of the great furnace and of the deep pit. Awaken, for you know not when the hour comes.<sup>125</sup> Come hither to me, into the Church’s Camp, and your faces will not be confounded.<sup>126</sup> Come unto me, you who desire me, and be filled with riches.<sup>127</sup> Hear the words of life, for I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.<sup>128</sup> All flesh is as straw ..., etc.<sup>129</sup> Do not fear those who kill ..., etc.<sup>130</sup> Be strong. Come, all you who are heavily laden.<sup>131</sup> If you thirst ...,” etc.<sup>132</sup>

[34] Here I must begin [to speak] about the world and about the world’s deceptions, about sin and the turning away from God, about eternal and most excruciating punishment in Hell, about the glory and

beauty of the Heavenly Jerusalem and about that infinite sweetness, [viz.,] most pleasant fellowship with God, with the glorious Virgin, and with the saints, and about the means of arriving in Heaven, and about the fact that the arrival must occur by means of triumphing. And the first thing that is necessary is to purify yourself from sins through a turning away from sins and a turning unto God by grieving over the fact that you have offended against so great a Good, [viz.,] against your gracious Creator. And, thereupon, you begin to pass through the desert of penance in the direction of the Church's camp—[to do so] by forming within yourself conceptions of how many goods He against whom you have so greatly offended has bestowed upon you and about how many evils you have done against Him. Secondly, by ascending to confession, with weeping and tears, you will come to the camp's water. Thirdly, by making satisfaction [for your sins] you will be in the [camp's] trenches, in which you will struggle to enter at the gate; and you will remain a while on a trench's ascent and descent as you reflect on your fear of God because of the punishments of Hell and as you examine your past offending sins.

Keep in mind that the judgments of God are most just. And, next, reflect upon the fact that you are going to die without advance notice. And consider yourself to be already in a state of death; and make for yourself an envisioning of death. Consider where you will arrive. Reflect on the Last horrendous Judgment and on the punishments of Hell. Thereupon you climb forth from the camp's moat and begin to glimpse the walls, by means of the hope of forgiveness. And love begins to be induced when you consider (1) how many goods God has given you and how many goods He has prepared for you and (2) that our merciful God has invited you to come. And when you begin to view that Heavenly Jerusalem from afar, you are more aroused in your approach and in your ascent, as you reflect on the glory of Paradise. Next, you consider again the benefits from God: that God has given you contrition for, and sorrow for, your wrong-doings and has given you love, by means of which you can enter into the [Celestial] City, inasmuch as without that currency no one is let in. And to the end that your love may increase and become inflamed and may purify your soul, you see the City that has been prepared for you, and you meditate on Christ's life, on His Cross, and on His death for you, and on the fact that He stands always beckoning you and awaiting you. And then, [standing] in front of the camp's gate, you sustain your ascent by means of reading, meditation, and prayer.

(b) *The gates-of-entry and the stages of ascent.*

[35] And when you thus arrive at the first gate—the leaden gate of humility—three men, who will examine you, are standing in front of the gate. And if they find you to be manly, each will give you a single word of counsel about what is indispensable for your being able to ascend. These [indispensable things] are: energeticness, discipline, and kindness. Energeticness disposes the soul to do good works carefully, confidently, and aptly—in opposition to negligence. Discipline restrains all lust and renders the soul fit for love of hardship, of poverty, and of lowliness. Kindliness disposes toward benevolence, forbearance, and inner gladness; and it excludes wickedness. These [aids] are three primary weapons. For after by means of penance and the preceding acts of contrition you have divested yourself of all sin: then, as if naked, you approach the outer-wall, where you become armed and clothed with these three [aids]. Your head is clothed with the very snug hood of energeticness; your body is clothed with a hairshirt of discipline, and your feet [are shod] with shoes of the affection of kindness. After you have been thus armed, proceed to the first gate, made of lead. This is the gate of humility. One who approaches the Camp must despise his own worthiness. Now, [the metal] lead is a very lowly but incorruptible metal in which dead bodies are laid to rest, etc. Moreover, this gate has three levels: the first [is reached] when a man despises himself; the second [is reached] when he does not despise others who despise him; the third level is [reached] when he desires to be despised. And these levels are called levels of assurance, for in humility alone is there assurance. Furthermore, at the third level there is given to you leaden defensive armor, all the way to your knees. By means of it you may resist pride.

[36] Next, you approach the second gate, the gate made of stannite. This is the gate of patience. Patience is likened to stannite, which melts quite rapidly in fire. It is, most enduringly, ductile; and it makes the metals with which it is mixed sonorous and stronger, so that they may sustain all assaults. Patience has three stages: viz., a double stage of martyrdom—with blood and without blood—and the stage of peace. And it furnishes protective armor above the knees all the way to the buttocks.

Hereafter comes the gate of silence and quietness; and it is rightly compared to iron, which without very intense fire is neither ductile, fusible, nor malleable. And silence also has three stages: the silence of beginners, of on-goers, and of the perfected. Although silence is a

virtue with respect to many things, it is ordained especially with respect to purity and chastity. Therefore, it serves to protect the groin. Next comes the fourth gate, which is the gate of obedience. It is likened to red copper. It is rightly likened to copper because copper is very fusible and ductile, and it easily receives into itself other colors. And it is subject—as to things superior to itself—to gold and to silver, as occurs in the case of bronze. Similarly, obedience subjects its will to the judgment of a superior in matters of the permissible and the honorable. And obedience is a copper belt that fastens the genital protections firmly. And it too has three levels: of beginners, of on-goers, and of the perfected.

[37] Thereafter, there follows contempt for riches; and this is a bronze gate. Bronze is rightly opposed to greed, because it appears beautiful and noble but is, nevertheless, of only little value. And all of the beauty that is present in bronze is of earth that is called zinc. Moreover, this gate has three levels: of beginners, of on-goers, and of the perfected. Those who are beginners do not desire things belonging to others but are content with their own things. Those who are on-goers keep only things that are necessary. But all those who have been perfected despise riches and choose poverty, as do the religious. And just as greediness for goods and avarice of heart are exercised through the hands and the arms, so too the hands, and also the arms, are covered with bronze protective coverings in order to prevent their becoming inordinately defiled by the filth of riches. It is not fitting that a soldier sift flour; nor is it fitting that he whose hands are armed militarily and mightily be besmirched with mud.

Next comes the sixth gate, which is of silver. It is the gate of sobriety. It is both silver and rightly likened to silver; for silver is a pure metal, a noble metal, and a bright metal. It does not become corrupted, and it is ductile, as is also sobriety, etc. And silver has three grades: viz., that of quality, that of quantity, and that of measure. And so, a silver torque is placed on the neck of one entering by this gate; it compresses the neck and represses gluttony.

Thereafter comes the last gate—the golden one. It is the gate of chastity. And chastity is rightly likened to gold, which is extracted from the earth with very great difficulty. And gold is beautiful, bright, incorruptible, noble, and very pure. Similarly, chastity is extracted from our earth with difficulty because of lust that indwells the flesh. But once it is extracted, it is never soiled but always remains beautiful and noble, etc. And chastity has three levels. The first level is absti-

nence from carnal intercourse, with the intent of remaining abstemious and with the intent of withdrawing consent from all illicit motions. The second level is the mortification of the flesh in order that it become subjugated to the spirit. The third level is the chastising of the flesh in order that lustful desires not be experienced. And next—as a sign of triumph—[the one who is ascending] is crowned with a small, rounded crown that is golden and polished.

[38] And when you are thus outfitted, you approach the four steps of the Palace. These are the four cardinal virtues. The first step is the step of practical wisdom, which examines all present, past, and future goods and evils, choosing the good things and spurning the evil things. And so, it arms one with a bow in order that he may defend himself at a distance. The second step is that of temperance, which in no respect exceeds the law of moderation. And temperance furnishes a shield (commonly called a buckler) for resisting the javelins-of-lust that come from the world, the flesh, and the Devil. The third step is that of courage. It protects the upper arms with steel. Just as that part [of the body] receives undauntingly the blows of the enemy, so courage bravely sustains all assaults, and it fears only things that are shameful. The fourth step is that of justice; and justice girds onto the thigh the sword, [used] for rendering to each his own.<sup>133</sup> And justice rightly girds the sword, because justice is symbolized by a sword. “From the mouth of the one seated on the throne there proceeds a sword” ..., etc.<sup>134</sup> Gird on your sword ..., etc.<sup>135</sup> The sword defends justly and strikes justly. It receives onto itself strong blows; it protects soberly and defends cautiously on all sides. Moreover, all the virtues are present in justice, as is evident. Each step is composed of three kinds of precious stones—marble, jasper, and topaz—because virtue is either (1) political virtue or (2) purifying virtue or (3) virtue of a purified mind. Virtues are called *political* insofar as they regulate human life; they are called *purifying* insofar as they conquer vices; they are said to be *of a purified mind* insofar as the possessor of the virtues is at rest, having vanquished vices.

[39] Therefore, when you thus ascend, you come to an ornate palace that is called perseverance. And this palace, or courtyard, is erected on seven pillars, which are the seven gifts of the Divine Spirit, who governs the Church—[gifts] opposed to the seven deadly sins. The pillar of fear-of-the-Lord is opposed to pride; the pillar of graciousness is opposed to envy; the pillar of knowledge is opposed to anger (because anger is a kind of madness); the pillar of courage is



opposed to sloth; that of advisedness is opposed to avarice; that of understanding is opposed to gluttony; that of wisdom, to licentiousness. And in this palace these seven pillars are the seven good spirits<sup>136</sup> who rule over the Church Militant; and other spirits, who are evil, rule over the assembly of evil-doers.<sup>137</sup>

[40] Next, you enter among the seven banners placed higher up on the pillars. These banners are—in accordance with a distinction of degrees—the seven beatitudes. And because, according to essence, there are eight banners: the eighth banner—the banner of the Cross, unto which you come—is in the middle. The first banner is black and is poverty-of-spirit, in opposition to lust; and it is mortification of spirit, etc. The second banner is azure and is the banner of meekness and of gentleness. The third banner is yellow and is mourning. The fourth banner is gray (commonly called [in middle high German] *gra*) and is hunger [for righteousness]. The fifth is green in color and is mercy. The sixth is white and is purity of heart. The seventh is red in color and is [the banner] of peace. The Cross, in the middle, is the color of blood and is the suffering of persecution for justice's sake. By means of all these banners our Heavenly Homeland, situated on the Mount, is attained.

(c) *The entrance into the Heavenly Jerusalem.*

[41] Now, the twelve tribes of Israel have twelve leaders. And, [likewise], this holy congregation has a great high priest in the middle, together with the banner of the Cross; and the congregation has twelve apostles together with trumpets sounding the word of God. And this diocese assembles itself—together with Eucharius, Valerius, Maternus, Paulinus, Maximinus, and the other pastors—under the banner of the Cross. And the whole army begins to move itself toward Mount Sion. And because the army is still not entirely armed, the priest at the first bridge gives a shield to those who are approaching.<sup>138</sup> It is the shield of faith;<sup>139</sup> and faith is likened to a bridge because through faith one approaches hidden and very deep matters, in much the way that by means of a bridge one crosses over dangerous waters. And at the second bridge, when now that Heavenly Homeland begins to show its splendor to the eye, the priest places on each [ascender] a helmet [that protects] against hopelessness, so that [the ascender] may hope that he will be a victor. And when, now, he begins to approach more closely to the Mount and to the pathway of ascent, a plate of armor protects [him and the others] who are approaching. Without this armor they could in

no way be safe. And the breastplate of love, or armor of love, is, on its outer side, made of steel because love endures all things; but on its inner side it is iron, in order to be very firm. True love puts up with all things on account of the beloved, and it cleaves uninterruptedly to the beloved with a very strong bond.

[42] On this pathway of love the Standard-bearer<sup>140</sup> ascends very highly. And His mother, the Mother of mercy, follows Him, as do also all holy spirits. And He presses His way through the stars up to the City; and in the [Heavenly] Camp the guardian angels shout out: “Who is He who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra?”<sup>141</sup> He answers: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”<sup>142</sup> And I am the Living Host; I offered myself to my Father, and I redeemed those prisoners, my exiled brothers. Open the gates, so that the Minister may be there where His Father is.” And immediately the doors of the City of Jerusalem are opened. And the whole Heavenly army will shout out: “O Desirable One, O Light and Salvation, You have arrived! Holy, holy, holy!” And [in the army] one [will say] to another: “O how lovely that congregation is! Lo, here are the 144,000 of the twelve tribes!”<sup>143</sup> Lo, here are a countless number who are marked with the blood of the Lamb!” And all will enter with might; and the voice of the Father will be heard: “Come, Blessed Ones, receive the mansions prepared for you from the beginning.” And each one will ascend, in proportion as he is fervent and light-weighted as a result of the fire of his love. And each will receive, in full satisfaction of his desire, a dwelling-place in Glory, where, in accordance with the thirst and hunger of his inflamed love, he is fed with the vision and the enjoyment of immortal life and will live forever. May our Standard-bearer, our very great High Priest, who is blessed forever, lead us triumphantly to this most blessed Glory.

#### APPENDIX

[43] In the valley of the world the Prince of [this] world<sup>144</sup> has his temple, wherein are diabolical documents and diabolical images and perverse doctrines. There the Devil’s business is conducted—his diabolical mass, with gaming-tables, dice, blasphemies, deceits (commonly called [in middle-high German] *velen*). And, in this manner, there are present there, in every circumstance, deceits, etc. Take in hand the painting of the horse on which the Pope is seated and which the Emperor is guiding and which all the attendants are attending: [viz.,] all officials, all merchants, clergy, executioners, citizens,

women, etc. Now, the temple of the Devil has around it seven gates of the seven capital sins. The higher and more public gate is the gate-of-pride, decorated in different ways in accordance with the different forms of pride and of vainglory. And it has four door-posts, because of the four kinds of pride, and twelve steps, because of the twelve gradations of pride. The next gate, toward the South, is the large gate-of-greed, decorated in different ways (because of its many offspring) and having an idol at the top (because greed is likened to idolatry). The third and larger gate is the gate of licentiousness. It faces East and is decorated in different ways. It has seven door-posts, because of its seven offspring and the seven steps by which one ascends unto licentiousness. In between the gate of pride (which is toward the north) and the gate of greed is the gate toward the west. It is somewhat large; it is the gate of envy, and it is smaller than the gate of pride. Nevertheless, it is made in the likeness of the gate of pride, because envy is pride's offspring. On the other side of pride, toward the gate of licentiousness, is the gate of anger. Next is the gate of gluttony; it is situated very close to the gate of licentiousness. And near to the gate of greed is the gate of sloth. Through these gates the world enters upon the Devil's service.

## NOTES TO *SERMON VIII*

1. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1.
2. Canticle of Canticles 6:8 (Song of Solomon 6:9).
3. Psalms 44:13 (45:12).
4. Luke 10:18.
5. I Kings 4:6-8.
6. Luke 1:42.
7. Canticle of Canticles 4:7 (Song of Solomon 4:7).
8. Re Christ as Bridegroom, cf. Matthew 9:14-15.
9. Luke 10:38-42.
10. Here (at 3:14-15) I am reading “assumpsi” in place of “assumpsit”.
11. Apocalypse (Revelation) 21:2.
12. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 40:5-16.
13. Luke 1:38.
14. Isaias (Isaiah) 33:15.
15. Luke 1:45.
16. Psalms 4:9-10.
17. Throughout this and other sermons Nicholas uses *autonomasia*—the use of a metaphor to substitute for a personal name, or the use of a personal name for something non-personal, etc. Not only is the Virgin Mary called Bethany but the power motivating the active life is called Martha, and the power motivating the contemplative life is called Mary, the sister of Martha (not to be confused with the Virgin Mary or with Mary Magdalene). Jesus is called the Standard-bearer, the Bridegroom, the Sun of justice, etc. See n. 22 and n. 29 below.
18. Pseudo-Anselm, *Homiliae*, IX (*PL* 158:646B).
19. Apocalypse (Revelation) 21:2.
20. Proverbs 9:1.
21. Canticle of Canticles 4:7 and 6:9 (Song of Solomon 4:7 and 6:10).
22. Here Nicholas mistakenly believes Mary the sister of Martha to be Mary Magdalene.
23. Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem Prophetam Libri Duo*, II, 8 (*PL* 76:953).
24. Romans 1:20.
25. Proverbs 8:31.
26. Luke 2:51.
27. Psalms 45:11 (46:10).
28. Psalms 75:3 (76:2).
29. Nicholas, using *autonomasia*, here ascribes to the Virgin Mary an interest in, and pursuit of, the active life (vs. the contemplative life). He personalizes this interest on the Virgin Mary’s part, referring to it by the name “Martha.” Similarly, when Nicholas speaks of the Virgin Mary’s contemplative power and contemplative life, he refers to it as “Mary” (the sister of Martha).
30. Psalms 18:6 (19:5).
31. Cf. Baruch 3:38.
32. Luke 10:41.

33. Luke 10:42.
34. Luke 10:42.
35. Psalms 83:8 (84:7). I Corinthians 13:12.
36. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, VI, 37, 59 (PL 75:763C).
37. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
38. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1.
39. James 1:27.
40. Nicholas accepts not only the doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception but also the doctrine that Mary never sinned and was never able to sin. See, below, the passage marked by n. 92. See also Sermon IX: my note 69 and the text marked by it.
41. Psalms 45:5 (46:4).
42. Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem Prophetam Libri Duo*, I, 3, 10 (PL 76:809).
43. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Liber*, VI, 37, 57 (PL 75:761).
44. Not an exact quotation. See Hugh of St. Victor, *Expositio in Hierarchiam Coelestem S. Dionysii Areopagitae*, IV (PL 175:998B-C).
45. Gregory the Great, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia Libri Duo*, XXXVI, 1 (PL 76:1266A-B).
46. Gregory the Great, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia Libri Duo*, XXXVI, 1 (PL 76:1266B). Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium*, 96.4 (PL 35:1876 (near top). *De Trinitate*, X, 1, 1 (PL 42:972).
47. Psalms 33:9 (34:8).
48. Matthew 5:8 (not Luke 21, which Nicholas writes).
49. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, I, 2, 4 (PL 42:822).
50. Wisdom 11:21.
51. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum*, 31, 3 (PL 183:941-942).
52. Romans 1:20.
53. Hugh of St. Victor, *Eruditionis Didascalicae Libri Septem*, VII, 1 (PL 176:811D - 813A).
54. Isidor of Seville, *Sententiarum Libri Tres*, I, 4, 2 (PL 83:543). Nicholas refers to this passage as a passage in *De Summo Bono*.
55. Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Meditationes Piissimae*, 1, 1 (PL 184:485A).
56. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV, 29, 39 - 23, 43 (PL 42:1088-1091).
57. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de Diversis*, XLV, 1 (PL 183:667B).
58. Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Meditationes Piissimae*, 1, 3 (PL 184:487B). Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV, 23, 43 (PL 42:1090).
59. Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Minor*, 78-79 (PL 196: 55D-56C).
60. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 2:13 and 5:2.
61. I Corinthians 13:12.
62. Not Bernard of Clairvaux but William of St. Theodoric, *Epistola ad Fratres de Monte Dei*, II, 3, 17 (PL 184:349C).
63. Job 7:19. Gregory the Great *Moralium Liber*, VIII, 30, 49-50 (PL 75:830B and 833B. Pages are misplaced and misbound in some printings.) "Saliva," "head," "stomach," etc. are being used metaphorically. For example, "saliva" symbolizes contemplation; "stomach" symbolizes the mind; "food" symbolizes celestial understanding.
64. Wisdom 9:15.

65. Romans 6:11.
66. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, XII, 27 (PL 34:477-478).
67. I John 3:2. Cusa, *De Theologicis Complementis* 2. *Sermo* IV (32:26-28). Hugh of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, I, 16 [Vol. VIII, p. 72<sup>b</sup> of *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, edited by A. C. Peltier (Paris: Vivès, 1866). This work was, at times, wrongly ascribed to Bonaventure.].
68. John 10:9.
69. John 14:23: “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. And my Father will love him ....”
70. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 5:2.
71. Wisdom 9:15.
72. Here (at 21:28) I am reading “animam” in place of “animas”.
73. Romans 7:24.
74. Proverbs 31:29.
75. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 3:6.
76. Cantic of Canticles 6:9 (Song of Solomon 6:10).
77. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 8:5.
78. Throughout this section Nicholas alludes to Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1.
79. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1.
80. I Paralipomenon (I Chronicles) 15:1-25.
81. *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, Vol. IV, p. 223 (Strassburg, 1480/81). Reprinted in Brepols by Turnhout, 1992.
82. Cf. Luke 2:35.
83. Philippians 1:23.
84. Deuteronomy 10:3.
85. Psalms 131:8 (132:8).
86. Cusa, *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 8. The passage above is a later addition. Nicholas came to believe that Mary died and was resurrected and raptured.
87. Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Meditationes Piissimae*, 4 (PL 184:492B - 493A).
88. Here (at 26:18) I am reading “facilitatem” in place of “facultatem”.
89. Psalms 86:3 and 7 (87:3).
90. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 2:14.
91. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1.
92. See n. 40 above.
93. Ecclesiasticus 24:41.
94. Note Esther 10:6 and 11:10.
95. III Kings (I Kings) 2:19 (not III Kings 3, as Nicholas writes).
96. Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo* 208.5 (PL 39:2131).
97. Hebrews 6:20.
98. Not an exact quotation. Paschasius Radbertus (not Jerome), *Epistola* IX (“Cogitis me”) (PL 30:130A-B). Nicholas continues by borrowing parts of 130C.
99. Exodus 20:12.
100. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 5:8.
101. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 5:12.
102. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 4:11.
103. Ecclesiasticus 50:8.

104. Psalms 44:10 (45:9).
105. Psalms 44:11 (45:10).
106. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 2:10.
107. Psalms 44:12 (45:11).
108. Psalms 39:8-9 (40:7-8).
109. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 6:9.
110. III Kings (I Kings) 10:10.
111. Psalms 44:9 (45:8).
112. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 4:12.
113. Psalms 44:5 (45:4).
114. Psalms 44:5 (45:4).
115. Psalms 44:8 (45:7).
116. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 4:8.
117. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1.
118. Esther 5:1.
119. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
120. Psalms 18:7 (19:6).
121. Matthew 11:12.
122. Psalms 34:2 (35:2).
123. I John 2:15.
124. John 8:44.
125. Mark 13:35.
126. Psalms 33:6 (34:5).
127. Ecclesiasticus 24:26.
128. John 14:6.
129. Ecclesiasticus 14:18.
130. Matthew 10:28: "Fear not those who kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in Hell."
131. Matthew 11:28.
132. John 7:37: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."
133. The analysis of *justice* as "rendering to each his own" is drawn, ultimately, from Cicero's *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, V, 23, 67. See also Augustine's *De Libero Arbitrio*, I, 13, 27 (PL 32:1235).
134. Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:16.
135. Psalms 44:4 (45:3).
136. Apocalypse (Revelation) 4:5.
137. Psalms 25:5 (26:5).
138. In section 38 Nicholas spoke already of the ascender's receiving a shield (*clipeus*). Here he seems to repeat himself. But this time he uses the word "*scutum*," indicating that this shield is not a smaller shield worn on the arm but a larger shield that is carried.
139. Ephesians 6:16.
140. The Standard-bearer is Christ.
141. Isaias (Isaiah) 63:1.
142. John 14:6.
143. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:4. The number here is 144,000.
144. "... the Prince of [this] world": viz., the Devil (John 14:30).

**Sermon IX: Complevitque Deus**  
(“And God ended [His work] ....”)  
[September 8, 1431; feast-day of Mary’s birth;  
preached perhaps in Koblenz]

[1] “And on the seventh day God ended the work that He had done, and He rested ....”<sup>1</sup>

Rejoice with all your heart, O Mother, O happy Church!<sup>2</sup> Etc. Let us celebrate most devoutly the rise of the Star from [the lineage of] Jacob<sup>3</sup>—the Star, [viz., Mary], from which the Sun of justice, [i.e.,] Christ our God, issued forth. For this birth of the [God-] Bearer was the beginning of our salvation, etc. For today there was born the Ladder by which the Savior came down to man and by which man ascended unto the Savior. There was born, [viz.,] the Mother of orphans in order to lead unto joy those who were weeping, etc. Who could adequately speak of her marvelous origin? Surely, no one! And so, in order to obtain grace, let us beseech this same one in saying “Hail, Mary!”

[2] The words [of our text] can be expounded along three lines: [first,] as regards the Blessed Virgin Mary, through whom God completed all the works of the six periods and in [whom] He rested on the seventh [day]. Secondly, they can be expounded with respect to [the themes] of rest and of quietude: [viz.,] how it is that on the seventh day God rests in man after having completed the six works. Thirdly, because it is necessary to remove all disquietude (even [disquietude] that is unknown to us by nature) before there is suitable rest: it is necessary to speak about disquietude secondly and, after this, to speak about rest.

*PART ONE*

*The Six Days of Creation and Some Figures  
of the Old Testament Are Expounded with reference to Mary*

(a) *The completion of the work of six days is likened to Mary.*

[3] Regarding the first part: How did God rest after having completed in Mary all the works [of creation]? The answer is the following: “The Lord possessed me from the beginning of His ways, before the earth was made ....” etc.<sup>4</sup> By means of eternal predestination God the Father formed, of old—in His infallible Idea, in a marvelous, ineffable man-



ner—this most glorious Vessel, [viz., Mary], of the reparation of the human condition. And Moses, expressing this point for us says: “In the beginning God created heaven and earth.”<sup>5</sup> That is, He created in the Virgin Mary both a heavenly, angelic life and a human, earthly life. She was “heaven” in terms of her very lofty worthiness and was “earth” in terms of her very lowly humility—heaven because of her very pure virginity and earth because of her very fertile motherhood.<sup>6</sup> But this earth of the Virgin—most fertile with respect to its ancestors—was at the beginning void and empty; and upon the face of the deep, [i.e.,] in terms of her natural issuing forth from Adam, she was dark and cloudy. And then the Spirit of the Lord moved over the waters—i.e., moved over the face of all the people, who are signified by [the phrase] “the deep.” For there was a certain obscuring darkness of original guilt.<sup>7</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord—i.e., Love and Mercy—moved over the waters, i.e., over all the nations.

[4] And then in His own secret council God said: “Let there be light that expels this darkness and that shines forth.” And light was made, viz., the light of the world, a light that was exceedingly good. And by means of this light God separated day from night. For, first of all, by means of the light of His word God expelled the darkness of all bedarkening sin, whose author was separated from the light and turned unto night—i.e., unto everlasting darkness and the lack of the true light of seeing God. And this is the first work. Secondly, by the word of God water was separated from water; i.e., nation was separated from nation by the power of faith, and the people beneath the firmament were separated from the people who were above the firmament; i.e., the people who were earthly pilgrims were separated from the people who were in Heaven. And the firmament was in between; i.e., the glorious Virgin, called *heaven*,<sup>8</sup> was in between pilgrims [on earth] and attainers [in Heaven]. And in this firmament there were twelve stars, or signs, because they were the crown of [this] woman who was clothed with the sun and under whose feet was the moon.<sup>9</sup> The crown had twelve stars—[i.e.,] twelve prerogatives .... And the first work was finished when God willed that His mother, predestined from eternity be born—as, [in truth], she was born today.<sup>10</sup> He gave her to the lost for their salvation—for the remedying and washing away of all sin and for the expelling of the diabolical, nocturnal power and for the birth of Christ, the true Light.

The second work occurred when at His death Christ passed into the heavens and when by way of the firmament of the glorious Virgin

He assigned to His pilgrims and peoples places in the heavens. And, thus, the most blessed Virgin Mary was separated from the pilgrims and the attainers, since she was above the pilgrims but below the attainers and since she shared, with those above her, the perfection-of-virtues and, with those beneath her, the state of continued meriting. And just as the firmament, which is moved immediately by God or by an intelligence, moves and influences [whatever is] below itself, so the most blessed Virgin Mary was in the midst of the outpouring and influencing of grace, etc. For [like] the firmament, she has together with those above her rejoicing and security against falling; and together with those beneath her she has emotional suffering and the possibility of merit.

[5] And so, on the third day all the waters were gathered together into one place:<sup>11</sup> [i.e.,] at the time of the natural law there was a single locus of faith. This gathering [of waters] was called a sea. That is, under the firmament there are two things in all people, viz., a body and a soul. The body is dry land, and the gathering of the waters is called a sea, because people ought to be given an appellation from a consideration of their soul rather than from a consideration of their body. For although dry land is of different kinds, and although bodies are of very different kinds insofar as the proportion of their elements is pure, impure, or mixed (whence some men are black, others white; some are small, others large, etc.), nevertheless there is one gathering of the waters of all rational souls, which are dependent on the Creator alone, without the aid of the elements. This gathering had a single place: viz., the place of the natural law under which [man] was living. And just as when there is no water the earth begets or produces nothing, so when there is water, i.e., a vital spirit, it produces green herbs and every kind of thing that has seeds, etc.,<sup>12</sup> i.e., that has natural operations, which are likened to the vegetative power, etc. And by means of Him who governs the firmament, and by means of the influence of the firmament, which waters the earth with spiritual moisture and which distributes the water, there springs forth the fruit of affection and of love. And just as all intellectual spirits beneath the firmament (viz., human spirits) are called a sea, so [the Virgin] Mary alone is called an in-between sea and a vast sea, excelling by far all other [seas].

[6] On the fourth day: Because *acting* and *being acted upon* are not without influence in the domain of things active, so too spiritual action of grace and of love and of virtues must have spiritual influence. Therefore, in the firmament of the glorious Virgin Mary God placed

the Sun of justice, which would illumine and irradiate and causally influence the entire firmament. And, likewise, [He placed] the Moon, illuminated by the Sun; i.e., [He placed in the firmament] the excellent, imparted grace of the Virgin Mary, who dispelled the darkness of night from the hearts of those beneath the firmament in order that they could come to the daylight of eternal glory. And [this] was the work of the fourth day. That is, for all those who are gathered together within the natural law there was no ray of true life except in both the Sun of justice and the Moon that were in the firmament of Mary. This Sun and this Moon were placed in the firmament at this later time in order in this way to shine from afar upon those producing natural fruit on earth through their faith in the future Messiah. Seeing this [Messianic] Ray, the prophets manifested it. The Ray intimately manifested Himself on earth during the period of grace, when He conversed with men.<sup>13</sup>

[7] But when it thus happened as a result of this influence of faith in the future Messiah—[an influence that] descended unto souls (which are primarily symbolized by the gathering of the waters)—then at the beginning stage, there arose in the soil of the elemental power operations and seeds. This soil is the vegetative vital force situated in the elemental power. It is as if the life-giving Ray were exercising its influence from very far away—as occurred at the time of the natural law before the Flood. Hereafter [there arose] by means of this [vegetative power] every [kind of] reptile and [all kinds of] fish in the waters (i.e., in the souls). They arose in the earth-of-the-affections as powers of the senses. But the seeds and the plants arose first. Hereafter, the vegetative power becomes rooted in the knowing intellect, and it grows to become the power of the senses—[a power that is] vital, aquatic, changing, and influenceable. This was at the time of the Law and the Prophets, at the time of Abraham, etc.

[8] At length, on the sixth day the life of the senses is elevated more highly by means of the affections—elevated unto becoming the powers of the imagination. And this is called the elevation of the affections and of cognition, [and it extends] to all the beasts of the earth. This was at the time of Moses and of Daniel, when [God] was seen more closely. And, finally, [the imaginative power] is elevated, by means of the highest level of the affections and of the intellect, unto knowing the rational animal (viz., man) and itself. And by means of this knowledge (whereby man recognizes his own maleness and femaleness) the heavens and the earth and every adornment are completed. And then [man] sees that all things are completed, and he

begins to rest in God, etc.

[9] Therefore, on the seventh day God ended the work that He had done, and He rested. For on the seventh day (i.e., [if we speak] in accordance with the flux of time)—on the seventh day He rested in His very excellent work, viz., in the Virgin Mary. For “He created all things together”;<sup>14</sup> and “He spoke, and they were made...,” etc.;<sup>15</sup> and “by the word of the Lord the heavens were formed.”<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, all six works were completed in the Virgin, in whom on the seventh day—after six emanating times—God rested, etc. For the first work that was unfolded on the first day contained all the other works within itself. And the other works individualize the days up to the day of rest.

(b) *The annunciation and Mary’s birth.*

[10] This most sacred Scripture, at its very beginning, posited this predestined, eternal, maximal work of the Word’s being incarnated from the Virgin. (Lucifer, because of his arrogant disbelief in this work, fell; and, from the beginning, all were saved by humble faith in this work.) Therefore, all who have been enlightened by the Divine Spirit, and who understand this very deep Scripture with an illumined intellect, prophesy about this very excellent mother [viz., Mary] by means of its words and images. In the first verse of Isaias 11: “A virgin shall come forth from the root of Jesse.” The gloss [says]: “The Virgin Mary, the Bearer of God, is the virgin [referred to]; her Son is the flower [referred to].”<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Numbers 24: “A star shall arise from Jacob.”<sup>18</sup> Again, Isaias: “the sublime fruit of the earth...”<sup>19</sup> The gloss [says]: “... of the Virgin Mary.”<sup>20</sup> Again, Isaias 7: “I went to the prophetess.”<sup>21</sup> The gloss: “... the Virgin Mary.”<sup>22</sup> She is prefigured in the ark of Noah, in the rainbow, in the tabernacle of Moses, in the Ark of the Testament, in the candlestick, in the propitiatory, in the temple, in the throne of Solomon, in the door, in the house of the forest,<sup>23</sup> and in many other things. She is the bush of Moses (Exodus 3),<sup>24</sup> the sapphire throne above the firmament (Osee 1),<sup>25</sup> the mountain from which the stone is cut out without hands (Daniel 2).<sup>26</sup> She is prefigured in the tree that touched the heavens (Daniel 4),<sup>27</sup> in the closed gate (Ezechiel 44),<sup>28</sup> in Gedeon’s fleece (Judges 6),<sup>29</sup> in the small fountain that grew into a very great river (Esther 12),<sup>30</sup> in the beautiful gate of the temple (Acts 4),<sup>31</sup> in the woman clothed with the sun (Apocalypse 10)<sup>32</sup>; in Rebecca, Rachel, Judith, Esther, Sarah, Elizabeth, etc.

[11] The most glorious Virgin Mary received a special divine message. Because John, Isaac, and Samson received special divine

messages, *a fortiori* [Mary received one also]. John is the morning star; Mary is the dawn; Christ is the sun. If John received a special divine message, then . . . , etc. A watchman calls out when he sees the morning star; he sounds the trumpet when he sees the dawn from afar; the sun manifests itself. According to Damascene: just as Anna, who was barren, gave birth to Samuel because of her vow and promise, so Mary was begotten from Joachim and [a different] Anna because of prayers and promises.<sup>33</sup> And, miraculously, Mary was conceived even without original sin—according to the observance of the Church nowadays, although many rational considerations oppose this [view].<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, she was conceived in accordance with the usual course of nature. Much more than John or Jeremias, she was sanctified while in the womb. Of these [two], John was sanctified because of the fact that he was to show the way by pointing [to Jesus]; and Jeremias was sanctified because of the fact that he disclosed, in quite clear prophecy, the coming of the One-who-would-sanctify.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, *a fortiori*, the Mother [of Jesus was sanctified] . . . , etc. For (according to the observance of the Church, which celebrates her conception) she was of such great purity that she never had either original sin or actual sin.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, she was most holy while in the womb, because this [freedom from original sin] has never happened to a [solely] human created-being.

(c) *The disposition of Mary's body; her genealogy; her name.*

[12] **First of all, [let me speak] about the “earth” of the most glorious Virgin Mary**, i.e., about her body and its disposition, [e.g.,] about whether it was exceedingly beautiful, etc. Our first conclusion is that in the most blessed Virgin Mary there was complete congruence both with respect to nature and with respect to grace—to the end that she become the Mother of God. So, too, all the women that symbolize Mary were exceedingly beautiful in body—e.g., Esther, Judith, Rachel, and Rebecca. As regards Esther: she was especially beautiful by virtue of an unbelievable beauty; and she seemed to the eyes of everyone to be friendly and likeable. Now, regarding Judith we read that she was of exceedingly elegant appearance and that there was amazement in the eyes of those who beheld her countenance, etc.<sup>37</sup> And elsewhere [we read]: “There is no such other woman on earth in appearance, in beauty, and in description by words . . . ,” etc.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, as regards Rebecca we read that she was an exceedingly comely young woman and a virgin unknown to a man.<sup>39</sup> Regarding Rachel [we read] that she was of very lovely appearance and of beautiful countenance.<sup>40</sup> But of what

great beauty [Mary] was, and of what great nobility, let each [person] judge from her soul and from her status and from her being the tabernacle of the Most High; for King Solomon made for himself a litter from the wood of Lebanon ....<sup>41</sup> According to the scale of nature, bodies are beautiful and quite beautiful and very beautiful and very noble. But the superlative degree is present in only one thing [of a given kind]. Therefore, just as by a *supernatural* operation the body-of-Christ, which derived from the Virgin, was most perfect, so too the body of the Virgin Mary was *naturally* most perfect as regards the operation of nature in conformity with our pilgrim-state. And although Scripture says nothing about Mary's beauty, nevertheless in remaining silent it intends to say that it would be wrong to believe that there was not present in Mary whatever goodness and beauty was present in other saints. Now, the Gospels praise Mary with regard to her voluntary deeds and with regard to spiritual matters; and they are so occupied with this [focus] that they leave untouched [the topic of her] other, bodily [traits].

[13] Now, bodily beauty consists in three things: in a becoming body-size and in an elegant arrangement of bodily parts and in loveliness of complexion. The body of the Virgin was elegant in quality. It was neither over-weight nor over-developed nor under-weight; rather it was balanced, having its members proportioned very fittingly. The color of her skin was a blend of white and of red—[a ruddiness] which befits a well-tempered body, according to Galen and Constantine.<sup>42</sup> And a brain that is perfectly suited for the *natural powers* produces red hair in infants and reddish hair in others; for the brain is warm and moist, and in the full-grown the hair is red, etc. But a brain that is perfectly suited for the *animal* [i.e., sensing] *powers* is warm and dry; from the warmth comes quickness of apprehending, and from the dryness comes firmness of retaining; and [this brain] produces dark hair. The eyes are the same color as the hair. And such hair and eyes [viz., black] were had by the Virgin Mary. Dark eyes are correlated with acute and quite subtle spirits in a warm brain. And the more subtle the substance, the more form and activity it has. Therefore, although dark eyes do not have much moist crystal, nevertheless their crystal is quite subtle, etc. But Mary was moderately dark in hair and in eyes, just as we believe her blessed Son to have been.

[14] **Secondly: Of what ancestry was she?** It is said: [She was] of the House of David.<sup>43</sup> And by the account of today's Gospel-reading both good men and bad men are reported to have been in her ancestry. [This fact is] not without mystery, according to the doctors [of the

Church]. She is befigured through the rainbow placed in the clouds as a sign of the covenant between heaven and earth.<sup>44</sup> For God could not establish peace with sinners more effectively than by having accepted a daughter of sins as a wife, a spouse, and a mother for His own Son—so that just as she was the mother and the daughter of God, so she was also the mother and the sister and the daughter of the One sinned against. (I leave aside other considerations.)

Now, she was of the genealogy of kings and was very noble in cause, in substance, and in efficacy: in cause, since she took her beginning from a noble Source; in substance, because she had a noble substance and noble properties as regards perfection of nature and fullness of grace; and in efficacy, because she brought forth [Him who was both] God and a man. She had all the gradations of primary nobility because she was of *regal*, *priestly*, and *prophetic* origin—as is evident in consideration of David, Abraham, and Nathan. She had the gradations of secondary nobility because she was a queen (“The queen stood [at your right hand] . . .,” etc.).<sup>45</sup> She was a priest; for she offered up Christ for the human race’s salvation, which (according to Ambrose)<sup>46</sup> she was looking forward to at the foot of the Cross. For she did not stand there in order to view her Son’s pain and death but in order to reflect upon the salvation of the human race. She was a prophetess (“I went to the prophetess . . .,” etc.).<sup>47</sup> She was most noble with regard to the third level of effectiveness, because she begat a Son who was (1) the King of kings . . . , etc.,<sup>48</sup> (2) a Priest according to the order of Melchisedech,<sup>49</sup> (3) a Prophet powerful in deed and in word.<sup>50</sup> The foregoing three honors—of which the first is corporeal; the second, spiritual; the third, heavenly and supernatural—are the world’s very great honors and distinctions.

**[15] Thirdly, one speaks of her name, which is “Mary” . . . ,** etc. And this name is most suitable, for it means “Governess,” “Star of the sea,” “Enlightened one,” “Enlightening one,” “Sea of sadness.” According to Bernard she is rightly called “Mary” because of the worthiness of her person, the usefulness of her action, [and] the distinctiveness of her conception. Her worthiness-of-person is expressed by the nature of light, because she [is called] “the Star of the sea.” (Nothing is more worthwhile and noble than is light; for light is like the divine nature, secondly is like angelic nature, and lastly is like physical nature. Moreover, in the case of physical things nothing is nobler than physical light; and in the case of immaterial things, nothing is nobler than is immaterial light.) She is the morning dawn that

ushers forth the sun ..., etc.<sup>51</sup> Secondly, she is the Star of the sea that leads shipwrecked sailors to port. And, thirdly, as a star is to its light-beam, so is the Virgin to her Son ..., etc. Bernard:<sup>52</sup> “Let us say a few things about that which is called “the star of the sea,” for [that star] is most suitably likened to the Virgin Mother. She is very fittingly compared to a star because just as a star emits a light-beam without fail, so without injury the Virgin gave birth to a Son. And the light-beam does not diminish the star’s brightness; nor does the Son diminish the Virgin’s intactness. She is the Star [arising] from Jacob, whose ray illumines the whole world. She illumines minds rather than bodies; she fosters virtues and burns away vices. I repeat: as a bright and extraordinary star elevated above this large and vast sea, she gleams by her merits and shines forth by her examples.

“O you who in the flux of this world understand yourself to be swaying amid storms and tempests rather than to walk on land: do not turn your eyes away from the splendor of this Star if you wish not to be overwhelmed by the storms. If the winds of temptations assail you, if you run into the reefs of tribulations: look to the Star; call upon Mary. If rage or greed or allurements of the flesh shakes the ship that is your mind: look to Mary. If—upset because of an enormity of wrongdoings, confused because of contamination of conscience, terrified because of fear of judgment—you begin to be alarmed by the chasm or to be encompassed by sadness and by the abyss of hopelessness and begin to be in danger, in difficulty, in doubt: call upon Mary. Let her not recede from your heart nor [her name] from your mouth. And in order to obtain the aid of her prayer [to God], do not be at variance with the example of her behavior. If you follow her, you will not go astray; if you reflect upon her, you will not err. If she holds onto you, you will not fall down. If she protects you, you will not fear; if she leads you, you will not become weary; if she is propitious, you will prosper. And in these ways you will experience within yourself how it is rightly said<sup>53</sup> that ‘the name of the Virgin is Mary.’ ”

(d) *Mary’s special graces and blessings.*

[16] On other feast-days we will speak of how great Mary was with regard to inner virtues, of how full of grace she was—full of sacramental graces, of twelve prerogatives, of beatitudes, and of gifts of the Holy Spirit. She had the graces of all creatures and, in addition to these, twelve special graces. [17] As regards the special graces that surround her manner-of-life, which by grace stems from God’s special



love [for her], it is said that these graces were present most excellently in the Virgin Mary.

Abraham was loved by God because of his faith ...,<sup>54</sup> Moses because of his meekness ...,<sup>55</sup> David because of his humbleness (“I have found David my servant”<sup>56</sup> and “[he is] a man after my heart ...,”<sup>57</sup> etc.), John the Evangelist because of his virginity, and Martha because of her hospitality. Therefore, *a fortiori*, Mary was loved with regard to all these [characteristics].

[18] **Lastly**, because God rested on the seventh day (and immediately [Scripture] adds that He blessed the seventh day) **we must consider the blessings had by the glorious Virgin more than were had by all other women.** Now, her blessing contains within itself three things: viz., consummation of works, freedom from sins, [and] a prefiguring of eternal rest. In the Virgin Mary there was the consummation of works [that comes] when all created things are united to the Creator in one human being and when the first becomes the last, and the last becomes the first.<sup>58</sup> (For there is perfection of motion and of work only circularly). Likewise, in her there is true absence of sins; in her *will* there was never any sin. In her there was restfulness—a sign and a cause of future, [heavenly], rest. She is the true seventh day, blessed multiply because of the sabbath of creation and of true re-creation. For in all things she sought rest, and only in her did the Creator find rest. Therefore, He rested in her tabernacle ...; she is the true Sion, which the Lord chose as His habitation.<sup>59</sup>

Hence, all blessings were excellently present in the glorious Virgin. In particular, the following blessings<sup>60</sup> were present: “Increase and multiply ...”;<sup>61</sup> and “Isaac blessed Jacob ...”;<sup>62</sup> and all the blessings of the twelve sons of Jacob. (These sons symbolize the virtues. For example, Juda symbolizes love; Zabulon symbolizes zeal for souls; Issachar, the exclusion of false delight and of vain tumult; Dan, judgment; Gad,<sup>63</sup> discipline of the senses; Naphtali, the contemplation of things invisible; Aser, justification of practices, etc. See Albertus’s *Words of Praise for the Glorious Virgin*.)<sup>64</sup> Likewise, the blessings of Balaam<sup>65</sup> ... [were present in her as were] also those by which Moses blessed Israel.<sup>66</sup> About these blessings something remains to be said at the Advent; but right now it must be left aside because of other things that need to be said, etc.

(e) *Contemplation of the glory of the Virgin Mary is [here] added.*

[19] Here contemplate the marvelous origin of the Virgin Mary.

Contemplate from an outward viewpoint all created things. Mary is elevated above all the heights of contemplation! Contemplate the firmament and its marvelous constellations, its images and signs, its risings and sittings, the marvelous movements of the planets, the marvelous influences of its innumerable powers and beauties. Contemplate this [royal] litter of King Solomon's<sup>67</sup> [made] from very tall and straight trees of Lebanon, ([i.e., made] of the four columns of the cardinal virtues) and of the cedar of unrottable trees ([i.e.,] of very deep inner-love). Contemplate all created things in and through any given thing: in and through a body or a soul, things natural or products of grace. The Virgin Mary excels them all. Contemplate how she is very full of grace and is blessed among all [human beings].<sup>68</sup> Contemplate the Mother of mercy, the Refuge of the poor, the Star of the sea, the Tabernacle which the Most High sanctified for Himself [as a dwelling-place] in her womb. Contemplate how this exceedingly lovely Rebecca went out as the rising dawn. Contemplate: if [any] creature can have knowledge, virtues, gifts of grace, happiness, etc., then Mary had these things most excellently. O most great Possessor of knowledge, most learned in all fields of knowledge! O most gracious, most merciful Mother, who has begotten a Son who is our very gracious and merciful Savior: venerating your origin we gaze upon you who are all-lovely. We your exiled children cry out unto you with a serene mind, for your birth is our salvation and health. We call upon you. Hearken unto our prayer on this our most health-giving feast-day [commemorating] your entrance into the world.

Contemplate [these things], O Christian, in order that you may arouse yourself (1) to devotion for this Virgin, (2) to [imitating] her way of life, (3) to a life full of virtues, (4) to humility, and (5) to [good] works. According to Dionysius this mother was so great and was of such marvelous beauty that anyone who would have no knowledge of her Son would readily believe *her* to be God.<sup>69</sup> O how great a loveliness-of-virtues was in her—[loveliness] with regard to the natural virtues, the adventitious virtues, the theological virtues, and [loveliness] as concerns the particular prerogatives of the virtues and of grace! O how great her grace—she who was full of grace and who was the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit and who was a fount issuing forth abundant grace. How marvelous the Ark and Vessel, [viz., Mary], that contained infinitely more than itself—[that contained], viz., Him whom heaven and earth could not contain, etc. And in this way her

glory is invisible and unknown to all angels and all creatures, because she is exalted above the choirs of angels, etc. If any saints were to see and to apprehend her glory, then they would have the same glory; hence, no one knows [it] ..., etc.

*PART TWO*

*Restlessness, viz., Greed and Busyness*

(a) *Greed and the evils arising from it.*

[20] “And on the seventh day God ended [the work] ...,” etc. As will be spoken of in the last part [of this sermon], those who on the seventh day put themselves into a quiet mood will find rest at the end of their labors of six days. But since the seventh day—which is called the Sabbath (i.e., Rest)—is blessed by God, restlessness is accursed. Therefore, something must be said about the contrary of rest, viz., about restlessness, i.e., about greed, which is odious. Now, it is evident what restlessness resulting from greed is; for immoderate love of riches makes a man excessively concerned about acquiring or keeping riches. By these concerns and cares a man is drawn away from spiritual things, to which he ought especially attend. Hence, in Matthew 6 it is said: “Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven.”<sup>70</sup> And [the text] continues: “Where your treasure is, there is your heart.”<sup>71</sup> Now, greed is an immoderate love, or immoderate appetite, for getting or keeping external, useful goods that are ordained for the needs of life—such as a field, a house, vineyards, money, etc. If, then, that appetite is centered on others’ goods and moves the greedy man to seize them and keep them, the appetite is opposed to justice. Or the greed is an immoderate love for one’s own riches, and for this reason one clings very tenaciously to them; and in this way, greed is a special vice that is the opposite of generosity. And greed is always a sin.

At the end [of the Epistle] to the Hebrews [it says]: “Let your manners be without greed, contented with such things as you have.”<sup>72</sup> The gloss [reads]: “A greedy man is one who is niggardly in giving and avid in acquiring.”<sup>73</sup> And, thus, both rich men and poor men can be greedy. Nevertheless, because a wealthy man possesses worldly things, his mind is enticed toward loving them. Chrysostom [commenting] on Matthew [writes]: “The acquisition of riches kindles a quite large flame, and the desire [for riches] becomes stronger.”<sup>74</sup> Immoderate love is spoken of notably in regard to one’s own goods, etc. For according to Thomas ... : “If a man loves [something] more than he

ought but less than, not more than, [he loves] God, and yet does not because of his riches will to do something contrary to divine love or something against his neighbor: then [the sin] is venial, because every *mortal* [sin] is opposed to love for God and to love for one's neighbor."<sup>75</sup> And although temporal goods (which are obtained and safeguarded with effort and with apprehension and with risk) are the lowest of human goods, nevertheless they are desired for no other reason than [the following]: men strongly love honors, positions of leadership, liberties, pleasures, etc., and men see that all these things can be had by means of riches.

[21] Yet, for many reasons, greediness is especially odious. [It is odious] first of all because it is [a form of] idolatry. Matthew 6: "You cannot serve God and mammon."<sup>76</sup> The gloss [reads]: "To serve riches is to deny God."<sup>77</sup> For a greedy man *sins against God*. He ought to distribute God's goods and to love God all the more for having bestowed them on him. But on his<sup>78</sup> balance-scales a coin of money weighs more than do God, his own soul, and the Eternal Kingdom. At times, he sells God for less than a denarius when he commits perjury, etc. [The greedy man] *sins against himself*; for, having been redeemed by God, he sells himself to the Devil for a pittance. He *sins against his neighbor* by keeping for himself things which he ought to expend on the neighbor. (Ecclesiasticus 34: "The bread of the needy is the life of the poor."<sup>79</sup>) He *sins against his wife and children*, whom he causes to consent to his sins. He *sins against his merchandise*, because he keeps it hoarded up until it rots. Money is a greedy man's god, for because of money he disregards all of God's precepts: he lusts, swears oaths,<sup>80</sup> does not worship God, does not love God or his neighbor, etc. He is obedient to money, his master.

[22] All sins are from greed, because pride is from greed.<sup>81</sup> For pride is the worm of the rich. He is great who does not think that because he is rich he is great. Moreover, gluttony and luxuriating arise out of riches. And one who has riches enters the Kingdom of Heaven [only] with difficulty ... ;<sup>82</sup> but, according to the gloss, it is impossible for one who desires [riches] to enter.<sup>83</sup> In one who is greedy, whose heart clings to temporal goods, love for God is extinguished, because he besmirches himself in the world's muck. Like a small bird stuck in birdlime, his heart cannot soar upward. And Caesarius likens a greedy, wealthy man to a ship, tossed about at sea, that either founders and sinks or that is brought to shore almost empty with very great loss after the jettisoning of goods. The ship is very much like riches. See how the

ship is shaken by the winds, the waves, etc.; in a similar way a rich man is subject to many dangers, etc. Out of a desire for riches arise wars, combats, murders, strife, betrayals, treason, robberies, sacrileges, etc. And so, Ecclesiastes 5 [says]: Desire for riches “is a grievous evil,”<sup>84</sup> especially long-lasting when it concerns what is material, because many things in the world are desirable on the part of greed and greed is on-going. Ecclesiastes 2: “All his days are full of sorrows and miseries.”<sup>85</sup>

Greed greatly afflicts at the time one *acquires*; it seriously afflicts during the time one *possesses*; it most grievously afflicts at the time one *loses*. Greed will not spare old age, because when other vices become senescent . . . , etc.<sup>86</sup> According to Seneca “the greed of old age is like a monster. What is more foolish than to take on more provisions when the pathway is ending?”<sup>87</sup> O what a wretched thing is greed! How many vain concerns it has with regard to keeping! How many deceptions with regard to acquiring! For the world is full of deceptions and of greed. All men—from the most important to the least important—are given to greed.<sup>88</sup> O insatiableness! Unlimited desire is not satisfied by finite things. The heart of a greedy man is not satisfied unless land or gold is given to him—just as thirst is not quenched unless wine is drunk. You have thirsted for gold . . . , etc. Consider your servitude, you who serve riches; you serve a mistress who does not grant that you eat or that you ever rest. [One who is greedy] must always labor either physically or mentally (in preparing snares of deception); and, therefore, he becomes foolish. Luke 12: “You Fool. This night . . . ,” etc.<sup>89</sup> “The wisdom of this world is foolishness . . . ,” etc.<sup>90</sup>

[23] Greed is like the sea, like death,<sup>91</sup> and like Hell—which are insatiable. It is like a mole, which is blind and which produces many mounds of earth and is hidden amidst them all, etc. It is like a dung-pit, like the wheel of a mill-house, like a pig, a box with holes, the trunk of a tree, a hen, an abscess near the heart, a bag with holes, a man with dropsy, and like a thorn in the foot. Look at the *A Healthy Diet*, etc.<sup>92</sup>

[24] Now, just as in regard to love for God rest comes by means of six stages and by means of the works of six days, so too in regard to love of one’s neighbor one ascends unto rest by means of six works of mercy. And immoderate love of one’s riches, which begets restlessness with regard to retaining them, removes rest, while being rigidly opposed to these stages of mercy. And in regard to other goods the

appetite likewise has six gradations, or six stages, of restlessness. For in the case of obtaining goods greed is considered either with respect to the affections (and so the degree of restlessness is inwardly fervent) or with respect to its effect {and, in that case, when it acquires another's goods it uses sometimes force (which pertains to acts of violence), sometimes deceit (which, if it occurs *verbally*, will be deception with regard to the simple [giving of one's] word; but it will be perjury if the swearing of an oath is added)}. But if deceit is committed in a *deed*, it will be fraud if it has to do with *things*, and it will be betrayal if it has to do with *persons* (as is evident from Judas, who out of greed betrayed Christ). And, seventhly and chiefly, restlessness that stems from greed is moved in different directions unstably. For all the species of greed are reduced to the following forms: viz., robbery, usury, unjust pricing, simony, etc., and also commerce.

(b) *Commerce and trade.*

[25] Moreover, with respect to this vice [of greed] I want to dwell upon details, and I intend to touch a bit, first of all, upon commerce and trade and, secondly, upon obstinacy in holding onto one's riches and, thirdly, upon remedies for this vice [of greed].

In order for the contract having to do with buying and selling to be just, there is required (according to Scotus in Book IV, Distinction 15)<sup>93</sup> free will both in the one selling and in the one buying. There is required, secondly, liberty in the case of both parties, so that neither party is forbidden [to act—]forbidden] by law or by his position (e.g., clerics, monks, a minor, servants, etc.). There is required, thirdly, that the exchange occur without fraud. Now, fraud is committed in three ways: in terms of species or substance, by selling one thing as if it were another; secondly, with regard to size or weight; thirdly, with regard to quality (substituting what is defective for what is whole, substituting what is corrupt for what is unblemished, etc.) If one does these things knowingly, he commits fraud and the sale is unjust and he is obliged to make restitution. ([See] Book VI of *On Injuries and on Harm Done ...*, etc.)<sup>94</sup> If he knew of these [injustices], he sins; if he did not know, he does not sin but is [still] obliged to make restitution. Now, understand as applying also to the *buyer* that which has just been said with regard to the *seller*. If someone [mistakenly] sells gold in place of silver or in place of bronze, the buyer who knows this is cheating ..., etc.

Fourthly, there is required equality of value between the things exchanged. For selling-and-buying is introduced for the common

good, since you need something of mine, and I need something of yours. And so, [the exchange] ought not to be more to the detriment of the one than of the other. Therefore, the price and the value of the thing-sold ought to correspond. Matthew 7: “Whatsoever you will that men do unto you . . .,” etc. “That which you wish to be done to you . . .,” etc.<sup>95</sup> No one willingly desires to pay more than [a thing’s] value; therefore, one ought not to charge [more] . . ., etc. And even though—in a case where fraud is not committed—a contract is rescinded on the basis of the written code-of-law only if the buyer has been cheated by more than one and one-half times a fair price, nonetheless divine law does not leave unpunished anything that is contrary to virtue. According to divine law [a transaction] is esteemed illicit in case equal justice is not preserved. And so, according to God, one who swindles is obliged to make restitution to him whom he has harmed, if the harm is notable. I say this because sometimes the fair price of items is not exactly determinable but consists, rather, in a certain estimate, so that a slight increase or decrease does not seem to detract from equal justice. Although virtue consists in a mean, nevertheless it does not consist in an indivisible mean, etc. Moreover, a just price is determined not always simply from the value of the item but also (1) from the loss that the seller suffers because of the sale and (2) from the gain that the buyer receives. But although someone is greatly aided from [purchasing] some possession of another’s, and although that other is not harmed [by selling it], nevertheless the item is not to be sold for more than it is worth; for the usefulness that accrues to the buyer does not result from the sale but from the circumstance of the buyer. However, the one who is thus aided can generously make an extra, non-required payment; and this [act] pertains to his honorableness.

[26] Moreover, an exchange is twofold: (1) a *personal exchange*, when the one party intends to receive the item in order to use it; (2) a *commercial exchange*, [when someone receives the item] not in order to use it but in order to sell it. And to the end that the commercial exchange may be fair, two things are required: First, [it is required] that the exchange be useful to the state—as occurs in the case of merchants who transfer [goods] from an abundant country to a country that does not have [them] but where their use is more needed. A further [example has to do with] those who keep the purchased items on hand so that marketable items are readily found by those who want to buy them. There are other merchants who merchandise in a blameworthy way; they neither transfer [goods] nor store [them]; nor by their

industry is the salable thing made better. Rather, [the merchant] buys *now* in order to sell immediately, independently of all the aforementioned conditions. Such a [merchant] must be weeded out as being someone harmful to the community, because these men prevent the immediate exchange of those who want to exchange for their own use. And, thus, they make each saleable or ordinary thing to be more expensive for the buyer than it ought to be and less valuable to the seller, [thereby] doing injury to both parties, etc.

A second thing required for commercial exchange is that such a merchant receive in his transaction a price corresponding to his investment of time and effort and to his incurring of risks. For if he serves the state in an honorable manner by transporting [goods] or storing [them], then he ought to [be able] to live from his labor. Each man can justly sell his effort and his investment-of-time; and he is permitted to set the price in conformity to these and to the risks. But he ought not to seek to become excessively wealthy, lest he incur greediness, etc. And according to St. Thomas he ought not to aim at profit as the goal of his efforts; rather, he ought to aim at another goal ([viz.], at something necessary or at something honorable): [e.g.,] at supporting his household or at assisting the needy, etc.<sup>96</sup>

[27] From the foregoing, note that trade, which ought to be practiced in a fair manner, ought to have the aforesaid restrictions. And it ought not at all be conducted on a feast-day, because God rested on the sabbath day and blessed the seventh day. Should you wish to set aside God's precept for the sake of your advantage, then you would be sinning mortally. Keep the sabbath days holy! It is scarcely possible for trade and commerce to be engaged in without sin. For either deception or perjury or fraud or concealed usury enter in, because you sell too expensively at the time or there is concealed deception, [etc.]. [For example,] you sell cloth in a dark building; and in the open-air the buyer sees that he was fooled with regard to the color. For there are deceptions on the part of all sellers. Draw [this] conclusion from butchers, fishermen, millers, etc. And if you stick to keeping the sabbath holy, how can you practice commerce lawfully [on the sabbath]—unless necessity, which has no law, intervenes? If tasks of service, etc., are forbidden—[tasks] which [in and of themselves] can be done without sin—then, *a fortiori*, why do not also merchants, barbers, butchers, etc., (who ought likewise to keep the sabbath) take heed? Consider the example, found in Guallensis, of how it is that Abbot Aichardus<sup>97</sup> sent to have his [tonsured head] shaved [on the sabbath]. And the Devil



marked all the [remaining] hairs [of his head] with his imprint. After the Abbot was brought to repentance, he regained his trimmed hair as a sign of forgiveness. If God commands that one who gathers wood on the sabbath be stoned ...,<sup>98</sup> then why do those who govern the state permit the sabbath to be violated in this way? Those who do not keep the sabbath are for that reason not enriched, as Gregory in his dialogue tells regarding the man Deusdedit, of a religious order and a shoemaker.<sup>99</sup> He kept the sabbath and was not accustomed to make shoes [on the sabbath]; and he had, happily, all that he desired. Another always worked and was always poor, etc.

(c) *On rightly using one's time.*

[28] [I will speak] briefly about *hardness of heart*. In order that someone do what he ought with goods granted him by God, you should know (according to Armicanus) that one is obliged to distribute goods that he does not need, etc. [Those goods] are unneeded which are neither necessary for a person nor suitable to his status or his person. With regard to man, there are four things to be considered, each of which requires some amount of financial resources. First, there is the *person*, who wishes to have food, clothing, shelter, etc., in order to live and to be able to be active spiritually and physically; and [these needs] are called personal necessities. But that which is sometimes necessary for one person is more than enough for another, etc., depending on disability and health. And this [personal] necessity is also seen in the case of a family-obligation and a wife.

Secondly, *honorableness* is considered. It is a certain excellence of person with respect to certain good [traits] that are in the person; by reason of these good [traits] a person is rendered worthy of honor. Moreover, honorableness is a virtue that confers honor because of strength and knowledge. Now, the populace has an eye to outward nobility, family-size, costly garments, magnificence of food and of domicile. And it judges honorableness [in terms of these]; and it errs, because [these] are vanity and vainglory. Where there are virtues ..., etc. And one who is truly honorable can have somewhat more [means] for his garments and his servants.

Thirdly, one's job and the requirements of one's position are taken into account. Depending on one's position, one needs servants, tools, etc. And for this reason he must have temporal [goods] that correspond to his position and obligations. [Consider] the example of a general, who in order to preserve the peace needs guardians and sol-

diers. And these latter need servants and cooks, etc. And a citizen needs tools for his mechanical craft and needs weapons for the defense of his country and needs money for paying taxes to his lord, etc. The case is similar as regards a teacher, a deacon, a rector, etc., in accordance with the fact that different obligations befall them.

Fourthly, the honorableness of one's position must be considered, because of which honorableness servants, [appropriate] garments, etc., are required. Hence, one is permitted to have temporal resources, by means of which he can obtain all these [required] things. And honorableness has degrees, in conformity with the persons, etc. [Possessing but] few things is sufficient for honorableness; but no amount of possessions suffices for one who is idly curious, pompous, and vain, because by these men all [the goods] are consumed, and nothing is left for the poor. Yet, whatever a man has over and above the aforementioned [goods] belongs as a whole to the poor and must—on pain of mortal sin—be distributed to the poor or else be used to enhance the worshipping of God or be put to some other pious uses.

[29] However, no one ought to give alms from those things that are unqualified necessities—things without which a man cannot live—because he would be taking away life from himself and his dependents. [No one ought to do this] except in a case where he would be doing it for some great prince, for a pope, or an emperor—or doing it for a defender of his country. For in order that [that other individual] might live, he himself would, perchance, have to give himself up even to death for the sake of the common good. But alms are permitted to be given from that which is necessary [in such a way that] without it one cannot *conveniently* live. [Such giving] is not commanded; therefore, it is meritorious. With regard to one's super-abundant possessions, there is no merit [in distributing them to the poor], because [to do so] is obligatory. With regard to things without which one cannot live *conveniently*: in time of necessity alms-giving is required: "Feed one who is dying of hunger ...," etc. The wealthy offer excuses because of their children, for whom they say they are keeping [the wealth]. But oftentimes they are lying, because if a son were to die, the wealthy would nonetheless hold onto the goods; and if the [deceased son] could ask [for his share, the father] would not give it to him, according to Augustine.<sup>100</sup> In this way Coloniensis did not want to give his goods to his sons. In this way the Florentines say that only the last inheritor of a usurer goes to Hell, etc. Instead of distributing their excess [goods], the wealthy endeavor, when dying, to found churches;

and they believe that thereby they will be saved [from divine punishment]. The Lord's commandments ought not to be kept in this way but ought to be kept in the way that the Lord commanded. [Consider] the example of Saul<sup>101</sup>... and of Oza<sup>102</sup>..., [and] of the prophet in Bethel who was sent to Jeroboam,<sup>103</sup> etc. Lo, the following is evident from these examples: those who wish to rely upon their own cleverness and to explain away, to excuse, or to conceal their wrong-doings deceive themselves, etc.

(d) *Remedies for greed.*

[30] Now [I will speak of] the remedies for greed. First of all, association with the greedy and cupid must be avoided. And, secondly, "lift not up your eyes unto riches."<sup>104</sup> Thirdly, do not pay attention to the advantages of riches but to the infinite number of disadvantages. Shun worldly glory. In whatever condition you were—whether you were a thief or a bandit or a usurer, etc., or a simonizer or a cheat—reflect on the fact that all of your sins will, in the end, come to light and will ruin your reputation, no matter how subtly you have committed them. [Take] the example of two subtle thieves, one of whom stole a goblet, the other of whom stole fish; but both were hanged. Then, too, there was the thief who wanted to measure a church in Paris with a rope ..., etc. Consider the fact that you are going to die and to leave all things *here*, after the example of the king of the Muslims. After he saw that he was going to die, he had his handkerchief carried throughout the state as a banner and had a proclamation made: "Our leader, the King of twelve kingdoms, says the following: 'Of my glory and my riches this [handkerchief] alone will I take with me.'" Consider the virtues of the ancients—the way in which Diogenes, Socrates, Plato, etc., shunned riches because of their virtues. [And consider] the way in which that philosopher who had a silver goblet threw it away when he saw a boy cupping water with his hand.

Moreover, [there is the case] of the other philosopher who, when his house burned down carried nothing out of it and said: "All of my possessions are with me ...," etc. And [there is the story] of another philosopher who had, beneath his head, a purse with silver coins—[a purse] which a thief wanted to steal away from him at night. When that philosopher sensed that a thief was engaged in this [thievery], he said: "Take it, so that you and I can get some rest." And [consider] the way that an empty-handed traveller sounds in the presence of a bandit. And [think] of the pauper who was usually glad [but] who became sad after

he found silver coins, etc. See the examples in Gualensis's *Concerning the Laws*. [Consider] the goods of Lord Lenucius de Valle and his son. [Consider the example] of Scipio Africanus, who conquered all of Africa and took away nothing but his cognomen. [Consider the example] of Marcus Curius, who was eating on a country bench next to a small fire. Legates sought to corrupt him with gold. When they offered it, he laughed and said: "You have brought [the gold] in vain. Tell the Sammites that Marcus Curius prefers to command the wealthy rather than to become wealthy." Likewise, [there is the story] of Fabricius, who called himself rich not by virtue of possessing many things but by virtue of desiring few things. [There is the case] of Quintus Tubero, who, when he was using earthen vessels and when legates brought him silver ones, ordered them to go away: "Greater is the treasure of continence," he said, "than is a treasure of money." Similarly, [there is the case] of Arthagloga, King of Sicily, son of a potterer. He used earthen [vessels] and did not want to change his nature because of his good fortune. Furthermore, there is the other philosopher who, when he was offered much by the king, said that because he spurned more things than the king possessed, he was much richer [than the king]; and he accepted nothing.

[31] But when you turn these matters over in your mind and consider how blessed it is to please God in all respects and consider how transitory this life is, you begin to disdain superfluous riches, and God causes you to ascend by means of love—[ascend] to the point where you disdain even necessities that are suitable to your position. And subsequently you will disdain, in turn, necessities of honorableness. And thereafter you will decrease your personal necessities by means of mortification [of the flesh]—and, after this, by means of getting rid of your property and by following, as naked, the naked and impoverished Crucified One. And after you will have ascended in this way for six days, God will rest in you and will sanctify your seventh day, because he will have completed His works in you.

[Let] the foregoing [suffice] regarding the second [topic].

### PART THREE

#### *Ascension by means of Seven Stages of Contemplation*

[32] "And on the seventh day God ended [the work] . . .," etc.<sup>105</sup> God, who wills to prepare for Himself a mansion in order to rest in the soul by enlivening it eternally, causes man to cling to six stages of life by contemplating for six days. And on the seventh day man rests in God

and God in man. All of our works are divided by seven: in seven hours the *conceptus* is formed into a fetus; in seven days it acquires [human] contours; in seven times seven days it is fit for a rational soul; in seven months it is fit for birth; in seven years it is fit for language; in twice seven, for youth; in four times seven, for young adulthood, etc. Similarly, the world is turned in seven seasons; in seven days there is a week; in seven planets there is a causal influence; man's entire life occurs in seven life-stages. Moreover, there are seven angels in the Apocalypse<sup>106</sup> and seven golden candlesticks<sup>107</sup> and seven gifts of the [Holy] Spirit.<sup>108</sup> And when the seventh angel sounds with the trumpet, the mystery will be over, for on the seventh day there is complete rest.

[33] At the first stage of contemplation the ascent is unto true, living rest by means of the general work of the first day: [viz., the creation] of basic life, viz., vegetative life, that is present in all living physical objects. The second stage is the work of the second day: [viz.,] perceptual life. At the third stage one ascends unto the life of the imagination; at the fourth stage, unto the life-of-memory, which is common to the learned and the unlearned. At the fifth stage one is elevated when he ascends unto a pure willing of heavenly things. At the sixth stage one is elevated by means of the pure eye of the intellect—[elevated] unto beholding Him who is supremely desirable and is supremely loved. And thereupon, on the seventh day and at the seventh stage, this beholding apprehends the mansion of true Truth. In this way this ascension corresponds to the creation of [six] days—[a topic that] will be left aside for the sake of brevity. But in another way the first stage is called animation; the second, sense; the third, art; the fourth, virtue; the fifth, tranquility; the sixth, entrance; the seventh, contemplation. But [the stages] can also be spoken of as follows:<sup>109</sup> (1) from the body, (2) by means of the body, (3) with respect to the body, (4) unto [the soul] itself, (5) in [the soul] itself, (6) unto God, (7) with God. And [they can be spoken of] as (1) beautiful from another, (2) beautiful through another, (3) beautiful with respect to another,<sup>110</sup> (4) beautiful unto beautiful, (5) beautiful in the beautiful, (6) beautiful unto beauty, (7) beautiful with beauty. O happy is he who can arrive at seeing these things! O he is truly religious, because true religion is to reunite oneself, in reconciliation, to God, from whom one had torn oneself away by sinning.

[34] On the first day, seeing occurs by the senses in conformity with the imagination; and at that time [the soul] uses the world as a mirror.<sup>111</sup> On the second [day seeing occurs] by means of the imagi-

nation in conformity with the imagination; here [the soul] uses not the world but the image of the world as a mirror. On the third [day] seeing occurs by means of the imagination in conformity with reason; the reason for the image is now sought and is now found with amazement. On the fourth [day seeing occurs] by means of reason in conformity with imagination; through the likenesses of visible things [the soul] is now caught up unto invisible things. On the fifth [day seeing occurs] by means of reason in conformity with reason; [the soul] now proceeds, by reasoning, from things known to things unknown. On the sixth day [seeing occurs] above reason by beholding amid the elevation those things which transcend the nature of mind or are counter to reason, as are the articles of faith. And next comes rest, because there follows rapture, or ecstasy, in which “Rachel” (i.e., reason) dies and “Benjamin” (i.e., perfection of contemplation) is born.

[35] Now, the ascent unto God varies according to the persons and the medium. There are some who ascend by means of the state of this earthly condition and who see through a glass darkly<sup>112</sup> in five ways: (1) by means of a vestige, (2) by means of an image (by a vestige of creatures, by an image of the soul), (3) by means of unformed faith, (4) by means of faith [in-]formed [by love], and (5) by means of contemplation. Other men see beyond [the limitations of this] present earthly pathway—[see] in a mirror, [not darkly but] in light, in four ways: (1) the first vision is that of the prophets; the second [vision] is that of Moses, [viz.,] face to Face;<sup>113</sup> the third [vision] is that of John, who was sleeping on [Christ’s] breast;<sup>114</sup> the fourth [vision] occurs, without a darkening—[occurs] in Adam’s state of innocence, when his intellect was pure. Above this earthly pathway there is the vision of sleeping Adam, viz., ecstasy. [And] there is the Virgin Mary’s rapture and vision. And her vision excels all other visions in three ways: (1) as concerns the Virgin’s purity, (2) as concerns the disproportional medium (viz., the means of grace granted only to her), and (3) as concerns God’s love. (He loved her more than all others, and He joined her in fellowship with Himself by means of a disproportional love.) Our vision, in our Heavenly Homeland, is that of those who are glorified in body and in soul; it is that of the angels and of the Virgin Mary. Higher than all these visions is our vision of Christ. First of all, [this vision] on the part of the attainer [of Heaven comes] through the grace by which the attainer apprehends more clearly than do any other creatures. Secondly, [this vision comes] with respect to the grace of the deific union by which the soul knows more perfectly that Christ’s divine

nature is united to it itself. And with regard to [our seeing Christ's] deity: this is the very vision that is the seeing of the Trinity as a whole. In comparison with this seeing, all of the aforementioned visions and states of knowing are imperfect.

*AN ADDITIONAL TREATMENT [OF THE TOPIC]*

*The six days of creation are likened to the stages and periods  
by which rational, human life was elevated and completed in Christ.*

[36] “In the beginning God created heaven and earth . . .,”<sup>115</sup> etc. That is, [He created] all things. [He created] heaven, i.e., the heavenly natures, and earth, i.e., earthly natures (coarse natures and subtle natures, etc.). The earth was void, because it lacked a vital, rational spirit. And it was empty of every vital, worthwhile operation, because darkness was upon the face of the abyss—i.e., because in the depths of its nature there was the darkness-of-ignorance of original guilt.<sup>116</sup> And over these waters of the rational creature the Spirit of the Lord moved, because rational creatures are not brought forth from the potency of matter. The Spirit moved by *creating* in this way and by *re-creating* out of love and mercy. And out of love and mercy the Lord spoke, and there was made true light, which illumined and dispelled the darkness. And when God saw within His own depths that that light was good, He separated it from the darkness, which did not tolerate it. That is, He separated it from rational creatures who did not believe this light to be good. Since heaven and earth were created first, there was at that moment no true light in this created [state]; but now true Light was united hypostatically with what was created. And creatures, not believing this Light, turned away from it and withdrew into darkness—as, for example, did the angels, Lucifer, etc., who for this reason fell, from the very first. And thereafter all the unbelieving [angels fell]. But [the angels] who remained in the light were led unto glory, i.e., into everlasting day, whereas those [angels] who departed [from the light] were led into everlasting darkness.

[37] The work of the second day determined the way in which creatures were expressly present in this work in a state of unorderedness, because rational creatures were beneath the firmament and above the firmament, and the firmament was in the middle. The work of the third day [determined] that the waters (i.e., rational creatures) were at first gathered into the one place of the natural law. And the collection was called a lake. And the land was dry; a lake (i.e., rational spirits) in the depth of the dry land (i.e., of the body) produced—by means of the

natural law and in accordance with its own elements—plants and trees, etc. That is, in the first stage of vegetative life, which is situated in elemental life, the sensing (from very far away) of the supernatural, vital ray produced natural operations innate to itself—[produced them] without regulation and prescribed law. On the fourth day, in the intermediate nature (which is the firmament between the heavenly waters and the earthly waters), God placed great lights (specifically, at the time of Noah and of Abraham): viz., the sun of justice<sup>117</sup> in the firmament and the moon, i.e., the most blessed Virgin, who is situated in the firmament *above* all bodily creatures existing in this pilgrim-state but *below* the attainers [of Heaven]. And in this firmament where this moon is situated, there is the humanified Sun-of-justice. And this Sun, [viz., God the Son], rules over the Kingdom of Heaven and over the daylight, whereas the Moon, [viz., the Virgin Mary], is in charge of all darkness, i.e., of all creatures.<sup>118</sup> On the fifth day, at the time of the prophets (who now perceived this ray of the Sun of justice and of the Moon), the waters (i.e., rational souls) produced a reptile, etc., (i.e., produced works of higher life, viz., of perceptual life).

[38] On the sixth day (at the time of Moses and of Daniel) the earth (already stirred by faith in the Sun of justice at the time of the commandments) brought forth [still] higher works of life, viz., [works] of the imaginative life. And, at length, the water and the land, being quite extensively distributed by means of faith—that is, the human race being, at length, now spread out—received a living, life-giving man, [viz.,] Christ the Sun (who was God and a man, someone Supreme but united to what was lowest). Previously [He was received] from afar in the firmament; but now [He was received] on earth. (And, likewise, [the human race received] the Moon—previously from afar but now on earth.) That is, [God] created [a man] after His own image. That is, the Father created for His own Image, viz., for the Son,<sup>119</sup> a human nature, which He united hypostatically to the Son.

And that human being of whom it was previously spoken with regard to the works [of creation] and who already came near [to possessing] a life of reason and who already possessed the imaginative life as a whole—that man [God] now created in His image as truly rational both in terms of masculinity and in terms of femininity, i.e., both in regard to the higher part of the intellect and in regard to the lower part of the will ..., etc.



## NOTES TO SERMON IX

1. Genesis 2:2.
2. Hymn for the feast of Mary's birth. See *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, Vol. 51 (*Die Hymnen des Thesaurus Hymnologicus H. A. Daniels und anderer Hymnen-Ausgaben* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1908)), edited by Clemens Blume. On p. 144 Blume cites this hymn as having to do with Mary's assumption (not her birth).
3. Numbers 24:17. The immediately subsequent reference to the Sun of justice is taken from Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
4. Proverbs 8:22.
5. Genesis 1:1.
6. Throughout this sermon Nicholas is using *autonomasia* in expounding Genesis 1 and 2. See, above, my note 17 in Sermon VIII.
7. Nicholas is here viewing the human race as fallen. He is not implying that the original creation was other than good.
8. See n. 6 above.
9. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1 (not Apocalypse 10, as Nicholas writes at the end of the next sentence).
10. "... was born today": i.e., was born on the day commemorated by this present feast-day.
11. Genesis 1:9.
12. Genesis 1:12.
13. Baruch 3:38.
14. Ecclesiasticus 18:1. Nicholas holds the view that God created all things at once and that the days of creation are ways in which Moses wrote in order to accommodate the limitations of human understanding. See Cusa's *Dialogus de Genesi*, II (159).
15. Psalms 148:5.
16. Psalms 32:6 (33:6).
17. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Interlineari, Ordinaria, et Nicolai Lyrani Expositionibus, Burgensis Additionibus et Thoringi Replis*, Vol. IV (Venice, 1588), f. 28<sup>r</sup>, column 1. [Volumes V & VI have the variant title: *Biblia Sacra ... Lyrani Postilla eiusdemque Moralitatibus ...*].
18. Numbers 24:17.
19. Isaias (Isaiah) 4:2.
20. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa, op. cit.* (n. 17 above), f. 13<sup>r</sup>, column 2 (Postilla Nicolai Lyrani).
21. Isaias (Isaiah) 8:3 (not Isaias (Isaiah) 7, as Nicholas writes).
22. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa, op. cit.* (n. 17 above), f. 22, column 1.
23. III Kings 7:2 (I Kings 7:2).
24. Exodus 3:2.
25. Not Osee 1 (Hosea 1) but Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 1:26.
26. Daniel 2:34.
27. Daniel 4:10-11.
28. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 44:2.
29. Judges 6:36-37.

30. Esther 10:6 (not Esther 12). This verse is not in the King James version.
31. Acts 3:2 (not Acts 4).
32. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:1 (not Apocalypse 10).
33. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, IV, 14, 274-275.
34. See, above, my n. 40 in Sermon VIII. See, below, n. 69.
35. Matthew 3:11. Luke 1:41. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 1:5.
36. See, above, my n. 40 in Sermon VIII.
37. Judith 8:7 and 10:14.
38. Judith 11:19.
39. Genesis 24:16. "... unknown to a man": i.e., without having had sexual relations with a man.
40. Genesis 29:17.
41. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 3:9.
42. Claudius Galenus. See *Galenii Ars Medicinalis cum Commentariis Francisci Vallesii* (1567), ff. 38<sup>r</sup> - 41<sup>r</sup>. Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Mariale* (1488 edition), Chap. 44. Constantinus Africanus, *L'Arte Universale della Medicina (Pantegni)*, I, 18. Edited and translated from Latin into Italian by Marco T. Malato and Umberto de Martini (Rome: University of Rome, 1961), pp. 65-66.
43. Luke 1:27. John 7:42. If Christ is of the seed of David, then He is so through Mary, not through Joseph. Thus, Mary is of the house of David (as is also Joseph).
44. Genesis 9:13.
45. Psalms 44:10 (45:9).
46. Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, X, 132 (PL 15:1930C-D).
47. Isaias (Isaiah) 8:3.
48. Apocalypse (Revelation) 19:16.
49. Hebrews 7:17.
50. Luke 24:19.
51. Canticle of Canticles 6:9 (Song of Solomon 6:10).
52. Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Laudibus Virginis Matris Homilia*, 2, 17 (PL 183:17B - 71A). Mary is called by Bernard not only the Star of the sea but also the Star arising from Jacob (Numbers 24:17).
53. Luke 1:27.
54. Genesis 15:6 (not Genesis 2, as Nicholas writes). James 2:23.
55. Numbers 12:3.
56. Psalms 88:21 (89:20).
57. I Kings 13:14 (I Samuel 13:14).
58. Matthew 19:30 and 20:16.
59. Ecclesiasticus 24:11-12. Psalms 131:13 (132:13).
60. Here (at 18:24) I am reading "illae" in place of "illa".
61. Genesis 1:28.
62. Not an exact quotation by Nicholas. Genesis 27:28-29.
63. Here (at 18:31) I am reading (with the editors of the Latin text) "Gad" in place of Nicholas's "Dan".
64. Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Mariale* (1488 edition), Chaps. 201-230.
65. Numbers 23. Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Mariale* (1488 edition), Chaps. 214-217.

66. Deuteronomy 28:3-13.
67. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 3:9-10.
68. Luke 1:28.
69. This amazing passage is present in manuscripts C and in  $V_1$ . However, in  $V_1$  the passage has been deleted (by someone other than  $V_1$ ). See, above, n. 34 and the passage that is marked by it.
70. Matthew 6:20.
71. Matthew 6:21.
72. Hebrews 13:5.
73. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa, op. cit.* (n. 17 above), Vol. VI (Venice, 1588), f. 161<sup>r</sup>, column 1.
74. Not an exact quotation. John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Matthaem*, 63, 3 (PG 58: 606, bottom).
75. Not an exact quotation. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 118, 4 *corpus*. Cusa mistakenly writes “q. 58” (instead of “q. 118”).
76. Matthew 6:24.
77. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa, op. cit.* (n. 17 above), Vol. V (Venice, 1588), f. 26<sup>v</sup>, column 1.
78. Here (at 21:8) I am reading “sua” in place of “suus”.
79. Ecclesiasticus 34:25.
80. See Matthew 5:34-37.
81. Pride is said by theologians to be the root of all evil. (See, e.g., Augustine, *De Musica* 13, 40 (PL 32:1184).) *A fortiori* greed is that root if pride stems from greed.
82. Matthew 19:23.
83. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa, op. cit.*, (n. 17 above), Vol. V (Venice, 1588), f. 59<sup>v</sup>, column 1.
84. Ecclesiastes 5:12 (5:13).
85. Ecclesiastes 2:23.
86. I.e., whereas other vices grow senescent, greed alone does not become old.
87. Seneca, *De Moribus Liber*, n. 18 (p. 462 in Vol. I of *L. Annaei Senecae Opera Quae Supersunt*, edited by F. Haase (Leipzig: Teubner, 1862).
88. Jeremiah (Jeremiah) 6:13.
89. Luke 12:20: “This night is your soul required of you.”
90. I Corinthians 3:19: “... is foolishness with God.”
91. Here (at 23:1) I am reading “morti” in place of “mortuo”.
92. See, below, n. 44 of my Notes to Sermon X.
93. Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in Librum Quartum Sententiarum*, Liber IV, Distinctio 15, Quaestio 2, pp. 277<sup>1</sup> - 284<sup>1</sup> in Vol. 18 of *Joannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia* (Paris: Vivès, 1894). Here (at 25:8) I am correcting Cusa’s “dist. 3” to “dist. 15”.
94. Instead of Book VI—a mistake by Nicholas—see the *Decretals of Pope Gregory IX*: Book V, Title 36 (*De Iniuriis et Damno Dato*), Chap. 9 [*Corpus Iuris Canonici*, edited by Aemilius Friedberg, Vol. II (Leipzig, 1880), column 880].
95. Matthew 7:12.
96. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 77, 4, *corpus*.
97. Johannes Guallensis, *Legiloquium*.
98. Numbers 15:32-36.

99. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, Book IV, chap. 37 (PL 77:388B-C).
100. Augustine, *Sermon 9*, 12, 20 (PL 38:89-90). The son dies and is with God. If he were to ask that his inheritance be given to him (and thus to God, by giving it to the poor), the father would refuse.
101. I Kings (I Samuel) 15:1-34.
102. II Kings (II Samuel) 6:6-8.
103. III Kings (I Kings) 13:1-32.
104. Proverbs 23:5.
105. Genesis 2:2.
106. Apocalypse (Revelation) 8:2.
107. Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:13.
108. Isaias (Isaiah) 11:2-3.
109. Augustine, *De Quantitate Animae*, 35.79 (PL 32:1079).
110. Here (at 33:24) I am reading "circa" in place of "contra".
111. Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Maior*, I, 6 (PL 196:70B - 72C).
112. I Corinthians 13:12.
113. Exodus 33:11.
114. John 13:25.
115. Genesis 1:1. Nicholas's subsequent sentences also relate to Genesis 1.
116. See n. 7 above.
117. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
118. See n. 6 above.
119. Hebrews 1:3. Colossians 1:15. The Son is the Image of the Father.

**Sermon X: Beati Mundo Corde**

(“Blessed [are those] with a pure heart ....”) <sup>1</sup>

[November 1, 1431; feast-day of all saints;  
preached perhaps in Koblenz]

[1] “Blessed [are those] with a pure heart, for they shall see God....”

Today, most Beloved, as we celebrate on this feast-day of all saints, let us endeavor with all our might to sing the praises of all their virtues and to praise their happiness. For this glory is to all His saints ....<sup>2</sup> Let us by means of the saints abundantly praise Him who works wondrous things especially in His saints. But in order that for this reason [these] quite devout [saints] may be praised<sup>3</sup> with great abundance of praise, let us ask for aid, saying “Hail, Mary ....,” etc.

“Blessed [are those] with a pure heart ....,” etc.

I am going to take up three topics in order: First, [I will speak] of the states of happiness of the saints. Secondly, I will speak, additionally, about the purification of the heart; and in that place I will state, briefly, some things about the purifying of souls (in accordance with the feast that comes tomorrow). Thirdly, I will conclude with [the topic of] the purified heart’s beatific vision in Glory [i.e., in Heaven].

*PART ONE*

*The Eight Beatitudes*<sup>4</sup>

[3] As regards the first topic the following must be said: although free choice is the most powerful thing below God, nevertheless it can by its own doing fall into sin; but it cannot at all rise up again without the aid of divine grace. (This is said to be the grace that makes one pleasing [to God].) Although grace is infused freely, [the infusion does] not [occur] without adult-consent. Thus, the [will’s] fault is remedied by the gift of God, not by free choice; yet, [it is] not [remedied] apart from free choice. Through freely-given grace one is recalled from evil and is motivated toward the good. [I will say more] about this [point] elsewhere.

[4] Now, in another way, grace is likened to fixed-dispositions for the virtues. Grace extends at times to fixed-dispositions for the virtues, at times to fixed-dispositions for [God’s] gifts, at times to fixed-dispositions for states of happiness. As concerns fixed-dispositions for the virtues, we must maintain the following: although there is one bestowing grace, there are seven bestowed virtues. These are the

three theological virtues (faith, hope, love) [and] the four cardinal virtues (practical wisdom, moderation, courage, justice). [I will] also [say more] about this [point] elsewhere. Secondly, [grace] issues forth in [God's] gifts, which, particularly and fittingly, are seven. Isaias names and enumerates these when he speaks of the flower that has proceeded from the root of Jesse, viz., Christ, and when he says that upon Christ the spirit of the Lord rests (i.e., the spirit of *wisdom*, of *understanding*, of *counsel*, of *courage*, of *knowledge*, and of *godliness*) and that the spirit of the *fear-of-the-Lord* will fill Him.<sup>5</sup> [I will] also [say more] about this [point] elsewhere. The third issuing forth [of grace] is in the fixed-dispositions for states of happiness: The following [beliefs] must be held fast: [viz.], that there are seven beatitudes that our Savior lists in the Sermon on the Mount in today's Gospel-reading and that they are, in particular, *poverty of spirit*, *meekness*, *mourning*, *hungering-for-justice*, *mercy*, *purity of heart*, and *peace*. [Believers] obtain these beatitudes, the twelve fruits of the [Holy] Spirit,<sup>6</sup> and the five spiritual senses. These [spiritual senses] indicate not new fixed-dispositions but states of delight and the uses of spiritual speculations by means of which the spirits of just men are filled and comforted.

[5] The reason for the beatitudes is that since the Restoring Beginning is altogether perfect, He restores by a free gift. And so, His gift of grace issues forth into fixed-tendencies for perfection. Since these latter resemble that toward which they tend, they are rightly called beatitudes, whose sufficiency is inferred from the order of perfection. There is required for the wholeness-of-perfection (1) complete departure from evil and (2) perfect advancement in the good and (3) perfect dwelling in the best. Now, evil proceeds from either (i) the tumor of pride or (ii) the rancor of malice or (iii) the lassitude of lust. Opposed to the first [of these] is *poverty of spirit*, which SEPARATES from tumescence; opposed to the second [of these] is *meekness*, which SEPARATES from rancor; opposed to the third is *mourning*, which SEPARATES from the evil of lust and of lustful lassitude.<sup>7</sup> And PERFECT ADVANCEMENT IN THE GOOD is directed toward imitating God. (This pathway is mercy and truth, since "all the ways of the Lord ...," etc.<sup>8</sup>) Hence, perfect advancement is a zeal for, and a *hunger for, justice* and is an *affection for mercy*. But since a DWELLING IN THE BEST occurs either through clear knowledge or tranquil affection, there are two last beatitudes: viz., *purity of heart* (for seeing God) and *peace of mind* (for enjoying Him perfectly).

[6] Likewise, if the ways of perfection are attended to, there

ought to be seven beatitudes, or ways-of-happiness. For there is either (1) perfection of religion or (2) perfection of authoritativeness or (3) perfection of inner<sup>9</sup> sanctitude. There are required for the first [of these perfections] (a) the renouncing of [merely] private good, (b) the acceptance of fraternal good, and (c) the desire for eternal good. The first three beatitudes conduce to this [first] perfection. There are required for [the second perfection]—[viz.], the perfection of authoritativeness—(d) zeal for justice and (e) affection for mercy. (For “mercy and truth preserve the king.”<sup>10</sup>) There are required for the perfection of inner sanctitude (f) purity of conscience and (g) tranquility of the entire soul.

The seven gifts of the [Holy] Spirit dispose to beatitude: *fear* [of the Lord] disposes to poverty [of spirit], i.e., to humility, which is the foundation of all perfection; *godliness* disposes to meekness; *knowledge* disposes to mourning; *courage*, to hungering for justice; *counsel*, to mercy; *understanding*, to purity of heart; *wisdom*, to peace (because it joins us to Him who is the supremely True and the supremely Good, in whom are found the end-goal and tranquil satisfaction of our entire rational appetite).

Let us turn] to [consider] the Gospel, etc.

[7] “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*”<sup>11</sup> “Poverty of spirit” stands for abstaining from love of the world, i.e., love of carnal pleasures, of riches, and of personal excellence. Love of the world encompasses these three things. I spoke of carnal pleasure on the [feast-]day of holy Mary Magdalene. I spoke of riches-to-be-spurned on the [feast-day of the] birth of the glorious Virgin [Mary]. Certain men spurn their own wishes and all possession of goods, in order to have more time for contemplating God. Such were the Apostles; and religious hermits, religious mendicants, etc., were supposed to be such. Secondly, those too are called poor who possess earthly goods but who put them to use in the worship of God, in accordance with the regulation recently issued, etc.

[8] Regarding humility, I have often said that one who is humble is like one who is inclined toward the ground (according to Isidor in Book 10 of his *Etymologies*)—i.e., he is like one who clings to the lowest things. And if such downcastedness results from an outward cause, it is a punishment; [but] if it results from inner motivation, then it is a virtue. And [this virtue] has two forms: one is internal and mental; the other is external, i.e., bodily, and involves one’s words, deeds, gestures, disposition. These latter are not the virtue *per se* and are not

acts of virtue—except when they proceed from inner humbleness. Moreover, in Proverbs 19 it is said: “There is one who humbles himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit.”<sup>12</sup> (Likewise, one is to think similarly about exaltation.) True humility restrains an inordinate appetite as concerns inner excellence—[restrains it] in such a way that a man does not esteem himself as better than he really is or as otherwise than he really is. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, because such men are vanquishers and overcomers of the lusts of the world, etc.

[9] “*Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.*”<sup>13</sup> Those men who are meek and mild amid affronts—who are long-suffering amid tribulations, who are possessors of the land-of-their-perceptual-power—are blessed and holy in their Heavenly Home, [where] they will eternally possess this Glorified Land. Mildness maintains peace with its neighbor, because it subdues anger by means of the softness of reason. Proverbs 15: “A mild answer subdues anger.”<sup>14</sup> God gladly answers the prayers of the meek. Judith 9: “The prayer of the humble and the mild has always pleased You.”<sup>15</sup> And God gladly dwells in the soul of him who is meek. Mildness is a soft mattress on the bed of a beautiful conscience.<sup>16</sup> A meek man is known to God, as was Moses, who spoke face to Face and was the meekest ....<sup>17</sup> And so, [the meek] have their inheritance in the land of the living, because God possesses them here [and] they [possess] Him there. According to Augustine no one will possess God unless God possesses him here.<sup>18</sup> The meek possess their own hearts and govern themselves—something that the irate do not do. And so, ..., etc. Proverbs 16: “Better is he who governs his own soul than is a conqueror of cities.”<sup>19</sup> The meek well know how to possess spiritual and temporal goods; and they do not squander them, as do the irate. According to the Philosopher mildness is present in men by nature, and cruelty is present by nature in the lion.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, someone cruel is someone bestial. Human physiognomy indicates mildness of nature by means of an attractive face, soft skin, a small mouth, etc. But anger makes a man a beast, and it enflames him and changes him; and thereupon he is like senseless beasts and is made like them.<sup>21</sup> An upright man ought to have three things: gentleness of heart, truth of mouth, and justice of deed.

[10] Just as meekness is long-suffering, so anger desires vengeance, etc. Anger is like a fire that sets a wooden house aflame; and without grace anger is dry wood, etc. It is like a boiling jar that gives off steam; similarly, an angry man, in boiling, exudes folly. And he is like a wild boar that out of rage dashes against a sword. Gregory



in his *Pastorals* [writes]: “Rage impels the mind to a place where desire does not draw it. And as not knowing, it causes detriment; wherefore, as knowing, it later grieves.”<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, rage is like a raving man who in a fit of passion hurls himself into fire or water. Or again, it is a coal that emits a glow [and] which, when it is stirred, emits a flame. Similarly, many men seem to be long-suffering—unless they are stirred up. Anger is like an empty vessel placed on a flame, etc.

[11] The harms of anger: It blinds the eye of reason. James 1: “The anger of man does not work justice . . .”<sup>23</sup> According to Seneca two things hinder deliberation: haste and anger.<sup>24</sup> Anger makes one prone to [commit] whatever evil. Proverbs 29: “He who is quick to anger will be more prone to sinning.”<sup>25</sup> Etc. Anger removes a man from himself and removes from him mercy and compassion. It begets strife, murders, war, arson, and plunder.

[12] As to just how long-suffering the Ancients were, note in the *Short Discourse* [by John of Wales], Part IV, [the passage] on the long-suffering of Julius and of Augustus.<sup>26</sup> [Read also] about him who said, “O Tyrant!” and received the answer: “If I were a tyrant, you would not be calling [me one].”<sup>27</sup> [See the section] on Vespasian, to whom a certain man said that a wolf can change its hair not its mind [but that] Vespasian [could do] neither. [Vespasian] replied: “We owe to such men derision, to ourselves<sup>28</sup> improvement, and to criminals punishment.”<sup>29</sup> Additionally, [see the section] on King Antigonus, who after he had heard some men speaking ill of the King, moved his cloak and said in another voice through the medium of the cloak: “Go away from here, lest the King hear [you].”<sup>30</sup> Aristippus the philosopher said to one who was reviling him: “As you are in charge of your tongue, I am in charge of my ears.”<sup>31</sup> Likewise, Antitanes [i.e., Antisthenes] did not [directly] answer one who was reviling [him, but] said: “Two ears ought to be stronger than one tongue.”<sup>32</sup> Xenophon [replied] to one who was reviling [him]: “You have learned to revile; with my conscience as witness, I [have learned] not to take seriously your words.”<sup>33</sup> After it was told to Diogenes that he was being criticized, he replied: “An evil tongue shows to be better him whom it slanders.”<sup>34</sup> Socrates said to Alcibiades that he put up with a loquacious woman at home in order that through her he might learn more easily to bear the affront of others. And when he would be struck with blows, he said only that it was annoying that men did not know when they should leave home with a helmet and when without one.<sup>35</sup> Lentulus spit in the

face of Diogenes, who responded: “I will attest to all men that Lentulus has a mouth . . .,” etc.<sup>36</sup> The Ancients saw to it that the angry not adjudicate, lest perchance they exceed the mean.

[13] “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*”<sup>37</sup> Because the sadness of the saints is turned into joy, this blessedness is called the blessedness of weeping. Now, there is the weeping (1) of remorse, (2) of compassion, and (3) of devotion. As regards the first: “My eyes have sent forth springs of water,”<sup>38</sup> and [the weeping] is a cleansing eye-salve. The second form of weeping is an assuaging ointment. And here three things are required: viz., fire, ointment, and the rubbing-of-hands. The fire is, indeed, the fire of love; the ointment is the ointment of compassion; the hands are the hands of assistance in deeds of mercy. Job 30: “I once wept over him who was afflicted, and my soul had compassion on him who was needy.”<sup>39</sup> The third form of weeping is like a soothing bath: the soul swims in tears of devotion as a fish swims in water. Proverbs 14: “The heart that knows bitternesses . . .,” etc.<sup>40</sup> There are six stimuli to weeping, six hindrances, six benefits. *The stimuli*: (1) recognition of one’s guilt, (2) passage through this present life, (3) fear of Hell, (4) recalling our Lord’s suffering, (5) compassion for human wretchedness, (6) the longing for the Heavenly Homeland. [Consider] the weeping of Peter and of Mary Magdalene because of their sins—[consider it] not just because they were afraid of losing Glory [i.e., Heaven] but because the offense was against the Infinite God. (Look, above, at the sermon of Ramon [Llull], etc.) *The hindrances to weeping* are: (1) pride ([which is] a dry mountain), (2) greed, or the affection for earthly things (Genesis 4: Cain, i.e., possession, slew Abel, i.e., mourning), (3) hardness of heart, (4) excessive busyness, (5) the blinding that results from ignorance, (6) the magnitude of sin. (Just as excessive cold freezes water, so the magnitude of sin freezes tears.) According to Gregory love is by nature warm; therefore, where there is love, *there* there are true tears. There are *six benefits from tears*: (1) tears bathe a contrite spirit; (2) they lift-up a devout spirit; (3) they oppose an evil spirit; (4) they enrich the soil of the heart; (5) they quench the thirst; and (6) they avail efficaciously when one prays. The first [of these] is symbolized by a bronze sea in which those entering are bathed.<sup>41</sup> The second [is symbolized] by the Flood’s lifting up the Ark [of Noe] on high.<sup>42</sup> The third, by the Red Sea, which inundated Pharaoh. The fourth, by the fountain of Paradise, which watered the land.<sup>43</sup> The fifth, by water’s extinguishing fire (as weeping extinguishes the [searing] thirst that originates from lust). The sixth

has many examples in Scripture. ([Moreover,] examine [what is said] in *A Healthy Diet*.)<sup>44</sup>

[14] “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled.”<sup>45</sup> Justice is the virtue of giving to each his own (Augustine, *On Free Choice*).<sup>46</sup> Justice is the right pathway, and every other way is a straying. ([God] leads them, viz., the just, in the right way, so that they would go into a city of habitation.<sup>47</sup> But the ungodly walk in circles.<sup>48</sup>) Justice is like a right rule that is regulated by the Lord. Proverbs 15: “He who follows justice will be directed by the Lord.”<sup>49</sup> Justice is a lovely straight line that is extended in an upward direction. Canticles 7: “Your stature is like a palm-tree.”<sup>50</sup> Man is raised upwards in a straight direction in order that he may be just. Ecclesiastes 7: “I have found out only this: that God has made man upright.”<sup>51</sup>

There is *general justice*, which guides unto every good; in terms of this justice a man is said to be holy. There is *judicial justice*, which reproves and keeps one back from evil. There is *moral justice*, or *cardinal justice*, which renders to each what is good. The saints and the blessed, i.e., those existing in grace, are crowned with a crown of grace wherein there are four [precious] stones: in the front, [there is the stone] of practical wisdom for foreseeing even things future; on the right side, [the stone] of moderation for making one sober-headed amid prosperity; on the left side, that of courage against hardship. In the back [there is the stone] of justice; [it is] like [having] the bishop at the end of a procession, the king at the end of a battle-array, the sailor at the aft of a ship, the just verdict at the end of the trial, the crown of victory at the end of the struggle. And the entire crown takes its name from that stone [of justice]. II Timothy 4: “A crown of justice is laid up for me.”<sup>52</sup>

[15] Justice is like the North Star, around which all other stars revolve. And just as the stars are sometimes higher, sometimes lower, but the pole always remains, so justice remains forever; and the just man always stays in the same place without being changed because of either hardships or honors. And even as in His majesty God through justice rules over all things in number, weight, and measure,<sup>53</sup> so in the microcosm justice weighs and numbers all works. Therefore, blessed are those who in this world hunger and thirst, with most fervent love, for everlasting justice, for there [i.e., in the next life] they will be filled by the same justice in accordance with their loving hunger. Thirst for justice must always be in our affections, lest anyone ever think that he

is sufficiently just.

[16] *“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”*<sup>54</sup> For the merciful shall be blessed by God through the infusion of grace. They please their neighbor by their just behavior, and they float on olive oil by means of their inward devotion, as is symbolized in Deuteronomy 33: “Blessed is son Aser; he is made pleasing to his brethren, and he soothes his head in olive-oil.”<sup>55</sup> Moreover, mercy transacts prudently; for by the ills of others it is improved, by their uncleanness it is washed, by their poverty it is enriched, by their infirmity it is healed, by their burden it is lightened. Mercy has compassion on all, and it endeavors to bear the burdens of all. And the more burdens it takes on, the more it is enriched and the more swiftly it runs. Mercy lends to the Great King in order that in Glory it can have, with interest, profit (viz., grace) and loss (viz., guilt).<sup>56</sup> The prudent virgins took the oil of compassion and of mercy in their vessels.<sup>57</sup> Christ taught this transaction. Matthew 19: “Go and sell all that you have and give to the poor.”<sup>58</sup> O of what sort is this merchandising! It receives, in exchange for a drink of water, torrents of pleasure.<sup>59</sup> Augustine: “Give a house, and obtain Heaven.”<sup>60</sup>

Two virtues are especially recompensed: [viz.,] love and mercy, which are very rich in judgment. Love makes others’ goods its own. (“I am a partaker with all those who fear [You] ...,” etc.)<sup>61</sup> Mercy makes others’ ills its own. (II Corinthians 1: “... as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also of the consolations.”<sup>62</sup>) Penance is a sacrifice of the body; mercy, of the soul. [Mercy] is a river that issues forth goods and that carries away ills. (Corinthians 11: “Who is weak, and I am not?” etc.)<sup>63</sup> Mercy is a judge that is higher than justice.<sup>64</sup> We appeal to mercy from justice, because “His tender mercies are over all His works.”<sup>65</sup> Do you desire that the Judge be merciful to you? Then be you also merciful; for it will not be forgiven [to you] unless you forgive. (Matthew 6: “If you will forgive men their sins, then your Heavenly Father will also forgive your sins.” Luke 6: “Forgive, and it will be forgiven [you].”<sup>66</sup>) Mercy is Heaven’s gateway. It is symbolized in III Kings 6: at the entrance of the temple-posts Solomon made two small doors from olive trees—[i.e.,] from two things, viz., from mercy as regards material things and mercy as regards spiritual things.

[17] If you wish to be motivated toward mercy, consider that there is one and the same Origin of all things. Matthew 23: “You are all brothers.”<sup>67</sup> Isaias 58: “When you see one who is naked, cover him, and despise not your own flesh.”<sup>68</sup> Consider your own need and

necessitude. Ecclesiasticus 31: “Know by yourself what things are your neighbor’s.”<sup>69</sup> Thirdly, consider the love that God has for him who is poor. Matthew 25: “That which you will have done for one of the least of mine, you have done for me.”<sup>70</sup> And then you, O son of man, are seated amid the seven golden candlesticks<sup>71</sup> of the seven physical works of mercy, which are, viz.: feeding the hungry, giving the thirsty to drink, clothing the naked, sheltering the stranger, visiting the sick, freeing the bound, and burying the dead.<sup>72</sup> And you shall have in your hand the seven stars<sup>73</sup> of the *seven spiritual works of mercy*, which are: (a) forgiving the sinner, (b) reproving the sinner, (c) praying for the sinner, (d) instructing the unknowing, (e) advising and reassuring the doubter, (f) consoling the mourner, and (g) having compassion for all afflictions of the heart. Then you will obtain mercy, etc. How great was the mercy of Serapion, who sold himself to the Saracens in order to win their souls! (See Guallensis’s *General Discourse*, Part II, Chapter 5.)<sup>74</sup>

[18] “*Blessed [are those] with a pure heart, for they shall see God.*”<sup>75</sup> By these words we understand two things: In one way [we understand] the very great purity that is acquired [by us], in this present Church Militant, through [both] grace and merit. In another way [the pure in heart] are also cleansed in the Dormant Church, viz., in Purgatory. (I will speak about this second topic in the next section, where [I deal] with Purgatory.) But the pure [in heart] of all kinds shall see God in the Church Triumphant. Now, in this present life three things conduce to purity of heart: viz., reading the Scriptures, generously giving alms, and shedding tears. Regarding the first [of these, consider] John 15: “Now you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.”<sup>76</sup> [Secondly,] the shedding of tears makes the heart clean. Night after night I will wash my bed (i.e., the bed of conscience) by my weeping.<sup>77</sup> If you wish to wash [it] well, then you should have, through devotion, the warm water of tears; through contrition, the bitter water of tears; through recalling death, the ash-colored water of tears. And in this way you have true lye, etc. Thirdly, alms-giving purifies [the heart]. Luke 11: “Give alms, and, lo, all things are clean for you.”<sup>78</sup> In order to cleanse the wound of sin, apply the cauterizing iron of justice and the protective covering of alms-giving.

Three things are purifying: the broom of confession, the file of correction, and the furnace of affliction. Take heed to be such that you can be purified by the fire of tribulation. Be not chaff, because it is burned up by the unquenchable fire (Matthew 3).<sup>79</sup> Just as the rubbing

of a rough cloth produces, and maintains, the cleanliness of a goblet, so tribulation and mortification-of-the-flesh produce cleanliness of soul, provided that the washing of the baptismal stream, of the flame, or of blood precede [it], etc. I must speak subsequently about purification by Purgatory's fire and must speak, thirdly, about our vision of God. (Augustine in his homily [says]: Just as evil eyes cannot see this [Divine] Light, so an impure heart does not see God, etc.)<sup>80</sup>

[19] "*Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called sons of God.*"<sup>81</sup> Blessed are those peace-makers who have inner peace, in whom intellect, memory, will, and imagination have peace and infuse the same peace into the lower perceptual powers in harmony with God, their Beginning; for lower powers are supposed to obey higher powers. Such men are sons of obedience with respect to God's commandments. Blessed, too, are those who make peace with their neighbors by means of an outward peace that arises from their inner peace, etc. Peace comes from Heaven. John 20: "Jesus said: 'Peace be with you.'"<sup>82</sup> Likewise, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace . . .," etc., is the angel's salutation (Luke 2).<sup>83</sup> Likewise, the Apostles said "Peace be upon this house"—[said it] because of Christ's instruction: "Into whatever house you shall enter, say 'Peace' . . .," etc. (Matthew 10; Luke 10).<sup>84</sup> Peace is the last and best gift of Christ—[a gift] which He left for His disciples when He said: "My peace I leave with you . . .," etc.<sup>85</sup> Peace is God's vestige. Proverbs 3: "All her pathways are peaceable."<sup>86</sup> Inner peace is present in the heart. Colossians 3: "Let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts . . .," etc.<sup>87</sup> [Inner peace] is from Heaven: "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men."<sup>88</sup> [Inner peace] is eternal. Isaias 32: "My people shall sit in the beauty of peace."<sup>89</sup> Conformity of will, humility, and tranquillity of mind make for peace. Where there is tranquillity of mind, *there* there is God's dwelling-place. "In peace—in the self-same I will sleep . . .," etc.<sup>90</sup> "His abode was made in peace."<sup>91</sup>

[20] There is a bad, polluted peace of hearts that are engaged in evil—as were Herod's heart and Pilate's heart in the case of Christ's death. Psalm [72]: "I was jealous of the wicked when I saw the peacefulness of sinners."<sup>92</sup> Feigned [peace] is bad, as in the case of Judas. Like Judas are those who speak peace with their neighbor but who in their hearts speak ill of their neighbor. Disordered peace is bad, when the greater obeys the lesser, as Adam obeyed his wife, although the wife was, instead, supposed to obey her husband.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, [wives] do not always obey, for by nature they always strive for what

is forbidden. ([Consider] the examples (1) of the woman who fell into the water, (2) of another woman who injured her finger, and (3) of another one who broke her back—[consider them] in your little book. And [consider the example] of the cheese—[consider it] in [the writing of] Gandavo, etc.) A fourfold peace allays war: *Penance* allays the war between the flesh and the spirit, and *justice* allays the war between man and God; *Christ's Incarnation* [allays the war] between man and the angel [Satan], and *long-suffering* allays [the war] between a man and his neighbor. And so, pray for the things that are for peace,<sup>94</sup> since peace-makers will be called sons of God.<sup>95</sup>

[21] “*Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*”<sup>96</sup> Blessed is that commoner or king or prelate who suffers persecution for the sake of justice. Long-suffering is very prudent, very calm, and very noble with respect to waging war. It is very prudent for governing. It is present in three [activities]: in obtaining, in keeping, in increasing. It discharges the debts for those things that seem to be worth nothing. It discharges guilt by means of the punishment that it endures. Similarly, it frees from disgrace and reproaches, and it redeems itself with others, [and] it obtains from God grace and a kingdom. [Long-suffering] holds on to things spiritual, even at the expense of losing things material. An impatient man does not act in these ways. [See] the example in the case of Job. [Long-suffering] causes an increase: it transforms disgrace into gold; and by means of afflictions it is made fat like a bear; and like a salamander it is nourished by fire.

[22] One who is long-suffering wages war vigorously. [He does so] first of all by means of a vigorous mind, because he wants to fight rather than to cease struggling. It is more glorious to be in battle than to be in a bath, more glorious to dwell with the king in his camp than to be in bed with one's wife. Paul in Galatians 6: “I bear the marks of Christ in my body.”<sup>97</sup> Secondly, [one who is long-suffering] has a vigorous way of fighting, for he is evasive without fleeing, he gives ground without [experiencing] the blow of a spear, he conquers without striking back. He is so vigorous that against his enemy he does not raise an earthen battering-ram. In the Psalm [it says]: “He has broken the gates, the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle.”<sup>98</sup> In battle he has a very well-made triangular shield. At the lower angle is fear of punishment; at the right angle is love of the reward; at the left angle is the suffering of Christ. And this shield repels all spears—especially three spears, viz., the harm of property, troubles of body, and verbal

insults. And, thus, according to Paul, in Hebrews 12: “Let us run with patient endurance toward the goal that is set before us.”<sup>99</sup>

[23] Thirdly, long-suffering governs very nobly. For it is a peace-making king that has royal dominion over all things. For all the things that are harmful to others benefit the peace-maker. For example, a year’s crop-failure [nonetheless] fills his cupboard; his enemies crown him; fevers serve him as medicine; death opens his prison door, and all things work together for good for him.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, one who is patient is summoned to the royal meal; he is pulled, and his clothing becomes rent. This last [occurrence] is a most effective sign that [his presence] is cordially desired. Thus, the inhabitants of Cologne were not accustomed to entertain . . . , etc. Likewise, he is invited to the royal meals of Christ, the Supreme King. These are tribulations, persecutions, hardships, etc. It is a great discourtesy to refuse the goblet of kings, offered after the draughts of the king; and, similarly, it is a great discourtesy to refuse Christ’s chalice when offered. Our sufferings become sweet when they pass through the sufferings of Christ—just as wine takes on taste from a vase with cloves, etc. Therefore, “blessed are those who [suffer] persecution . . . ,” etc. “And you will be blessed . . . ,” etc.<sup>101</sup> And if in this way you are tried by eight fires and are found to be pure in your heart, you will see God, For as the goldsmiths know, the best and most pure gold undergoes seven processings. And just as silver and gold are processed, proved, purified, etc., seven times by fire, [so the soul] is purged by the fire of long-suffering.

## PART TWO

### *Purgatory and the Intercessions for the Deceased*

[24] “Blessed [are those] with a pure heart . . . ,” etc.<sup>102</sup> According to Augustine there are three kinds of men: very good men, of whom Heaven consists; very bad men, of whom Hell consists; and certain men who are [bad but] not very bad, of whom Purgatory consists. Supreme goodness does not permit someone who is good to go unrewarded; likewise, supreme justice does not permit someone who is bad to go unpunished. And so, there is Purgatory. Moreover, there is Purgatory because only the pure in heart shall see God. Therefore, the spirits of the just are purified by the material fire of Purgatory; and dross and that which is combustible are burned away. And that punishment is greater than any punishment of the world’s; but it is lesser than Hell’s punishment; for [in Purgatory spirits] know that they are not in Hell, although at times they do not take note of this fact, because



of the extensiveness of the punishment. And after sufficient purifying, they fly away to Heaven.

In sinning we do three things: we offend God; we inflict injury upon the Church; we deform the image of God in ourselves. The offense requires punishment; the injury requires satisfaction; the deformation requires purification. And so, the punitive penalty here and in Purgatory ought to correspond to the sin. And because things opposed are remedied by the things to which they are opposed, and because sin arises from pleasure, sin is blotted out by punishment. For once spirits have been purified, then because there is in them the utmost purity-of-heart (which is not present without love), the spirit's love elevates [the spirit], without hindrance, unto its Beginning; and, in the end, [that spirit] finds rest and will see God.

[25] Just as a sinner, in sinning, commits an offense in three ways (as was previously said), so his penalty ought to be (a) justly punitive, (b) fittingly such as to render satisfaction, and (c) sufficiently purifying. And because departing from God and clinging to the creaturely is to sin: a just ordering demands that [the one who departs] be subject to what is lower, viz., to fire. By a just ordering, fire is so united to him that what-does-the-punishing [is united] to him-who-is-rightly-punishable—even as by the order of nature the soul is united to the body for the purpose of infusing life. However, because of the fact that these spirits are in a state of grace, the punishment ought to be temporary [and] ought to be of greater and lesser duration [and] ought to accord with the demands of what is combustible, etc. Some [spirits ought to be punished] for a longer time, some for a shorter time, some more harshly, others more leniently—in accordance with what the charge against them requires [as punishment] for the offenses. The pain hurts in proportion as the love [of the creaturely] was a clinging love, according to Augustine.<sup>103</sup> One is purified more with difficulty the deeper his love of worldly things has stuck to the core of his heart. From the fact that *there* [i.e., in Purgatory] there is no state of meriting, satisfaction is seen [to be made] not on the part of the will but because of the harshness of the punishments. Yet, the state of grace in which [those spirits] are found to be brings it about that they cannot be [totally] engulfed by sadness or fall into hopelessness; they neither desire to, nor can they, burst out into blaspheming. And in the case of that spiritual purifying: material fire has—by divine dispensation—a spiritual power; and inner grace, by means of outward fire, purifies the spirit and removes [from it] all unlikeness [to God] in order that it may

see [God] without delay. I say “without delay” because delay is a punishment that divine justice does not inflict after the purifying, etc. (Introduce here [the example] of Guido, who had a purgatorium in his house, etc., and [the example] of that thief in Mecheln,<sup>104</sup> etc. [Speak] also about the example in Gregory’s Dialogue.)<sup>105</sup>

[26] As regards intercessory works the following must be held: [viz.,] that the intercessions which the Church makes on behalf of the dead are of benefit to them—[intercessory works] such as sacrifices, fastings, alms-giving, and other prayers and disciplines that are willingly assumed in order to expiate their sins more quickly. However, [such works] are not of benefit for [those dead men who are] saved, because they have no need [thereof]; on the contrary, *their* merits and prayers assist the Church Militant. Nor do [such works] benefit the damned, because the damned are cut off from the Body of Christ,<sup>106</sup> so that the Enlivening Spirit cannot invigorate those members. But in greater and lesser degrees [intercessions] are of benefit to those in Purgatory: either in proportion to the difference of merits among the dead or in proportion to the love on the part of the living—[a love] which is exercised for some [who are dead] more than for others [who are dead]. And this [exercising of love is directed] either toward mitigation of punishments or toward a quicker deliverance [from Purgatory], in accordance with God’s disposing. For just as the severity of justice causes them to be in Purgatory, so the mildness of mercy permits their punishments to be lightened because of intercessory works—especially because they cannot, while situated in misery, aid themselves by their merits.

The mercy of God permits, I repeat, [their punishments] to be lightened through intercessory prayers, provided that there is satisfaction of divine justice and that honor is rendered to God. Divine honor demands that payment be made to it through works that are punitive and that make satisfaction (the three parts of satisfaction are fasting, prayer, almsgiving) and through the sacrifice on the altar (in which due honor is very greatly rendered [to God] on account of the pleasingness of Him who is offered there).<sup>107</sup> As for the fact that the mass avails more than do all other things, see Gregory, in [Book] 4 of his *Dialogues*.<sup>108</sup> (He states that by means of these sacrifices many men are freed very quickly from punishments.) And add [to this] the responses of the spirits of Guido and of the thief, etc. Augustine, in his book on *Caring for the Dead*, says that caring for the [bodies] of the dead does not at all avail as intercessory works for the dead. He states: “The preparation of the

funeral, the condition of the grave, and the pomp of the obsequies are comforts to the living rather than aids to the dead.”<sup>109</sup>

[27] Moreover, in intercessory works, just order and just universal governance ought to be preserved. Hereby it happens that in the imparting of causal influences orderliness is preserved, as is also the symbolism.<sup>110</sup> Accordingly, intercessory works do not avail for those who are in Hell, because being cut off from the mystical Body of Christ they can receive no spiritual influence. So too, [such works] do not benefit the blessed, who are already at their goal and are in the highest seats [i.e., who are in Heaven]. Therefore, [intercessions] are of benefit to those who are in the Dormant Church.<sup>111</sup> By reason of their inability to do meritorious works they are lower than the living but are, by reason of their justice, conjoined to the other members of the Church—conjoined because they are just and are in a state of grace. Therefore, on account of the symbolism and the ordering,<sup>112</sup> the intercessory works of the Church Militant are of benefit to the Dormant Church.

Moreover, justice, which considers the demand of merits, ought to be preserved. Hence, although intercessions are of avail to all who are in Purgatory—[of avail] in proportion to their measure—nonetheless, they are of more benefit to those who, when they were in the state of being pilgrims, merited to be benefited. Therefore, regarding those [intercessions] that are made specifically for someone: because their intent is upright and they proceed in conformity with God, and because the institution of the Church is not violated, they avail more for those for whom they are specifically made, although they are also beneficial in some way to others—not, however, in a principal way, because divine justice requires a greater payment for greater guilt and requires more numerous payments for more numerous instances of guilt. (Therefore, the example of light and of the basket of apples, etc., is not applicable, because intercessory works of this kind are like [particular] redemptive payments rather than wide-spread influences. But just how much they avail specifically for any given person must be determined for sure by him who has the task of noting the weight and the measure in regard to the accusations and the penalties.

[28] Now, as regards the one who makes intercession, it is necessary that he do so in love. For if not, then either he is the one who commissions [the intercessions] (in which case his intercessions avail only incidentally, as alms given to the poor cause the poor to pray for the deceased) or he is the executor [of the intercession] (in which case,

if he is a public [servant] of God and of the Church—as, for example, a priest—then his lack of love does not nullify the work of the good commissioner (as is evident in the case of a just master who gives alms by the intermediary of an evil servant). If one makes [intercession] as the servant of a private-person-who-was-filled-with-love—whether [the servant] of a deceased [private person] or of another—the work is beneficial, even if it is a dead [work]<sup>113</sup> with respect to the servant. If a deceased [master] leaves a command that something be done, then the work is effective (i.e., the merit is acquired) at the time he commands; and he obtains that which is worked (i.e., the fruit of the work) after it has been worked. Masses for small children are celebrated not because of need (since [baptized children] go immediately [to Heaven]) but for thanksgiving. Moreover, it is a tenet that the pope can extend indulgence even to Purgatory, although many disagree.

[29] Durandus states that (1) Augustine in his book *Caring for the Dead* says that intercession was used in the Church<sup>114</sup> and that (2) according to Damascene in a certain sermon<sup>115</sup> and according to Dionysius in the last chapter of the *Ecclesiastical*<sup>116</sup> *Hierarchy*,<sup>117</sup> it had a use from the time of the Apostles. Furthermore, Durandus says that although public prayers avail by way of a public minister, nevertheless because in the mass there are many prayers that precede and that follow, the mass of a good priest is better, he claims, because of both (1) the one working by means of the work and (2) the work that is worked. As regards the saying of St. Jerome (who says: “As often as a psalm or a mass is sung for one hundred souls, it is of benefit to each one of them, as if [it were sung] for each [of them] individually”), Durandus states: “It is understood with respect to the *effect* of the reception and of the rejoicing or of the consolation that all such souls that are amid love have in and through this good work which is done for God’s honor; [it is] not [understood] with respect to the *satisfaction* [that is made]. Accordingly, a mass for many persons is not so greatly beneficial as is a special mass.”<sup>118</sup> Indeed, according to Durandus: from the fact that the one who does the work has from the work only the fruit that he transfers to a determinate individual by means of his intent, he aids (claims Durandus) only that individual with respect to [obtaining] satisfaction of the punishment, etc.<sup>119</sup>

### PART THREE

#### *The Beatific Vision*

[30] Thirdly now: “*Blessed [are those] with a pure heart, for they*

*shall see God.*"<sup>120</sup> Let us ascend with the Queen of Saba, lordess of peace and of restfulness, unto the Heavenly Jerusalem in order to behold the immense wisdom of supreme Solomon.<sup>121</sup> And let us see how the 144,000 who are marked assist the Lamb,<sup>122</sup> who is in the middle of the throne<sup>123</sup> [and who is He] whom they praise and bless each day. Let us hasten there in hope and with sighs [and] flaming desires.

Let us contemplate, to begin with, the [Heavenly] City, constructed from living stones that are square and completely perfect.<sup>124</sup> In that City there is not heard the hammer of a mason or an axe or any tool of iron.<sup>125</sup> For in that world, where [the living stones] are hewn, Solomon made them perfect by means of penance, tribulation, etc. And each [stone] suits its place, with the large stones being placed at the foundation. And that City does not need either sun or moon, because the beatific Face of God everywhere illumines it.<sup>126</sup> There the Lamb shows Himself to the saints as true God and true man, with divine light dwelling in His humanity as in a lamp. O true vision of peace!—for there God has wiped away all tears from the eyes of the saints, etc.<sup>127</sup> *There* there is the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.<sup>128</sup> *There* there is the Lord round about His people,<sup>129</sup> defending His City forever. This is the City of those saints whose [names] have been written in the book of life.<sup>130</sup> In this City there is no spot or wrinkle, etc.<sup>131</sup>

[31] This City has twelve gates—of the [twelve] Patriarchs. Through each gate a Patriarch enters with 12,000 marked ones.<sup>132</sup> And on the twelve towers are the twelve Apostles, with trumpets that proclaim the Gospel; and the Apostles call with the trumpet, so that from all nations and multitudes an innumerable host of people may come—whom no one can number, [people] from all nations. All the courtyards of this City (i.e., all the saints) are of pure gold; and the entire City is gold as pure as clear glass. The courtyards gleam with love and with divine wisdom, and they glow perfectly with divine brightness. This is the City of the Great King,<sup>133</sup> the City wherein dwell most wise Solomon [and] the exceedingly praiseworthy Great Lord, of whose wisdom there is no measure.<sup>134</sup> Every spirit praises Him, saying: “Through Him are all things; He has made us, and we [have] not [made] ourselves.”<sup>135</sup> He is the Lord, in whom are all things. By all citizens He is seen by means of an intellectual vision; and all citizens enjoy Him with infinite delight. From this immense and excellent City have been expelled giants who have perished on account of their folly.<sup>136</sup> Unto their places have ascended from our earth tribes ...”

etc.<sup>137</sup> Let us rejoice in these words, for mansions have been prepared for us, provided we have lived rightly. Each of the saints rejoices in his chamber there, in accordance with his merits.<sup>138</sup> And before the Throne of God [the saints] serve Him day and night.<sup>139</sup> Around Him are stationed angels, who fall on their faces, because they are ministering-spirits, who serve their triune Lord [and who are stationed] in a threefold hierarchy having a threefold trine order. They are the King's cupbearers, who convey the higher outpourings of wisdom unto those lower down.

[32] And the Lord God Omnipotent is as a Consuming Fire<sup>140</sup> who transforms all others into Himself. And He is like a living Fiery Fount that flows, as it were, into the middle, while gushing forth and emitting a stream of fire in a circle. This Stream and this Fount flow unfailingly and are an enormous Sea surrounded by the infinite bounds of eternity. And this entire Unfailing Fount—the one God who is trine by virtue of the *Source*, the *Stream*, and the *Sea*—will never cease and will inebriate, with infinite savor, His saints. And all created things have, as it were, flowed forth from the steamy vapors of this Fount; but only the saints are returned unto the Fount. In this Holy City King Solomon offers up as a meaty burnt offering those who have followed in his footsteps—[offers them up] on an altar in the sight of God and with the words: “These are they who have come out of great tribulation . . .,” etc.<sup>141</sup> [God] feeds them with the bread of life and of understanding; and He causes them to drink of the water of health-bringing wisdom.<sup>142</sup> And the Lamb, who is in the middle of the Throne, shall lead them unto the Fount of life.<sup>143</sup> He indues them with a robe of glory.<sup>144</sup> “They are clothed with white garments because they have overcome.”<sup>145</sup> And they are wrapped with light as with a garment,<sup>146</sup> having crowns on their heads . . ., etc. They are clothed individually with different ornaments of glory; and they have on their foreheads the name of God and of the Lamb.<sup>147</sup> These joys are spiritual—not carnal, as the wretched Muslims and certain Jews believe.

[33] And in conclusion: Because happiness is what is best, most delightful, and most sufficient, and because perfect activity accords with virtue,<sup>148</sup> happiness exists objectively in God alone and consists formally of our vision and enjoyment of God—as is the common opinion of the doctors [of the Church]. Herefrom it is evident that God is the nourishment and the clothing of the saints. Indeed, He is their entire perfection of happiness; and He is it so efficaciously that He brings about happiness in the saints even objectively, because He

affects them in this way with respect to the fact that He is, as it were, a Living Object. The vision and enjoyment [of God] is the saints' food, drink, clothing, etc. The saints also have incidental happiness because each [of them] rejoices over the glory of the other as if it were his own glory; for there, [in Heaven], love is perfect. Consequently, their neighbor's good as well as their own good makes them happy. The saints rejoice that they are there and that they have escaped afflictions. They rejoice over their God-given gifts and over their merits. The Virgin Mary [rejoices] because she is the mother of the Lord; the Apostles [rejoice] because they are disciples of the Lord God, etc. Virgins, martyrs, and teachers [rejoice] over their halos, etc. Then, prostrating themselves before His countenance, [the saints] praise and bless Him, praying always even for us, to the end that we might be made sharers of the Kingdom. Therefore, let us today join ourselves, in heart, to these [saints], who desire our salvation, who hear and understand us when we pray. Let us make a request of this [Heavenly] Jerusalem: "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!" etc.<sup>149</sup>

[34] O Lord, cause us to love You truly, so that we may be eternally joined to You most intimately by means of most fervent love. You, O Lord (who have said "I will deliver him; I will glorify him; I will fill him with length of days, and I will show him my salvation"<sup>150</sup>): show us in this life, O Lord, Your mercy, so that we may be blessed with a pure heart. And in the eternal Heavenly Home grant us Your salvation, in order that we can see You, the true God—You who are forever blessed.

## NOTES TO *SERMON X*

1. Matthew 5:8.
2. Psalms 149:9.
3. Here (at 2:10) I am reading “extollantur” in place of “extollentur”.
4. In the immediately following paragraphs Nicholas discusses only seven of the eight beatitudes found in Matthew 5. He does not mention the eighth beatitude until the passage marked by margin number 21.
5. Isaias (Isaiah) 11:1-3. These seven gifts are usually referred to as “the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.”
6. We learn of the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit by combining Galatians 5:22-23 and Ephesians 5:9. These fruits must be distinguished from the gifts of the Holy Spirit (note 5 above).
7. These three beatitudes are correlated with a complete departure from evil. The two subsequent beatitudes are correlated with perfect advancement in the good. And the remaining two beatitudes are correlated with one’s dwelling in the best. Thus, there are seven beatitudes under three categories.
8. “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.” Psalms 24:10 (25:10).
9. Here (at 6:4) and a few lines later (at 6:12) I am reading “internae” in place of “aeternae”.
10. Proverbs 20:28.
11. Matthew 5:3.
12. Ecclesiasticus 19:23 (not Proverbs 29, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
13. Matthew 5:4.
14. Proverbs 15:1.
15. Judith 9:16.
16. Cf. Canticle of Canticles 1:15 (Song of Solomon 1:16).
17. Exodus 33:11. Numbers 12:3 (not Numbers 22, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
18. Julianus Pomerius, *De Vita Contemplativa*, II, 16, 2 (*PL* 59:460A). Not Augustine, as Nicholas writes.
19. Proverbs 16:32 (not Proverbs 26, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
20. Aristotle, *Topics*, V,2 (130<sup>a</sup>26-27). *Historia Animalium*, VIII, 5 (594<sup>b</sup>17 ff.).
21. Psalms 48:21 (49:20).
22. Gregory the Great, *Regulae Pastoralis Liber*, III, 9, admonitio 10 (*PL* 77:59C).
23. James 1:20.
24. Seneca, *De Ira*, I, 18, 1.
25. Proverbs 29:22.
26. A *breviloquium* is a short discourse. Re John of Wales (Johannes Guallensis) see Joan de Galles, *Breviloqui*, edited by Norbert d’Ordal (Barcelona: Barcino, 1930). [This is an anonymous translation into Catalan—a translation that appears to the editor to have been made in the fifteenth century.] See also John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, II, 14, 54-108. [E.g., see Dennis Foulechat, translator, *Le*



*Policratique de Jean de Salisbury (1372)*. Introduction and notes by Charles Brucker (Geneva: Droz, 1994).].

27. John of Wales (Johannes Guallensis), *Breviloquium*. (See p. 128 of the Barcelona edition cited in n. 26 above.) See also John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, III, 14, 81. "... you would not be calling me one"—because of your fear for your life.

28. Here (at 12:9) I am reading "nobis" in place of "non".

29. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, III, 14, 112.

30. Seneca, *De Ira*, III, 22, 2.

31. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, III, 14, 21.

32. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, III, 14, 24.

33. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, III, 14, 28.

34. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, III, 14, 29-30.

35. Seneca, *De Ira*, III, 11, 2.

36. Seneca, *De Ira*, III, 38.

37. Matthew 5:5.

38. Psalms 118:136 (119:136).

39. Job 30:25 (not Job 3, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).

40. "The heart that knows the bitternesses of its own soul ...." Proverbs 14:10 (not Proverbs 18, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).

41. Cf. III Kings (I Kings) 7:23.

42. Genesis 7:17.

43. Genesis 2:6.

44. Guillaume de Lanicia, *De Diaeta Salutis* (Lyon, 1496). This work has often been ascribed, wrongly, to Bonaventure. It can be found in Anton C. Peltier's edition of the volumes *Opera Omnia Bonaventurae*, published in Paris by Vivès, 1864-1871.

45. Matthew 5:6.

46. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, I, 13, 27 (PL 32:1235). See also my n. 133 in Sermon VIII above.

47. Psalms 106:7 (107:7).

48. Psalms 11:9 (12:8).

49. Proverbs 15:9. Not an exact quotation by Nicholas.

50. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 7:7. Not an exact quotation and not Canticles 1, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text.

51. Ecclesiastes 7:30 (7:29). Not Ecclesiastes 1, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text.

52. II Timothy 4:8.

53. Wisdom 11:21.

54. Matthew 5:7.

55. Deuteronomy 33:24 (not Genesis 33, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).

56. Cf. Proverbs 19:17.

57. Cf. Matthew 25:4.

58. Matthew 19:21 (not Matthew 20, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).

59. Psalms 35:9 (36:8).
60. Augustine, *Ennaratio in Psalmum 36*, verse 26, sermo 3, n. 6 (*PL* 36:387).  
The idea is to give to God that which is earthly and to receive from Him, in exchange, that which is Heavenly.
61. Psalms 118:63 (119:63).
62. II Corinthians 1:7.
63. II Corinthians 11:29 (not Corinthians 12, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
64. James 2:13.
65. Psalms 144:9 (145:9)
66. Matthew 6:14. Luke 6:37.
67. Matthew 23:8 (not Matthew 1, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
68. Isaias (Isaiah) 58:7 (not Isaias 18, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
69. Ecclesiasticus 31:18 (not an exact quotation and not Proverbs 9, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
70. Not an exact quotation. Matthew 25:40.
71. Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:13.
72. Matthew 25:35-36.
73. Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:16.
74. Johannes Gallensis, *Communiloquium*, (Strassburg, 1489), Part II, Distinction 5, Chap. 3.
75. Matthew 5:8.
76. John 15:3.
77. Cf. Psalms 6:7 (6:6).
78. Luke 11:41.
79. Matthew 3:12.
80. Augustine, *De Sermone Domini in Monte*, I, 2, 8 (*PL* 34:1232).
81. Matthew 5:9.
82. John 20:19-21 (not John 2, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
83. Luke 2:14.
84. Matthew 10:12.
85. John 14:27.
86. Proverbs 3:17 (not Proverbs 10, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
87. Colossians 3:15 (not Colossians 4, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
88. Romans 12:18.
89. Isaias (Isaiah) 32:18 (not Isaias 33, as Nicholas writes and I have corrected, as do the editors of the Latin text).
90. Psalms 4:9 (4:8).
91. Psalms 75:3 (76:2).
92. Psalms 72:3 (73:3).
93. Genesis 3:6 and 12. Colossians 3:18.
94. Psalms 121:6 (122:6).

95. Matthew 5:9.
96. Matthew 5:10.
97. Galatians 6:17.
98. Psalms 75:4 (76:3). Not an exact quotation.
99. Hebrews 12:1.
100. Romans 8:28.
101. Luke 6:22.
102. Matthew 5:8.
103. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXI, 26, 4 (PL 41:746).
104. Today Mecheln is called Antwerp (in Belgium).
105. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, IV, 55 (PL 77:416D-421C).
106. Cf. Galatians 5:12. Romans 11:22.
107. The allusion is to the eucharist and to transubstantiation.
108. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, IV, 55 (PL 77:416D-417C).
109. Augustine, *De Cura pro Mortuis Gerenda*, 2, 4 (PL 40:594).
110. Here (at 27:4) I am reading “et” in place of “est”.
111. “Dormant Church,” i.e., those believers who are in Purgatory. Cf. Sermon XXI (4).
112. Here (at 27:15) I am reading “ordinem” in place of “originem”.
113. James 2:17.
114. Durandus de Sancto Porciano, *In Petri Lombardi Sententias*, IV, 45, 1, 6 (Venice, 1586), f. 405<sup>va</sup>.
115. Durandus (cited in n. 114 above) makes this point. See also John of Damascene, *De Iis Qui in Fide Dormierunt*, 4 (PG 95:249C-D).
116. Here (at 29:6) I am reading “Ecclesiasticae” in place of “Caelestis”.
117. Durandus (cited in n. 114 above) makes this point. See also Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, 7 (*Dionysiaca* II, 1420-1476).
118. Not an exact quotation. Durandus de Sancto Porciano, *in Petri Lombardi Sententias*, IV, 45, 3 (Venice, 1586), ff. 406<sup>va</sup> - 407<sup>ra</sup>.
119. Durandus, *In Petri Lombardi Sententias, op. cit.*, IV, 45, 3, n. 7 (406<sup>vb</sup>).
120. Matthew 5:8.
121. III Kings (I Kings) 10:1-4.
122. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:4.
123. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:17.
124. Cf. I Peter 2:5.
125. III Kings (I Kings) 6:7.
126. Apocalypse (Revelation) 21:23.
127. Apocalypse (Revelation) 21:4.
128. Philippians 4:7.
129. Psalms 124:2 (125:2).
130. Philippians 4:3.
131. Ephesians 5:27.
132. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:4.
133. Psalms 47:2 (48:1).
134. Psalms 146:5 (147:5).
135. Psalms 150:5 (150:6). Colossians 1:16. Psalms 99:3 (100:3).
136. The allusion is to the fallen angels.

137. Psalms 121:4 (122:4).
138. Psalms 149:5.
139. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:15.
140. Exodus 24:17. Hebrews 12:29.
141. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:14.
142. Ecclesiasticus 15:3.
143. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:17.
144. Ecclesiasticus 6:32.
145. Apocalypse (Revelation) 3:5. Not an exact quotation.
146. Psalms 103:2 (104:2).
147. Apocalypse (Revelation) 14:1.
148. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 13 (1102<sup>a</sup>).
149. Psalms 147:12).
150. Psalms 90:15-16 (91:15-16).