

Sermon I: In Principio Erat Verbum
("In the beginning was the Word")¹
[December 25, 1430; preached perhaps in Koblenz]

[1] "The Word was made flesh." John 1:[14].

Since, O most reverend Bishop of Trier and others who are beloved in Christ, I, who am the most unsuited of all, was never gifted in explaining concepts even in regard to very trivial instances of clear expression: there is no doubt that in regard to this mystery of the ineffable [Christmas] celebration not only will all the joints of my body tremble but also because of my constricted spirit all the powers of my soul will be numbed with fear-of-failure as concerns the examining of so wonderful and so marvelous a sacred teaching. For who dares to explicate the name of the so infinite, immense, and inconceivable Supreme God—a name that is not known even to angels? And who will declare the generation of the Only-Begotten Word?² [Indeed,] the beast which touches so high and imperceptible a mountain will be stoned.³ If with regard to those features that are nature's most evident features our intellectual eyes are as are the eyes of a bat in regard to light, what [would our eyes be like] if we were to attempt to investigate nature itself and its curious secrets? Clearly, it would profit us little or nothing [to do so]. What if [we were to seek to investigate] the natures of immaterial substance, the order of the heavens, and the order of the stars' power? [Clearly, it would profit us] still less.

But since, as infinite, the Disposer, Orderer, Director, Conservator, and Creator of all the foregoing things exceeds all created things with respect to His simplicity, immateriality, luminosity, and perfection, it is evident that the human intellect through its own vision not only is weak as concerns its perceiving such excellent Light but even remains altogether blind in and of its own nature. Since these are the facts of the matter, let no one wonder why holy and very literate Aurelius Augustine ([in commenting] on the beginning of this most sacred Gospel [of John]), and why other orthodox Catholic men, being also theological luminaries, are so hesitant (as regards an exposition of our present theme) that they add little to the words of [John's] Gospel, after having made a previously appended excuse as best they could. For the loftier the meaning of John's Gospel, the more risky is the discussion [of it], since the feeble intellect cannot assist itself with

the exposition. For our pure, priestly John writes the things that you have all heard in the reading of the Gospel. As an eagle flying very high he drew these secrets, by special privilege, from the divine, most sacred breast [of Jesus] at the [Last] Supper. And because contained in John's words are sacred teachings of truth so lofty that neither heaven nor earth nor the entire universe (even if [creatures] numbered in the millions) could comprehend them:⁴ all of us wretched sinners must all the more devoutly beseech the Almighty (from whom are all things and without whom there is nothing) to grant us as much illumination from this Gospel as suffices, by His assisting mercy, for our salvation.

Let us, therefore, by means of the consummate joyous salutation at the birth of the Only-Begotten One,⁵ pay respect to the bearer of the Word [viz., Mary], so that the most delightful infant Son, with His most gracious mother entreating, may enlighten us as we say with devout mind: "Ave, Maria, . . .," etc.

PART ONE
The Names of God

[2] "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . .," etc.

I profess . . ., etc.

Because God, from whom all things derive, is the independent Origin of all good, all perfection, all virtue, and all truth, He is, necessarily, the Supreme Good. Now, that which is supreme admits nothing into superlativeness with it. Otherwise, it would completely lose the characteristic of supremacy. Accordingly, God is singular and, hence, most simple. It is not the case that anything precedes what is Supreme. Now, the parts precede the whole, and the union of the parts depends on the power of a higher power. Therefore, it is evident that only the Supreme Good—whose being, because supreme, depends on none other—is singular, most perfect, and most simple. And so, it is, properly speaking, the only God. Hence, God is called (among other Hebrew names) *va-heie*, i.e., "He who is," even as elsewhere [in Scripture] He is called "I am I-who-am."⁶ Now, because this Divine Being is supreme it must exist through itself and on account of itself. And since it is not the case that anything is the cause of itself (otherwise it would exist before it existed—something that implies a contradiction), it exists eternally and unchangeably and was at the very beginning.

Now, it is evident that nothing is lacking to the singular, most perfect, most simple Divine Being; for it exists most perfectly. And it is evident that there befits it only that which is compatible with the Supreme Good; for whatever falls short of the supremacy of the good does not befit most perfect Being. It is now evident that supreme being, supreme duration (i.e., eternity), supreme power, supreme majesty, supreme glory, supreme justice, supreme truth are one simple God, outside of whom there is nothing supreme and nothing infinite. Therefore, the world is not eternal, nor is anything [other than God] of infinite power or might. [3] Hence, this so immense God remains unnameable, inexpressible, and fully unknowable⁷ by any creature. He is assigned names with different human words, in different languages of different nations, although His own name is unique, supreme, infinite, ineffable, and unknown. When the created intellect ascends in order to apprehend the power of such a Supreme Good, (1) it finds Him alone to be the most just Provider: hence, among the Jews the created intellect gave Him the name “El.” (2) It finds Him to be the Governor of the universe who foresees all things: [hence,] it called [Him] “Adonai.” (3) It finds [Him to be] most powerful: [hence,] it called [Him] “Jah.” (4) It finds [Him to be] most kindly: [hence,] it called [Him] “Sabaoth,” “Schaddai,” etc. And according to the tradition of the Hebrews there are eight such names. However, the one most holy [name], whose meaning the human intellect cannot apprehend, is given by God. It is “Tetragrammaton,” i.e., “of four letters.” It is ineffable; i.e., it is inconceivable by the intellect. And it is voiced by the Jews only once a year after a preceding fast. This name is “Jehova.” And wherever this name occurs in the Hebrew Bible we have [in our Bible the name] “Dominus” [“Lord”]. Etc.

[4] Because this same most holy and most exalted divine name [viz., “Jehova”] signifies God not according to any individual external power, as do other names, but according to omnipotence and to internal properties without regard to things exterior: Rabbi Moses in his *Guide for the Perplexed* states that all the divine names are derived from the divine works, except [the name] “Tetragrammaton,” which is assigned to the Most High Creator. That name signifies the Divine Being together with His inner properties, and it is [a name] of maximal mystery. And by means of this [name], as certain say, the Ancients worked all the things that nowadays we call magical operations, which have no apparent cause. And in those books which Adam and his righteous son Abel are said to have written, and in a certain book that is

ascribed to Solomon and is called *Sepher Raziel*, there is found how it is that the Ancients thought there to be contained in this name (and in countless other divine names) all wisdom regarding both higher and lower matters. But today [these] books have been destroyed because they were written in unintelligible language and were rightly despised and condemned. (We must speak of these matters elsewhere, rather [than here].) [5] Likewise, the Greeks have different names for the one God: e.g., “*ischyros*,” indicating power; “*kyrios*,” indicating dominion; and He is properly called “*theos*.” Similarly, too, in Latin “*deus*” is derived from “*theos*”; and, in Tartar, “*birtenger*,” i.e., “one God,” [is said]; and in German, “*ein got*,” i.e., “*eine gut*” [“one Good” is said]. Likewise, in the Slavic language God is called “*boeg*,” and in the Turkish and Arabic languages “*olla uhacber*,” i.e., “the Great and Just God.” And in Chaldean and Hindi He is called “*esgi abhir*,” i.e., “Creator of the universe.” Hence, although the One God is one in all respects, He is named differently by different peoples in accordance with different attributes.

[6] Now, this God of Supreme might, who has in His being nothing imperfect, small, and minute, necessarily abhors idleness. Otherwise, God would be supremely idle; and, consequently, supreme happiness would consist of laziness and idleness—an impossible consequence. And since it is the case that no idleness can possibly be found in the Supreme Being, it follows that He is of supreme activity. But in every action there are found, necessarily, three perfect correlations. For nothing acts on itself but on an object of the action that is distinct from the agent. And from the agent of the action and the object of the action there arises a third thing: viz., the doing. In the Divine Being these correlations will be the three Persons by reason of which we call God trine. For God whom we call Father deifies, begets, justifies, loves (along with infinite other perfect activities). And God is deifiable, begettable, justifiable, lovable, etc.; and we call Him the Son, who proceeds from the Father. And, thirdly, there is the Deifying on the part of the One who deifies and on the part of the One who is deifiable, i.e., the Deifying on the part of the Father and on the part of the Son (and, similarly, there is the Justifying, the Begetting, and the Loving on the part of the One who loves and on the part of the One who is lovable); and we call this the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both [the Father and the Son].

[7] By means of the aforementioned concepts the human intellect lays hold of a firm and certain faith in the immense, ineffable,

and inconceivable Divine Trinity, and it assists itself by means of the authoritative claims of those who have spoken with a divine spirit. For the sacred teaching regarding this most simple Trinity is often disclosed in the Old Testament in accordance with Hebrew truth. For example, the beginning of the Sacred Writings says: “In the beginning Elohim created.”⁸ And at the end of Joshua [we read]: “You will not be able to serve the Lord, for He is a holy God.”⁹ And in Jeremias 33 [we read]: “You have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts, your God.”¹⁰ And in Psalms 42 there is said: “The *God of gods*, the *Lord*¹¹ has spoken” (in Hebrew *El Elohim Jehova*). That is, because the works of the Trinity are undivided, the *three Persons*, the *one God*,¹² created the earth, etc. However, the Jews, wanting to evade [the notion of God as] Trinity, say that one ought to understand, regarding the trinity that is expressed in their [sacred] books, three properties: viz., divine wisdom, divine goodness, and divine power, through which properties they say all things to have been created. But Nicholas of Lyra, in a certain book against the Jews, destroys this [interpretation]; and he shows, on the basis of many authoritative considerations the Trinity in the Old Testament. I, too, when once disputing, discerned that wise Jews can be influenced to believe in the Trinity. But as for the fact that, in God, the Son became incarnated: this is [a teaching] against which they have become hardened and want to hearken neither to arguments nor to the Prophets.

There are other sacred documentations of this undoubted Most Holy Trinity. For the sake of brevity I will now pass over them.

PART TWO

The Eternal Nativity in God and the Creation of Man

[8] Let us now ascend unto an understanding of the sacred Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word.” We call this Word, in God, the Son. In Greek, the words are “*in archi henu tu logos*.”¹³ “Word” is understood not as perceptible word but as intellectual word. For since, in regard to God’s Being, there is, necessarily, God who understands Himself or conceives of Himself, who is called God the Father, then His Word, or Concept, is His Son, who is eternally begotten from the Father. Therefore, this most holy Word was in the beginning, in eternity itself, before all time; indeed, He was in the Supreme Beginning, i.e., in God the Father. And He proceeded from the Father, from the Father’s substance and nature. For Jehovah who is God the Father, said to Jehovah who is Lord, i.e., said to God the Son: “Sit at my right

hand,” etc.¹⁴ “With You is the beginning in the day of Your strength,” etc.¹⁵ “From the womb,” i.e., from my own substance, “I begot You prior to the morning star, which was created at the beginning of the world.”¹⁶ The Chaldean [Book of] truth contains this [point] more clearly. It says: “The Lord spoke by means of His Word.” “For God’s speaking is His having begotten His Word,” according to Gregory in *Moralium Libri XXIII*.¹⁷ But God spoke once, because He has no Word other than the Only-Begotten Word. For God speaks and does not repeat His Word. But God *speaks* a Word, because no time—whether past or future—befits God.

[9] Firmianus Lactantius says: “God comprises a vocal Spirit that proceeds from His mouth. He conceived it—not by means of a womb but by means of His mind through a certain mental power that is inconceivable [for us]—into an Image that lives with its own sensing and wisdom.”¹⁸ Hence, in Psalms 44 [we read]: “My heart has uttered a good word. I speak of my works to the king,”¹⁹ attesting, that is, that the works of God are known to no one except to the Son alone, who is the Word of God and who must reign [as king] forever. “The Greeks say ‘*logos*,’ whereas we say ‘*verbum*’ or ‘*sermo*’ [‘word’]; for ‘*logos*’ signifies word and concept [*sermo et ratio*], because Logos is God’s Word (*vox*) and Wisdom.”²⁰ [10] Who can fittingly state of that ineffable birth that [the Logos] was born from eternity and is born as co-eternal and that He who is begotten before the ages is begotten in such a way that He is not later than His Begetter?²¹ For according to Basilus, the Word was in the beginning and is neither human nor angelic but is God’s inner Expression. Together with the Father, this Son of God is (as is said in the first book of the *Sentences*, Distinction 5)²² one Wisdom and Substance. The Son is such as the Father.²³ O marvelous birth, where the One Begetting imparts to the One Begotten His own essence and nature, His own perfection, power, glory, infinity, and omnipotence! For the Son is consubstantial with the Father, because the three Persons are one God. Whatever befits God befits all of the Persons equally. Although the Father is distinct, the Son is distinct, the Holy Spirit is distinct, nonetheless the Father is not of another essence, nor is the Father one thing, the Son another thing, the Holy Spirit still another thing. For of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit there is one essence, co-equal glory, eternal majesty. Therefore, since the Son is ever in the Father with respect to essence, [the following] is said in accordance with Origen:²⁴ “‘And the Word was with God.’ In the beginning in which the Word was, there was not any separa-

tion of the Word and of God who spoke the Word, because ‘the Word was God.’ Hence, there is nothing less in the Son than there is in the Father, since [the Son is] ‘God from God, Light from Light’.”²⁵

[11] Supreme Truth revealed to some extent this inexplicable begottenness—[revealed it] if not with full light, nevertheless with a small ray [of light] to those situated in the darkness of heathenism. Many examples [hereof] are adduced in writing by Firmianus Lactantius in his *De Falsa Sapientia* [*On False Wisdom*].²⁶ Indeed, he reports apropos of Hermes Trismegistus: “In the book that is entitled *Logos Gelios*, i.e., *Perfect Word*, [Hermes] used the following words: ‘*kyros ke ton panton politis on theon kalei*,’ etc. That is: ‘The Lord and Creator of all, whom we are seen to name *God*, made a second *God*,’ etc.”²⁷ And there follows [the passage]: “Because [the Creator] made Him as First and Uniquely One, the [One that was made] seemed good to the Creator and seemed to comprise completely all goods. The Creator was pleased, and He exceedingly loved, as His own Offspring, [Him whom He had made].”

Likewise, [Lactantius writes]: “Sibyl Erithraea, at the beginning of her song, proclaims the Son of God as Leader and Ruler over all things, when she says: ‘*panto profton ktistin*,’ etc.: i.e., [she proclaims Him] ‘Sustainer and Founder of all things, who imparted to all things His sweet Spirit and who made His Spirit the Director-God of all things.’”²⁸ And another Sibyl [said]: “He must be known; know to be your God Him who is the Son of God.”²⁹ Hermes speaks of this Son as ineffable. But the reason for this [ineffable] Cause is the will-for-the-good, which has exalted Him whose name cannot be uttered by the mouth of men. And subsequently Hermes says to his own son: “There is, O Son, a secret word of wisdom that comes from the sole Lord of all things, from God who foreknows all things, of whom to speak is beyond man’s capability,” etc.³⁰ Zeno calls Him Logos or Word, the Disposer over nature and the Maker of all things. He also calls Him Fate and the Necessity-of-things and the Mind of Jove (by virtue of their custom of referring to God as Jove).³¹ But the words are not an obstacle, since the meaning agrees with the truth; for it is the Spirit of God whom he has called the Mind of Jove. For Trismegistus, who somehow has investigated almost all truth, has often described the power and majesty of the Word. Moreover, another Sibyl [says]: “... doing all things by the Word,” etc.³²

[12] Augustine reports in Book VII of his *Confessions* that he found among the Platonists the beginning of our Gospel: “In the be-

ginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," etc.³³ Then come the words: "And all things were made by Him."³⁴ For all things depend on one Beginning. The Uncreated Will, which is omnipotent, one, uniform, and of infinite power, did all things as it willed to.³⁵ But because the Word (*sermo sive verbum*) of the Father, who wills and speaks, is the Son, all things have been made through the Word. For He spoke and they were made; He commanded and they were created.³⁶ He said "Let there be light,"³⁷ and light was made; for by the Word of God the heavens have been formed.³⁸ Hence, in Psalms 42 [we read]: "The God of gods, the Lord, spoke and called forth the earth."³⁹ The Psalmist says the following: "Elohim Jehovah spoke"—[the Psalmist thereby] showing that the works of the Trinity are undivided. He combines "Elohim" with "Jehovah," [thus] showing that by means of God the Son the earth was created.

Supreme and incommensurable Goodness, willing not only to beget within itself *ab aeterno*, even multiplied His goodness by creating in the order of time and outside Himself. But the Most Perfect God could not create all things in accordance with the image of something external, since He is all things; nor could He create all things to an end other than the Highest End, viz., Himself. Therefore, all things were made by Him in accordance with the image of Divinity and unto God [as their End]. [13] But how it is that all things flow forth from God with respect to their being would be lengthy and impossible for me to explain. But in order that we may understand to some small extent, let us take an example from [Robert] of Lincoln's book *De Forma Prima* [*On the First Form*]: just as an artifact flows forth from the mind of an artificer, so we may imagine God, who is the Supreme Artificer, (1) to have had in His Mind, *ab aeterno*, all the things that have existed, that do exist, and that will exist and (2) to have brought them into temporal being, [doing so] through His omnipotence and in conformity with His will and without intermediary or external assistance. For omnipotence is in need of no one's assistance. And rightly so. By comparison, an artificer who conceives in his mind the form of a house or of a chest wants to bring that object into existence in accordance with his will. But because, in him, his power does not coincide with his will—as is the case with Omnipotent God—he must have many intermediaries (e.g., wood, an ax, and so on) in order to apply the preconceived form. These intermediaries are not necessary in the case of God. For every form flows forth from God's Form; every being flows forth from God's Being; all goodness, from God's

Goodness; all truth, from God's Truth. And we call such a flowing forth *creation*.

(14] And because the one God is trine, three kinds of creatures flow forth from God: immaterial only; corporeal only; and mixed. Angels and intelligences are immaterial [creatures]; vegetating, sensing, and elemental [creatures] are corporeal; man is a mixed nature, proceeding, as it were, from both [of the other two natures]. And because [the Divine] Trinity exists in Oneness, it follows that in the case of the immaterial nature there is a trinity: viz., three orders; and each order enfolds a trinity, [so that] there are nine choirs. Similarly, in the celestial-corporeal nature and the elemental, sensing, and vegetating natures: the image of the Trinity is present. And the case is similar with the mixed nature. Now, it would be very lovely to contemplate the orderings of things and these domains as regards the fact that the Most Wise made to be exceedingly good whatever He made. And by means of these contemplations St. Dionysius ascended unto [a knowledge of] the hierarchies. But because [the Divine] Trinity exists in Oneness, every created thing bears within itself, in its own being, an image of the Trinity. [It does so] through the fact that it has being, power, and activity; through the fact that it consists of power, of objectification, and of actuality; through the fact that it consists of innate correlations. For just as Divine Goodness consists of the Father, who is the Power to make good, the Son, who is the Power to be made good, and the Holy Spirit, who is the very Act of making good, so goodness that has issued forth [from God] bears within itself this trace of the Trinity. Consequently, no created goodness can be without the power to make good, the power to be made good, and the very act of making good. A similar point holds with regard to love, being, truth, and all the other things that have flowed forth from God.

O, if some contemplator would ascend hereunto! How pleasant he would find his speculations to be! Assuredly, no unbeliever, no one haughty, miserly, unchaste, or cloaked with other sordid sins will be able to apprehend this pleasantness. And no one is so hard-hearted that if he enters upon this pathway of contemplating, his heart will not be softened. [15] Let each one here take note: God created all things for His own sake, so that every creature would have its own best End. But God created man last, as being him in whom the fulfillment and perfection of creatures consisted. But man's perfection is in God; and so, every creature is ordered unto God by way of man. Accordingly, the Ineffable God of graciousness created man last and adorned him with

gifts—with free will and with reason—(1) so that through reason he would understand, and through free will would love, his Origin and Creator, and (2) so that he would uphold the naturally good principles given to him by God and naturally ordered unto God, and (3) so that by means of the virtues, by means of obedience, and by means of love he would increase morally. God situated man in a Paradise of pleasantness; He placed a most pure soul into a most suitable earthly body—one manipulable and compliant. He gave to man power over the entire Paradise, over his entire body, so that he could make use of all his material and immaterial senses. He commanded that man not eat of the tree placed in the middle of Paradise, in order that man would not through free choice misuse his reason and would not through pride disorderedly direct his principles toward the earth below—[principles] which were rooted in obedience directed upwards.

[16] Because of the Devil's envy,⁴⁰ that First Parent (viz., Adam) fell, having been seduced by an empty hope. And in this way, without the Word, *nothing* was made [John 1:3]; i.e., *sin* was done, for sin has *no being* (otherwise sin would bear the image of the Trinity and of Goodness). Immediately after the sin, after the disorderedness of principles, man became as an exile from Paradise and as a wanderer, since rebellion arose in the body against the soul. But because of the stain on human nature (a stain contracted from the First Parents), all the propagated descendants from Adam contracted and continue to contract this root of sin. O, the Devil's very perfidious envy, through which death entered into the world! O how great the sin that would have deprived all the posterity of their [destined] End had not the Savior mercifully rendered aid!

PART THREE

The Incarnation's Rationale, Which Is Explained by Means of a Pious Conflict among the Divine Attributes

[17] Now, O Venerable Lords, a true priest of God has disclosed—by means of the singular clause “without Him nothing was done”—the reason that God was made a [God-]man. Here, very briefly, I will now discuss the case of a certain pious conflict before [I take up a discussion of] the restorative verdict concerning the Incarnation of the Word of God. Man was created and ordained for salvation and for the best end. His sin introduced a disorderedness; and justice condemned [him] to punishment. The Lord's mercy and His justice's truth met each other.⁴¹ And so, it happened that between God and man a pious

conflict occurred in the presence of the most holy Trinity, which is called Elohim, i.e., Gods, or Judges. God was the Accuser; man was the defendant. The accusation [had to do with] the crime of *lèse majesté*; God's advocates were Truth and Justice; man's advocates were Peace and Mercy.

[18] Truth adduced against man the magnitude of the crime, saying that man, most wicked, had blasphemed the Majesty's honorableness and divinity, because man judged God mendacious and judged the Devil to be veracious. God, who is Truth, had said: "On whatever day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall die." The Devil, who is a liar, interjected: "You will not at all die." Man disbelieved the true affirmation, and he believed the false denial. He believed in greater measure the Devil who was falsely promising: "For God knows that on whatever day you shall partake, you will be like Him."⁴²

"Do You not, O God, detest those who work iniquity? Therefore, may You cause to perish all who speak a lie!⁴³ And let there remain outside of Your Kingdom dogs, sorcerers, the shameless, murderers, those serving idols, and all who love and do that which is false!⁴⁴ And because man committed the crime of *lèse majesté*, let this sentence pass down to his posterity, because You are a Jealous God, holding the sin of the fathers against the Sons."⁴⁵

Secondly, Truth adduced once again the sentence of God in saying: "You have stated, O Lord: 'It is not the case that God is as man, so that He lies; nor is He as a son of man, so that He is changed.'⁴⁶ You have said, O Lord: 'On whatever day..., ' etc.⁴⁷ Man the prevaricator did it; let him, therefore, die eternally."

[19] In defending man against [the accusation], Mercy spoke and endeavored to minimize the sin by [citing] the magnificence of Goodness: "It is not fitting that Supreme Goodness damn man. O God, You created man for Yourself;⁴⁸ and this work of Yours, O God, would be in vain and would be empty and imperfect and would not reach the goal that You purposed for it because of Your Goodness, O God. The charge brought by Truth applies to the angels who with no one urging sinned and fell. However, let man, who was deceived and impelled and deluded by the prompting and cunning of Satan, have a remedy. Will You be angry unto the end, O Lord?⁴⁹ Be mindful, I pray, of what human substance is; for You have not formed in vain all the children of men.⁵⁰ Truth said, O Lord, that You cannot be a Liar—[a statement] than which nothing is more true. See to it, then, that there

be fulfilled the oath that You swore to Abraham, etc.,⁵¹ viz.: ‘In your seed all nations will be blessed.’⁵² Therefore, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who effects the redemption of His people.⁵³ O Lord, You will keep Your promises, and David will not be disappointed.⁵⁴ You will not profane Your testament, and You will not make void [the words] that proceed from Your lips.⁵⁵ O Lord, You have said: ‘If his children forsake my testament ...,’⁵⁶ etc., ‘I will visit their iniquities with a rod.’⁵⁷ But I will not take away my mercy from him, nor will I blemish my truth.⁵⁸ And so, I will keep my mercy for him forever.’⁵⁹ This decree of Yours, O Lord, which is a decree of graciousness, will remain unchangeably. Your purpose, O God, will remain—the purpose by which You predestined [some men] to become conformed to the image of Your Son.⁶⁰ The testament that You gave to Your elect will remain in effect: ‘I have sworn to David my servant, I will prepare ...,’ etc., ‘and build up your throne forever.’⁶¹ Through Jeremias You have said, O Lord, in Chapter 18: ‘I will suddenly speak against a nation and a kingdom in order to uproot and disperse and destroy [it]. If that nation [against which I have spoken] will repent of their evil, then I, too, will repent of the evil that I have thought to do to them.’⁶² The human race repents. ‘How long will You forget [it]? Unto the end?’⁶³

[20] Justice, weighing against man his sin, said that man’s sin had done harm to Truth, had rebelled against Mercy, had abused Peace, had despised Justice. For Truth intended for man to be saved; Mercy intended for him to be predestined in order to be conformed to the image of God’s Son.⁶⁴ Justice offered merit, by way of grace in the present lifetime; Peace offered a reward, by way of glory in the future lifetime. O Adam, you believed a lie! Not only does man die but he lapses downward, as does water.⁶⁵ Even Mercy would not be merciful to one who does not repent, O Lord. Now, Adam substituted blasphemy for penitence, haughtiness for confession. For when God walked at the time of the afternoon breeze, He called Adam to repentance, saying: “Who told you that you were naked—except that you have [learned from having] eaten [of the tree]?” etc.⁶⁶ Adam answered: “The woman, whom You gave me as a companion, gave to me [the fruit], and I ate [of it].”⁶⁷ It was as if he had answered: “The blame ought to be imputed to You, who gave me the wife,” etc. Because the Lord is just and has loved justice ..., etc., and because You have commanded ..., etc.⁶⁸: judge him, O Lord, in accordance with the multitude of his impiety; and cast him out, since he has provoked

You, O Lord.”

[21] But Piety, seeing that it could not have, in favor of man, any arguments against Truth and Justice, resorted to pleading—adducing in favor of man’s reconciliation the twofold honor of God: with respect to His graciousness and with respect to His integrity. Piety adduced honor with respect to God’s graciousness, saying pleadingly: “O God, for Your own sake incline Your ear and hear—open Your eyes and see—the tribulation of [Your] people.⁶⁹ O Lord, bring it about that You do not forget to be merciful⁷⁰ and it be said ‘God is cruel and pitiless.’⁷¹ [For in that case] there will be a detracting from the honor of Your graciousness, O God, You to whom being merciful and ever-sparing are proper.” Likewise, Piety mentioned honor’s graciousness, saying: “You have sworn that You would give to our fathers the Land of Promise, i.e., [would give them] glory. Therefore, give [it]. Otherwise, demons and Egyptians will be detracting from Your power. And they will speak of that for which Moses prayed in Numbers 13: ‘Let not, I ask, the Egyptians hear [of it] and say, “He was not able to lead them into the land of Promise; therefore, He slew them in the desert ...”’ etc. Therefore, let there be peace in Your strength,⁷² O Lord, for the sake of honor with respect to Your graciousness.”

[22] Once the accusations of both parties were understood, a silence was made in Heaven for half an hour, as it were.⁷³ For the course of all time is a single hour; the first half of the hour is the time before the Incarnation; the other half is the time after the Incarnation. Wisdom 16 [says]: “While all things were in the midst of silence and night was in the midst of her course ...,” etc.⁷⁴ In other words, it is as half an hour from the time of man’s sin to the time of Christ, in whom silence came about, in whom a pact was awaited between Truth and Mercy, Peace and Justice, man and God. Then there was discussed in the sanctuary of the Divine Council how the legal case between God and man could be put to rest. There was discussion among those who give testimony in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the [Holy] Spirit.⁷⁵ And there was consideration of to which of them would be committed the judgment between Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace, God and man. The Father was suspect on account of His intimate acquaintance with Truth, because “You are powerful, O Lord, and Truth is round about You.”⁷⁶ Moreover, Justice is an intimate acquaintance of His, because He is just and has loved Justice.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is suspect, because He sides with Mercy and with Peace; for it is known that the Spirit of Wisdom is kind and benevolent.⁷⁸

Both parties [to the lawsuit] shouted in agreement: “O God, give Your judgment to the King and Your justice to the King’s Son.”⁷⁹ And it was decided that the Father of mercies would give all judgment to the Son,⁸⁰ because the Son could not be suspect; for although the Son is God, nevertheless His eyes look upon him who is poor.⁸¹ He “shall reprove, with equity for the meek of the earth.”⁸² And He is God’s Son, whom John in the Apocalypse saw sitting on a judicial throne and having a rainbow of reconciliation round about [Him].⁸³ For [as says] Genesis 9: “I will place a [rain]bow in the clouds of heaven, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and you.”⁸⁴

[23] After the merits of the case had been discussed, [the Son] rendered a decision: (1) that in accordance with the plea of Piety man would be saved and (2) in order that the condemnatory judgment of the Creator would be inviolable, one [individual] would die for the people, and the whole race would not perish.⁸⁵ Hence, a human being (and not anyone else) would die, because it was said: “At whatever time ...,” etc.⁸⁶ But the death of *which* human being will be able to satisfy this condemnatory judgment? For among those born of women no one suitable is found. Since an angel will not effect redemption but [only] a man will: how, then, [can] man, who is enshrouded in misery and is corrupt with guilt, [do this]? To redeem is to restore lost innocence and lost glory by means of a just and worthy payment. If, then, neither an angel nor a man nor any lower creature can [do this], only God can. And so, it is necessary that it be a God-man [who accomplishes redemption: it is necessary that it be] God, because of the pleadings of Piety; [it is necessary that it be] a man, because of the punitive judgment of the Creator. In this way, “Mercy and Truth have met each other,”⁸⁷ when they have come together in one gracious agreement, so that through Mercy man is freed and so that on account of Justice man satisfies the condemnatory judgment of the Creator. However, Justice wills that he who has sinned make satisfaction and that he make satisfaction according as he has sinned. Man sinned; let man make satisfaction. Man willed to be God. Therefore, he sinned as greatly as God is great. Therefore, let a man-God make satisfaction. And because man willed to be wise as is God and because the Son is the Wisdom of the Father, it was fitting that not the Father, not the Holy Spirit but the Father’s Son-made-man make satisfaction.⁸⁸ And so, let the Son of God be made, on account of Justice, a son of man, on account of Peace.

[24] At this point ascend unto contemplating the goodness of

this Divine Judge, who in order to grant you peace rendered a condemnatory judgment such that, on account of it, it was necessary that He empty Himself and take on the form of a servant.⁸⁹ O the infinite Graciousness of the Father, because “He spared not His own Son ...,” etc.⁹⁰ This Son of the Supreme King made to be proclaimed—after the execution of His condemnatory judgment was pleasing to His Wisdom and after night had passed—His advent in the midst of the world at the half-way point in time. And He caused the proclaiming [to be made] to every nation, since the Savior of the world will come, the Giver of life and the Regenerator, and Illuminator, of life. But the darkness apprehended Him not.⁹¹ Those who were seated in darkness and in the shadow of death⁹² were awaiting Him and shouting: O Lord, rend the heavens.⁹³ Come, O Lord, and do not delay. Forgive the transgressions of Your people. Come, O Lord, God of hosts, in order to free us. Remember Your favorable disposition. Visit us with Your salvation.

[25] Many saints and prophets have come, giving witness of His advent. Some [have given witness] of the [birth]place in Bethlehem, etc. Some [have testified] regarding His miraculous conception: “Behold a virgin shall conceive ...,” etc.⁹⁴ Some [have borne witness] regarding His glorious birth: “Unto us a child is born and a son is given,” etc.⁹⁵ Some [have borne witness] about the exact time [of His nativity]: “The Lord [foreshortened] yet seventy weeks upon His people ...,” etc.⁹⁶ Psalms 83: “Truth has sprung out of the earth”;⁹⁷ i.e., God, who is Truth, has taken on an earthly body in order to disclose the way of salvation to those who are earthly. Let the heavens rejoice!⁹⁸ Let the clouds put on justice! Let the earth be opened and bud forth a savior!⁹⁹ And Daniel: Lo, with the clouds of heaven the Son of man comes ..., etc.¹⁰⁰

NOTES TO SERMON I

1. John 1:1.
2. Acts 8:33. Isaias (Isaiah) 53:8.
3. Hebrews 12:20. Exodus 19:12-13.
4. John 21:25.
5. Luke 1:28.
6. Exodus 3:14.
7. Nicholas holds the view that no finite mind knows—or can know—*what* God is or what He is like in and of Himself. All “knowledge” of what God is is symbolical and metaphorical. By contrast, *that* God is is knowable to finite minds.
8. Genesis 1:1. Here the verb accompanying Nicholas’s use of “Elohim” is singular: “creavit”. In Hebrew “Elohim” is a plural noun.
9. Joshua 24:19. Here the adjective modifying Nicholas’s use of “Elohim” is plural: “sancti”.
10. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 23:36. Here the adjective modifying Nicholas’s use of “Elohim” is plural: “viventium”.
11. Psalms 49:1 (50:1).
12. Nicholas here alludes to the point that in Hebrew “Elohim” (“God”) is plural but that “Jehova” (“Lord”) is singular.
13. That is, ἔν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος. Nicholas’s rule for transliterating Greek letters differs from ours.
14. Psalms 109:1 (110:1).
15. Psalms 109:3 (110:3).
16. Psalms 109:3 (110:4).
17. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Libri*, XXIII, Ch. 19, n. 35 (PL 76:272B).
18. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, IV, Ch. 8 (PL 6:467 B).
19. Psalms 44:2 (45:1).
20. Lactantius, *ibid.*, IV, Ch. 9 (PL 6:469).
21. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Libri*, XXIII, Ch. 19, n. 36 (PL 76: 272C).
22. Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* I, *Distinctio* 5.6 (PL 192:536).
23. Basilus, *Homilia* XVI, 136 (PG 31:477A).
24. Origin, *In Evangelium Johannis*, cf. Vol. II, n. 1 (PG 14:105C).
25. Nicene-Constantinople Creed (381).
26. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*. Book IV: *De Vera Sapientia et Religione*, Chs. 1-30 (PL 6:447C, etc.)
27. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, IV, Ch. 6 (PL 6:461D).
28. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, IV, 6 (PL 6:462A).
29. Lactantius, *ibid.*, IV, Ch. 6 (PL 6:462C).
30. Lactantius, *ibid.*, IV, Ch. 7 (cf. PL 6:463B).
31. Lactantius, *ibid.*, IV, Ch. 9 (PL 6:469B).
32. Lactantius, *ibid.*, IV, Ch. 15 (PL 6:492D).
33. John 1:1.
34. John 1:3.
35. Psalms 134:6 (135:6).
36. Psalms 32:9 (33:9).

37. Genesis 1:3.
38. Psalms 32:6 (33:6).
39. Psalms 49:1 (50:1).
40. Wisdom 2:24.
41. Psalms 84:11 (85:10).
42. Genesis 3:5.
43. Psalms 5:7 (5:5-6).
44. Apocalypse 22:15 (Revelation 22:15).
45. Exodus 20:5.
46. Numbers 23:19.
47. Genesis 2:17.
48. Augustine, *Confessiones*, opening sentence.
49. Psalms 88:47 (cf. 89:46).
50. Psalms 88:48 (89:47).
51. Luke 1:73.
52. Genesis 22:18.
53. Luke 1:68.
54. Psalms 131:11 (132:11).
55. Psalms 88:35 (89:34).
56. Psalms 88:31 (89:31).
57. Psalms 88:33 (89:32).
58. Psalms 88:34 (89:33).
59. Psalms 88:29 (89:28).
60. Romans 8:29.
61. Psalms 88:4-5 (89:3-4).
62. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 18:7-8.
63. Psalms 12:1 (13:1).
64. Romans 8:29.
65. Psalms 57:8 (58:7).
66. Genesis 3:8-11.
67. Genesis 3:12.
68. Psalms 10:8 (11:7). Psalms 118:138 (119:138).
69. Daniel 9:18.
70. Psalms 76:10 (77:9).
71. Cf. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 6:23.
72. Psalms 121:7 (122:7).
73. Apocalypse 8:1 (Revelation 8:1).
74. Wisdom 18:14.
75. I John 5:7.
76. Psalms 88:9 (89:8).
77. Psalms 10:8 (11:7).
78. Wisdom 1:6.
79. Psalms 71:2 (72:1).
80. John 5: 22.
81. Psalms 10:5 (cf. 11:4).
82. Isaias (Isaiah) 11:4.
83. Apocalypse 4:2-3 (Revelation 4:2-3).

84. Genesis 9:13.
85. John 11:50.
86. Genesis 2:7.
87. Psalms 84:11 (85:10).
88. This reasoning is adapted from Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo*.
89. Philippians 2:7.
90. Romans 8:32.
91. John 1:5.
92. Psalms 106:10 (107:10). Luke 1:79.
93. Isaian 64:1.
94. Isaias (Isaiah) 7:14.
95. Isaias (Isaiah) 9:6.
96. Daniel 9:24.
97. Psalms 84:12 (85:11).
98. Psalms 95:11 (96:11).
99. Isaias (Isaiah) 45:8.
100. Daniel 7:13.

Sermon II: Ibant Magi

(“The Magi journeyed ...”)

[January 6, 1431; preached somewhere in the Diocese of Trier]

[1] “The Magi journeyed following the guiding star which they had seen. They seek after light by means of light. They acknowledge God with a gift.”¹ ([Words contained] in the hymn of the present celebration [of Epiphany]).

Properly speaking, today is the feast of the Church, which was led by the three Magi from heathendom unto Christ. By baptism the Church is united to Christ in matrimony. By means of a miracle it is transformed from its own insipid wateriness into a most succulent partaking of the Bridegroom and into a state of inebriating love for Him. Hence, we sing forth: “Today the Church is joined to the Heavenly Bridegroom ...,” etc. [2] First of all,² [I note] that the Greeks name their wise men *philosophers*; the Hebrews, *scribes*; the Latins, *sages*; the Persians, *magi* (especially because of the great extent of their knowledge of astronomy). According to Seneca (in the Golden Age), they are called kings, who were governing at that time. Seneca [writes]: “There was supreme happiness at that time, when there was no one superior in power who was not also superior in wisdom.”³ According to Gregory,⁴ wise men are those who, first of all, govern themselves; and so, they are rightly kings. Hence, I will say some things, first, as regards wise men who, in the first place, endeavor to seek God by the light of their knowledge; but, at length, it is necessary that they be led by Divine Light; otherwise, they would never reach their goal. To this discussion I want to append the Gospel-story: that the Magi set out from afar ..., etc.

Secondly,⁵ [I will note] that those who set out only as magi or magicians (as, according to Gregory in his homily, some claim that those kings first were), and who follow only the star that they see, and who seek after the light of insightfulness only by means of their own light—these men acknowledge God only with a gift. They are at odds with God, the Father of lights; and they are ever learning but never coming to their goal;⁶ and they will fall into heresy, deserting the true light. Hence, together with the Prince of darkness they are forever separated from the light of glory. ([I will speak] of these matters in the second part and [will direct my statements] to the laity.)

Thirdly,⁷ [I will note] that a pagan, magical soul—for a long time bedarkened with the darkness of unbelief and by the blight of sin but now turned toward the Star that has arisen from Jacob⁸—follows, with loving steps, the star on the day of its appearance. The soul follows it to the place of the crib, offering itself as a whole to God ..., etc. Then it inquires after the Light—[inquires] by means of the light present on the day of the epiphany that is related to Christ’s baptism, when, with faith in the Trinity, the soul purifies itself (by means of the baptismal fount) as a bride adorned for its Creator ..., etc. Next, the soul acknowledges God with a gift when it obtains the glory with which the Lord recompenses those who love Him ..., etc. And this [third] part will be for contemplatives. And this [third stage] is [symbolized by] the epiphanic festival at the house [in Cana] at which Christ changed water into wine ..., etc.⁹

PART ONE

*How It Is that the Ancients Endeavored To Seek
God by their Own Natural Light*

(a) *What the Ancients were able to presage about the Divine Trinity and about the re-creation of man.*

[3] As regards the first [issue]: how it is that the Ancients endeavored to seek the one God through rational considerations.

Since it is not the case that anything is the cause of itself, hence there is one Beginning, hence only one Originator of all things, from whom are all things, etc. And since the being of this Beginning derives from no other, it is eternal and infinite and most simple, without any composition; for otherwise it would not be eternal. And in this way the Platonists posited God as the Creator of the world—God, who created immortal souls according to His image. And, as St. Augustine relates in his Book of *Confessions*, Plato not only discovered that God is *one* but also spoke of the *Word of God*. Indeed, Plato spoke of almost the entire Gospel (as writes the same Augustine), to the point [of saying]: “There was a man sent from God.”¹⁰ [4] And by means of rational considerations certain men investigated the Trinity: the Unbegotten Father, the Only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both [of them]. For it is necessary that in that divine, supreme, most perfect Being there be supreme intelligence. Accordingly, [in God there is] He-who-understands, He-who-can-be-understood, and He-who-is-the-understanding. [Or again, there is] He who loves, He who

is lovable, and He who is the loving. And in this way the Word in God proceeds in the manner of intellect, and the Holy Spirit proceeds in the manner of will. And in this way the Son—like a mental word that flows forth from the intellect—is the Image of the Father. In and through this Word, as in and through His own Understandability, the One who understands, [viz., the Father], understands Himself; and in and through this Word [the Father] understands all things that are outside Himself. For in and through this Word all created things were conceived from eternity; through this Word all things are created, etc.¹¹

Eusebius Pamphilus, in his books of *Preparations for the Gospel*, relates many things concerning the foregoing [topic]—i.e., relates that even the philosophers spoke about the Trinity. They all had certain modes (nevertheless not precisely demonstrative modes) of investigating God and His Being, insofar as the Divine Being can be apprehended and understood by creatures. Although one mode draws nearer to Him [than does another], the situation is analogous to a circle's never being measured definitively by means of angular figures. Even though some [of these figures] tend more closely to roundness, nevertheless what is angular is always infinitely distant from what is round, etc. [5] Because the Ancients saw themselves entangled in many errors (even where the deformity of every nature ceased), they saw that each man comes to possess understanding [only] with difficulty, they saw [man's] proneness to evil, [and] they understood the fall-of-human-nature resulting from the offence and the guilt. Still, because of the fact that man was created by God, who is Best, unto an end that is best (this best end is God): they thought that unless created man were re-created, he could not attain his end. They thought that because God is *one* He created one world and because He is *trine* He created a threefold nature: immaterial, corporeal, and mixed. Therefore, in order that every creature might be exalted to the highest degree, God Himself would one day unite Himself to a common creature, viz., to human nature, in order that it might be re-created and in this way man might be led to his end. With great zeal some men (e.g., Messalaha the Arab and others) wrote astrologically about the fact that the Son of God, who was to become incarnated, was to be born of a virgin, so that both the incarnation and the birth would surpass the exercise of the common nature. For Messalaha said: "A young virgin who is weaning a child shall arise ...," etc.¹² Others [write] with respect to other linkages; for example, Ovid tells about a procuress,

etc.¹³ Moreover, there were female soothsayers; there were various female diviners—nine in number, according to Isidor.¹⁴ What these venerable women foretold of Christ is written about by Lactantius, in his last book on false religion¹⁵ (and by Augustine, etc.).

(b) *The continued transmission from the first parents through their descendants, and the one common faith of all living human beings.*

[6] And there is no doubt that the transmission [of sin] from the First Parent was continued through their descendants. Adam and Eve, as it is commonly held, were not among the condemned but were among the elect. And so, having turned to God after completing much penance (as can be inferred from the beginning of Genesis), they received many consolations from God—especially the promise of a Son who would be born and who would make satisfaction to Divine Justice for themselves and their descendants. Through this disclosure they were lovingly inflamed toward God, pleading for the coming of the Son. Indeed, with this disclosure all wisdom and knowledge flourished in the first human beings [viz., Adam and Eve]. And they made this divine revelation known to their blessed offspring Seth, who was raised up in Cain's place. And Henoch, a just man who was the seventh from Adam, after having lived a long time, viz., three hundred years, while his forefather Adam was alive, learned the very great mysteries that had been revealed to Adam. And, at length, he was caught up [unto Heaven]. But he revealed the mysteries to his son Mathusala, who lived a long time, while Adam and Henoch were alive. Because Mathusala lived until the Flood, he instructed Noe and Noe's sons. For the patriarch Sem, Noe's son, lived during the time of Mathusala and lived one hundred years before the Flood.

Now, Noe, who befigured Christ both in the building of the Ark and in the planting of a vineyard, knew many things about the Mediator. For Noe, according to the calculation whether of the Hebrew Bible or of our Bible, saw Abraham (the Father of faith), for at least ten years. During this long period of time when Sem lived, he revealed what he had heard. For Sem lived more than two hundred years, because after the Flood he lived five hundred years, and there were [only] two hundred twenty-two years from the Flood until Abraham. However, according to the Septuagint there were one thousand seven hundred years [from the Flood until Abraham]. Augustine in Book XV of *The City of God* approves of this [latter calculation], although according to Jerome, who is believed more greatly in matters of histo-

ry, the first [set of dates] is calculated more correctly. Nevertheless, none of this matters, since nothing as regards human salvation has been lost because of this [disagreement]. More-patent promises about the Son were made in the time of Abraham; after the time of Moses they were made through sacrifices, symbolisms, signs, and prophecies. Later, under David and Solomon, at the time of the construction of the temple, the promises were renewed and the oracles were clarified. Subsequently, there came the prophets, who proclaimed His imminent coming, His actual advent, and all things. O with what great desire the holy fathers were desirous of seeing Him!

[7] But when, at length, He was born in Bethlehem, as you have recently heard,¹⁶ then although He manifested Himself in a public place as a living and true Incarnate Word, He was proclaimed beforehand, by an angel, to simple shepherds. For from among the simple Hebrews He selected shepherds as apostolic ones. So too, it was fitting that He was announced by an angel, through whom the Jews received the Law, as is stated¹⁷ in Acts 7. About this matter, then, you have heard. However, His birth was not supposed to be manifested to all men, (1) so that justification (*iustitia*) would be by faith in Jesus Christ (according to Romans 3),¹⁸ and (2) so that His manifestation would not impede the crucifixion (according to I Corinthians 2: “If they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory”¹⁹), and (3) so that the mystery of His humanity would not come into doubt. (As Augustine [wrote] to Volusianus: “Were He to have imitated none of the life-stages from childhood to adolescence ...,” etc., “would He not have confirmed an heretical view, and would not people fail to believe that He had received a true human nature?”²⁰ Nevertheless, He was supposed to be manifested marvelously to every kind of man (although not to all men): to Israelite shepherds, to Gentile magi flocking to the one Cornerstone,²¹ to just Anna and Simeon,²² etc.

[8] At length, through His own efforts and those of His apostles, Christ manifested Himself so greatly—by preaching of Himself and sowing seed of Himself in the hearts of men—that His word was apprehended throughout the whole world. For throughout the whole world it is believed that Christ, the Son of God, was born from a virgin. The inhabitants of India believe this; Muslims believe this; Nestorians, Armenians, Jacobites, Greeks, Western Christians (as are we) believe this. The Tartars do not deny this; rather, they commonly believe it, although they do not pay attention to it. And nowadays there

is no nation of the world that does not believe that Christ, the true Messiah whom the Ancients were expecting, has come—[no nation] except for the Jews, who believe only that He is going to come. For there is one common faith of all living men—[faith] in one supreme, omnipotent God and Holy Trinity.²³ If [only the Jews] would understand, [they would believe], as do we! Because they think that we believe there to be three Gods, they reproach our faith. Belief as regards the Incarnation of the Word is widespread, as I indicated. Nevertheless, [these peoples] do not understand the Word of God [viz., Jesus] to be the Son of God, as do Christians.

(c) *The Magi were led to Christ by a star.*

[9] But in order now to approach our proposed topic, let us speak briefly of how it is that the manifestation [that is celebrated] today was made to the Magi. When the Savior was born, a star of marvelous brightness revealed to the Gentiles Jesus, the Splendor of the Father and the ray of his mother. For the Splendor of the Father did not have to be revealed by a more fitting physical sign. That star was created from the elements by the Divine command—[created] only for those Magi, who, alone, saw it. It was small but of great light. It was small because it showed the child who was born but did not cover the entire town, as does every smallest star of the heavens. Perhaps in Arabia Felix, in the region of Saba (from where incense is brought, because of which the kingdoms are called sacred)—perhaps in Arabia Eudaemon [i.e., Arabia Felix], in the area of Mecca—the Magi were desirous of investigating the truth about the upper heavens. And a new star, which was brightly shining, appeared to them, showing them the image of the [new-]born child, having a cross on His head. Inwardly aroused with regard to this new, truly-guiding, wondrous star, they inquired of God, asking: “O God, Creator of the stars, what new thing is this?” ... etc. And because they were inflamed with love (perhaps because of a certain earlier divine presage), they desired to see the Incarnate Word, after having received an answer from on high: “Here is a sign of the Creator of the stars, of the Incarnate Word. The Word is Truth and is true Light. Abandon works of darkness.” Therefore, seeing the star, and now knowing that it was supposed to be a sign indicative of a great king, and being exceedingly enlightened within, they trusted the outer sign and proceeded toward the star. And because the star was present with them in the region of Saba, [a region] east of Jerusalem, they journeyed a great distance, after having seen the

star in the East—[journeyed] toward the West with gifts, [in order] to adore Him. They heard a voice: “In Judea a child has been born.” Hastening onwards with the star miraculously guiding [them] for a brief time, they arrived in Judea.

[10] When they came to the royal city, Jerusalem, they asked: “Where is He who is born King of the Jews? We have seen His star in the East and have come to adore Him.”²⁴ When they [thus] asked for human assistance, they dismissed the guidance of the star. Although they knew that Herod was reigning, they did not give heed to the fact that to look for another king was to incur the law of death. They now chose, according to Chrysostom, to die for the sake of Christ.²⁵ When Herod, who then ruled, heard that the scepter of Judah was raised up (in accordance with the ancient prophecy), he feared (now that Christ was born) that he, being of another lineage, would be ejected from the kingdom. A child in a cradle now frightened a ruler. (Let kings now fear Him who reigns in Heaven at the right hand of the Father!) And Herod called together the elders and the Jewish wisemen, [asking them] where Christ would be born. They answer him according to the prophecy of Micah: “‘In Bethlehem of Judea.’²⁶ The dead show [signs of] life, just as a hand shows the way with a dry piece of wood ...,” etc. Having convoked the Magi secretly once the place [of birth] was known [to him], he learned of the timing of the star; and he said [to the Magi] deceitfully: “Go to Bethlehem; ask attentively about the child; and after you have found [Him], report [it] to me, so that, coming there, I may adore Him too.”

O Hypocrite, inasmuch as you devise evil by means of a false and simulated good! Simulated holiness is a twofold iniquity, according to Jerome.²⁷ Suspecting nothing evil, the Magi departed from Herod and went to Bethlehem. And they again saw the star, which went before them to the place above the head of the [new-]born child—as if it were pointing out [the child] and were saying: “Here is He who is born ...,” etc.²⁸ And the star, after its mission was accomplished, returned into pre-existing matter.

[11] And entering into the dwelling, or house, [the Magi] found the child with Mary His mother. And they rejoiced with great joy—rightly, according to Chrysostom—because they had found the Most Beloved, who was being sought. O happy Mary, without whom Christ would neither be born nor be found nor die! Joseph is believed (according to Rabanus)²⁹ not to have been present at that time, lest any suspicion that God was not born of a virgin be given to the nations,

who immediately sent their first-fruits for the purpose of adoring Him. And so, having entered [the house, the Magi] kneel down humbly before the child Jesus, prostrating themselves in mind and body; and they adore the Incarnate Word. O Magi, how is it that (according to Bernard) you venerate as King and God a child still taking milk from His mother's breasts?³⁰ Where is His purple? Where is His diadem? Does not the dwelling place of a lowly stable offend you? Does not the cradle, viz., the manger, [offend you]? Consider whether this is a king's mother dressed in a very lowly garment (not for adornment but for covering) such as it befits a travelling carpenter's wife to have! [The Magi] can reply: "We seek the King of eternal glory, not a king of earthly glory . . .," etc.

Or, again, [one may ask]: "Why do you *believe*, [since] you have not seen either miracles or signs?" [The Magi] reply: "The supreme humility of Christ draws us toward adoring and professing, as does also the star that we saw, which no mere man could have produced . . .," etc. The Magi, having opened their treasures, each offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh. By law, no one appeared empty-handed before a god and a king. Arabic gold and frankincense and myrrh are preferred to all things found there. Nevertheless, [the Magi] offered these [gifts] in very great mystery, because they knew Him to be a man, a king, and God. For they said: "Where is He who is born" (here is the man) "King of the Jews?" (here is the king); "we have come to adore Him" (here is God). Gold is a regal gift; frankincense is a divine gift, because [it is used] by the priest in the sacrifice; myrrh [has to do with] a lordly burial, etc. [The Magi offered] gold (according to Bernard) for sustaining the child and His mother; [they offered] frankincense [for use] against the foul odor of the stable; and [they offered] myrrh for strengthening the child's very tender members, etc. According to this interpretation these three kings were befigured by the three strong men who drew water for David from the cistern of Bethlehem.³¹

[12] At length, when the Magi wanted to return [home]—having completed their mission and after having kissed the feet of the infant and having received a blessing—they received in their sleep a [divine] message that they not return to Herod.³² And going down to the ship they were transported to Tarsus of Cilicia and returned to their own country by another route. Therefore, Herod, angered, vehemently broke up the Tarsian ships and burned them, etc. And Chrysostom claims that, after having returned, [the Magi] became very devout ser-

vants of Christ and were subsequently baptized by Thomas, with whom they were associated in preaching the Gospel of God ..., etc.³³

This [concludes] the first [section of our topic].

PART TWO

The Deceptive Light of Superstition and Its Varieties

(a) *A multitude of things are gathered together.*

[13] Secondly, I mentioned that evil magi [also] follow a star ..., etc. And the star that they follow is the one of which [we read] in Apocalypse 8: “The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, burning like a torch, fell from heaven. And it fell on the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star is Wormwood. And many men died ...,” etc.³⁴ There are many—even infinite—superstitious [practices], which by means of deceptive, diabolical light lead every soul away from the true foundation of the Christian faith. Now, he who falls away from the foundation of faith is a child of perdition. Hence, such superstitious individuals are to be cast out and not to be tolerated. [As] Deuteronomy 13 [states]: “If there rises up in your midst a prophet or one who says that he has dreamed a dream, and if he foretells a sign and a wonder and it comes to pass, do not hearken to the words of this prophet or dreamer, because the Lord your God is testing you in order to make known whether you love Him or not. Follow the Lord your God with your whole heart, and fear Him, and keep His commandments ...,” etc.³⁵ But that prophet, that forger of dreams, shall be slain, (1) because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God³⁶ and (2) because if you wish to be happy, it is necessary not to regard lying follies, since God hates all who regard vanities.³⁷ According to the laws [false prophets] are punished with death, and their goods are confiscated, as [prescribes] the law *Nemo* (in the chapter on wrongful deeds) and as [is prescribed] by Hostiensis in his *Summa*.³⁸ And according to the canons, secret sin is to be expiated by a penance of forty days. Public sin has [as a penalty] that the sacrament of the eucharist be denied to the [wrong-doer] (*De Cons. D. 2, “Pro Dilectione”*),³⁹ and there are other dreadful penalties if [the wrong-doer] does not correct his ways. (See Hostiensis’s *Summa*.)⁴⁰

[14] Now, the reason that so many men are deceived by these vanities is that human nature is corrupted; consequently, men believe errors rather than the truth. Secondly, there is in a diabolical affair a

power by which it happens that men are blinded, so that the truth does not shine forth to them. Likewise, because there are found *there* some holy words, the men think that [the affair] is not evil, although it is. Similarly, [deception occurs] because [what happens] follows as the result of more than one [cause]. And this fact ought not to influence us, as [warns] Deuteronomy 13 above. For example, in the case of a ring made of three iron nails that have been found, the effect is that when the ring is worn it is protective against certain infirmities. [This effect] happens (according to St. Thomas)⁴¹ in such a way that, at first, men have experienced, through diabolical inducement or by chance, something of the truth; but later when they begin to entangle their mind in these matters, many demonic deceptions occur.⁴² For demons do these things in order to tempt and lure [men] into idolatry, according to Augustine⁴³ in his *On Christian Doctrine* II. And although the Devil has no power of doing anything except by God's permission, nevertheless by God's permission he works, healing the feeble or foretelling future things, with the result that those who hear about and witness [these things] are tested. [15] And because superstition takes its origin and foundation from the Devil's illusion, then first of all one must know that the Devil has the power to deceive and transform man's outer senses. Augustine⁴⁴ gives examples in *The City of God* XIII: Just as men can trick the sense of sight with real colors, so evil spirits can do so with unreal figures. In *The City of God* [we also read] about a landlady who turned men, through their eating cheese, into pack-animals for a certain task; when the task was completed, the men became as they previously were. There, too, [we read] about Apulegus, who admits in a certain book that this [metamorphosizing] was done to him ..., etc.⁴⁵ Regarding these deceptions, [we find] in Clement's *Journey* the examples of Simon the Magician.⁴⁶ Now, such transformations can occur by an altering either of the senses or of the medium or of the object. Examine [this issue] elsewhere: [viz.], in Nicholas Gauwer's *Soothsayers*.⁴⁷

[16] Secondly, [the following] must be known: because the Devil cannot enter the rational soul, being present there intimately and inwardly (since only God can do this), he cannot alter reason or intellect. Thus, although a spirit can be in the body at the same time as is the soul, nevertheless a spirit cannot with respect to its essence be in the soul; for the intimate part of the soul and the supreme part of the soul are the same thing. Accordingly, God—who is Supreme and of whom the soul in its supreme part is the image—is the one who

can be present in the [soul's] intimate part. Augustine in his *Ecclesiastical Doctrines* [writes]: "Only He who created the mind can enter it."⁴⁸ But although the Devil does not enter into the soul through his essence, he may certainly do so through his effect [on the soul], so that the sinful soul is punished ..., etc. And because the Devil will not enter in, he does not know the secrets of hearts; rather, God alone knows [these]. For no creature knows the secrets of a consciousness except by means of outer signs. Yet, subtle spirits apprehend inner matters from many signs.

[17] However, [both] good and evil spirits can introduce thoughts. Evil spirits [can do so] by illuminating the images already possessed or by furnishing images not already possessed; moreover, good spirits [can do so] by directly impressing [thoughts] ..., etc. Now, this introducing has a certain influence. And so, although a demon cannot motivate the appetites or the affections immediately, nonetheless it can well incite [them] in persuasive fashion ..., etc. In regard to the instigations of the Devil: he first introduces divinations against faith, [doing so] when he wants to make a man to be a foreteller and a diviner. Hence, because it would be very lengthy to speak of this matter—of how the effect depends upon the cause and of how spirits sometimes know from causes future events, as do also men ([who know], for example, of eclipses and about [forthcoming] conditions of rain, etc. and as physicians know about [future states of] health, etc.)—[I will say only what follows]. In all these matters error occurs both with regard to demons and with regard to men. For there is no [pre-]determined truth about the future; and so, foretelling, etc., [the future] is foolish. Moreover, in Isaias 41 it is said: "Make known what things are going to happen in the future, and we will know that you are gods."⁴⁹ Therefore, he who arrogates to himself the role of foretelling future things blasphemes God, who alone knows—in and of Himself—future things. Understand this [fact] continually and without hesitation. Otherwise, if in persuasive fashion ..., etc. Telling of future things is "divining," because it befits God alone. Astronomers [who divine] pass beyond their limitations and fall into false interpretation and are led astray by the Devil in their judgments. A wise man is a master of the stars. According to Ptolomy all judgments are in between what is necessary and what is possible. Many things present themselves as mental images, presentiments, etc. (More about this topic elsewhere, etc.) For the Devil, who often induces [one] either to harsh penance in order to destroy [him] or to foretelling certain

things on account of the safety of the people, is recognized as the Devil because of the fact that he is a liar.⁵⁰ Oftentimes [what is foretold] does not come to pass; or if it does come to pass, it must not be believed [to have come to pass] for *that* reason. [See] Deuteronomy 13.

Furthermore, one must consider whether from the point of view of the right judgment of reason, this [foretelling, etc.] could occur. For according to Origen, whatever men do that exceeds right reason will not be done apart from [the power of] demons. Likewise, whatever is contrary to Sacred Scripture is neither to be believed nor accepted. See Bonaventure, *Sentences* III, Distinction 9: “It is not the case that every spirit is straightway to be believed. A certain [man] to whom the Devil appeared in the guise [of Christ] closed his eyes, saying that he did not want to see Christ during this lifetime.” Because of these and other temptations the solitary life is dangerous for the inexperienced.

[18] Now, the kinds of divinations that the Devil introduces are multiple: from air, from fire, from water, from earth, etc. (Examine the *Decretals* [of Gratian], etc.) To geomancy pertains inquiry by means of the mirror of Apollo, by means of a handle and cleaned-off stones, by means of a boy’s fingernail, etc. [There is] divination by means of the entrails of sacrificed animals and by means of palm branches, etc. Augury is of the kind that deals with (1) the hour of one’s birth, (2) the position of the stars, (3) fate. It deals with the chatter of birds, with sneezings, etc., or with an omen that is made when something expressed spontaneously by a man is interpreted as applying to the future. Augury also includes within itself chiromancy, spatulamancy. Furthermore, there are ways for knowing hidden matters—[ways] that take many forms: with weight-scales, with dice, with molten lead, with a rotated wheel, with treasures or stolen goods that are to be found, with trials having to do with a hot iron, with boiling water . . . , with a duell, a piece of cheese, etc. All of these are forbidden (throughout Deuteronomy 18 [Gratian, *Decretals*, Ch. 26, Question 2]). But as to how it is that this accursed, diabolical sect began at the beginning of the world’s creation and through books was handed down by succeeding generations, consult [the works of] Roger Bacon.

[19] Let us likewise touch upon how there are certain works of nature (in the case of herbs and of stones and as regards men’s subtle detections—for example, in physiognomy, in chiromancy, and in dreams and in astrology) which appear to be wondrous. And there are works of natural magic and of wondrous origins and wondrous appearances that occur by nature (as truly occurred on Mount Pincius),

and works of treasure-[finding], and works of deceivers who travel throughout the world. An example is taken from [William of] Paris in your lifetime. He said that he knew the art of finding treasures, etc. [Another] example regards a cross with a magnet, etc. Or again: there is no power on earth that can compare with the power of the Devil (Job 41).⁵¹ For God alone—and angels and men by divine grace—has power over demons. Man has [such power] not of himself but [only] insofar as God gives it to him. Therefore, those peasants who by means of signs and certain words and songs endeavor to cast out a demon by the power of signs, etc., err. And although, on occasion, the Devil withdraws without doing harm, etc. (as we read about in St. Bartholomew's *Legends*), this departing occurs in order to seduce, etc. The enchanters who claim to enclose a spirit in a claw or a jar are foolish, because a spirit is not enclosed in a material object. The astrologers with their imaginings are foolish. Nothing material has an effect on what is immaterial, although the text in Tobias speaks of the heart of a fish.⁵² Nevertheless, according to [Nicholas] Lyra the following is understood by [the text's word] "smoke": [viz.,] meritorious expulsive-power.

[20] Moreover, because—according to William of Paris, in his book *On Faith and the Laws*—[our God is a] Jealous God,⁵³ He wills with righteous jealousy that the soul betrothed to Him live a pure life. For he who truly loves his bride does not (1) tolerate another man's coming close or (2) tolerate anything suspicious being done as concerns touch, conversation, nods, signs, or nearness. Nor is it enough for a wife to shun adultery, unless she also shuns the forms of adultery: [viz., in the present case,] seeking help from elsewhere than from God; clinging with steadfast hope to someone other than to God; expecting prosperity from someone other than from God. [Such conduct] displeases God, as someone who is jealous with regard to the [soul] betrothed to Him. And so, for safeguarding His betrothed He gave the command:⁵⁴ "Do not suffer wizzards to live" (Exodus 22), because they are idolaters. Because those who captured a mother bird in her nest, with eggs, ascribed this [nesting] to fertility and to evidences of love, God commanded⁵⁵ that the mother not be captured (Deuteronomy 22). He commanded that vessels be covered because of the abundant powers and spirits (*holdi*), etc. For [*holdi*] are nothing but demons, to whom sorceresses offer things eatible and drinkable while cleaning house, etc. Nevertheless, [these demons] do not eat; rather, they seduce.

God proscribed men's putting on the garment of a woman, and vice versa, because of idolatry. For women used to put on men's clothes and weapons in honor of Mars. O, Deranged Ones! etc. And, conversely, men [put on women's clothes] in honor of Venus, etc. This festival is held among Christians at the [time just before] Lent, etc. Furthermore, why through blessings and incantations do you foolishly seek from the sun—and why do you through fasting on the first day of the new moon foolishly seek from the new moon—that, as an aid, it safeguard you? The Lord, your Bridegroom, is their Creator; and you are an idolater. What are you looking for in amulets, in characters, in unfamiliar diabolical names? Your God is one. In all of these there is diabolical seduction. At times, [the Devil] appears as a sorceress whisking away a boy; at times, he appears as a boy. And the boy is said to be transformed; and, at length, the boy disappears; he “*verweselt*,” (properly speaking, [in German]). At times, the Devil is permitted to slay the boy whom perhaps you exceedingly love—[permitted] in order that you be tempted as regards whether for this reason you wish to depart from God and to render divine honors to the Devil, in the guise of sorceresses, in order that he spare the boy. O accursed sorceresses in whom have remained all the relics of idolatry and who promulgate these [rites] daily! [As] the Apostle [says] in Titus 2: “Instruct women old in spirit that they teach prudence”⁵⁶—as if to say: “... [that they teach prudence], not foolishness.”

Another consideration is that man is not permitted to use the Devil's help (IV Kings 1, where [Ochozias] is reproached, etc.).⁵⁷ Brigitta, in her *Revelations*, [wrote] about this to Bernard, Archbishop of Naples, etc. Augustine [wrote about it] in his sermon *On Auguries*.⁵⁸ William [of Paris wrote about it] in his “Why evil-doers want to have virgins for their practices.” [21] Likewise, [consider] how it is that by their own superstitious light they seek God and acknowledge Him with a gift, praying otherwise, and seeking other things, than the Church has instituted. In regard to the worship of God no one is permitted by his own authority to add or subtract from the things instituted by the Church, etc. Moreover, it is superstition when worship owed to God alone is given to someone other than to God; indeed, it is idolatry. Accordingly, a pact with demons, sacrifices made to them, counsel taken from them is idolatry. It is superstition to seek health in marks, amulets, incantations, and in those things that the physicans condemn. When demons are openly invoked, it is called necromancy. If [they are invoked] by means of presentiments, it is *praestigium* [en-

chantment], because of a blunting [*praestringere*] of men's ears. And when [they are invoked] by means of a dream, it is called divination of dreams. Necromancy is like divination of the dead, because the dead seem to be revived by means of blood applied together with an incantation. If in regard to living men future things are [fore-]told—as occurs by means of those who are demon-possessed—it is called *pithonica* (from Pytho Apollis, the originator of divination).

[22] As regards herbs and stones, it is clear that when they are made use of for their natural effects, this is done without sinning. However, if [they are made use of] for another reason, then [the use is] not [without sin]; for it is done unto the honoring of the Devil. And the Devil pretends that he flees when one wears on his neck a gem of ponia or of jasper. [He does so] in order in this way [i.e., through one's wearing the gem] to be honored. If [the herbs and stones] are gathered otherwise than together with [the use of] incantations, nevertheless the Lord's Prayer or the Credo is not used. Here take note of the fact that if consecrated objects are put to a use other than their proper use, this [improper use] is superstition. [Superstition occurs], for example, with holy water that is drunk as a remedy for sickness or that is sprinkled for [acquiring] fertility and is sometimes given to brute animals. [It occurs] also with the light of an Easter candle, with the use of baptismal water. And, likewise, [superstition occurs] with regard to many other things: a withholding of oneself from the source of consecrated light in honor of St. Apollo or [St.] Blasius; a cross made from palm-twigs, etc.; baths on the eve of the [feast of the] Nativity and on the eve of the beginning of Lent as a remedy against fevers and dental pain; not eating meats on the birthday of our Lord, as a remedy against fevers, etc., or as a way of honoring St. Nicholas in order to acquire wealth, etc.; seeking alms for going to St. Valentine [in quest of] a remedy for epilepsy; weighing a boy by means of wheat or wax; carrying a cross all around a field in the springtime as a prevention for storms.

Moreover, [superstition occurs] with regard to certain things offered on the altar: for example, stones [offered] on the day of St. Stephan and arrows [offered] on the day of St. Sebastian, etc. Likewise, various superstitions arise from words mingled with things. [They arise] as regards hate and love and an evil, diabolical procedure with a needle that has touched the garment of a dead man; as regards fork-shaped pieces of wood, pieces of wood joined together as a remedy for fevers, as a remedy for jaundice; as regards an uncon-

secrated host as a remedy for fevers; as regards urine, etc.; as regards chicks, etc. (See the details in the small book.)⁵⁹ [Superstition occurs] with regard to the healing of sheep and of cows by means of a fire to drive away evil spirits; as regards incantation of mares as a remedy against worms or other evils; as regards the lifting of any heavy man who has [but] four fingers; as regards the holidays of the year in their order and together with their superstitious observances, beginning with the feast of our Lord's birth; as regards carvings, writings, etc.

[23] According to Thomas, [*Summa Theologica*] II-II.96.4: “with respect to all incantations two things require caution, whether in the case of words or letters or verses hung [around the neck]. For if there is anything therein that pertains to the divining of demons, obviously it is superstitious and illicit. Likewise, if [the amulet] contains words [whose meanings are] unknown, [it is not to be worn], lest among these meanings something illicit is hidden. Chrysostom [writes in his Commentary] on Matthew: ‘by the example of the Pharisees who enlarge their fringes, many men now invent, write, and adduce certain Hebrew names for angels—names that seem awesome to those who do not understand them.’ And we must beware lest [these names] contain any falsity.” Moreover, we must not believe that there is in those words a certain power that God has not given—as some men believe that if they wear the Gospel of John, they will not be able to be drowned or taken captive. Furthermore, one must beware lest there be mixed with the sacred words things that are vain, for example, marks other than the sign of the Cross. Or one must not rely on the manner of writing, of speaking, or of reading [of words]. If all of these [superstitious aspects] are absent, then—and then only—is [the practice] permitted . . .⁶⁰ Not only may the Gospels and the Lord's Prayer and relics permissibly be worn if nothing *vain* is mixed [with them]—[i.e.,] nothing which is done in such and such a manner or with regard to such and such a vessel or to such and such [an end], etc.—but in that case it is also required that there be respect for God. And let there not be supposed to be such exactitude that only those words have power and not other things divine. But not the writing or the words [have power] but their signification and meaning do.

[24] As regards fortune and misfortune, things fortuitous, sneezing, dancing flames of fire, footwear, the observance of days of ill-omen, etc.: all of these [practices] are abominable. It is permitted to observe times insofar as they are natural occurrences. But [observance] is not permitted with regard to those things that are not subject to the

influence [of nature]—for example, men’s choices of these times or of other times, and similarly regarding other things, regarding the day of the [Holy] Innocents, etc. (Consult teacher Nicholas Gauwer’s *Soothsayers*.) A similar point holds regarding things found: e.g., (1) a bird’s nest with the mother ([a finding] that signifies fecundity, and abundance, of goods) and (2) a piece of iron or a nail or a half-penny ([a finding] that is good fortune) and the finding of (3) a treasure ([a finding] that is ill-fortune), etc. [25] Rather, the one faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for us. For “there is no name under the sun . . .,” etc.⁶¹ “In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow ;,” etc.⁶² “If [you have] faith as [the size of] a mustard seed . . .,” etc.⁶³ “In whom, through whom are all things.”⁶⁴ Let us seek Him with our magic light left behind; let us seek Him by the light of His grace and by our light of love; let us adore Him together with the Magi, so that with joy we may return to our native land by another route . . . , etc.⁶⁵

The following things [I will now say] regarding the second part [of the sermon].

(b) *The order of things-to-be-said is determined.*

[26] The order of things to be said in the second division [of the Second Part]: The star that fell into the inner recesses of absinthian bitterness⁶⁶ works adultery and a form of adulterous departing from true Christian faith. Hence, all operations that do not have a reasonable mediate-cause are superstitious. Therefore, as regards evident and experienced natural causes—e.g., in medicines and in the case of certain astrological [phenomena]—and as regards the changes of the moon as they bear upon planting, trimming, and sowing, we must know [the following]: they are allowed, as long as nothing superstitious is mixed in [with them]. There are other things which, although they are secrets of nature, are concealed from us and in which the Devil intermingles himself. These are discussed by Nicholas Horem and Albertus [Magnus] and others (viz., Roger Bacon, John Batem in his *Mirror of Divine Things*, and others writing about the almanac; Alkindus, [writing] about starbeams; Ben Rabas, writing about physical connections; Avicenna; Algazel; etc.). They affirm that works of magic have natural causes, etc. [But] even if such things have [natural] causes, it is not for a Christian to make use of [such things]. For the Devil often intermingles himself amid these secret matters in order to deceive.

Other things occur by means of subtle hand-movements and by means of optics, etc. If such things are not done in order to deceive,

they can all be done [permissibly] and without idolatry. But many things, even countless things, that are condemned and evil are accomplished without any explanation or cause—things that our Jealous God does not will to be done (Deuteronomy 13, etc.). [Our attention is] chiefly on these things. And we must be aware of how it is that from the beginning a perverse generation from the church-of-evil-doers always runs together with the elect and with the church-of-the-predestined. Hence, books of divination and of enchantments are found carved on stones before the Flood—[found] by Hermes. These books came into the hands of Cham and his son Chanaan; they came to Zoroaster and to Aristotle and to Zuippus, according to Democritus and Plato, although Zepher Razahel says otherwise. And in these books are handed down manifold ways of using divination, using incantations, etc.—ways that are prohibited for a Christian.

PART THREE

On the Birth That Occurs by the Light of Grace

[27] As regards [this] third part, we must briefly become aware that after the soul (long defiled through faithless infidelity, as was mentioned, and through sins) turns to God, the true Light, then there is present the star of grace, the Eastern light-of-intelligence that guides [one] to understanding all things that fall outside of God. And [the intellect] follows this light of grace in order to apprehend where in that light Christ was born. Then comes the invisible sending of the Father's Splendor, viz., the Word of God in God. This sending is the Begotten Wisdom's entering into the mind of the rational creature for the spiritual and free illumining of it. And although the Word of God—indeed, the Trinity as a whole—is everywhere, with respect to essence, nevertheless the Trinity is not everywhere with respect to its freely-given light. Accordingly, when in your darkened heathen-mind, or your less illuminated mind, a greater light arises and is begotten, then through the light of grace and by faith [in]formed by love you apprehend Christ born in you. Although this [birth] is the work of the Trinity, nevertheless the Son is born in you, because He is the Brightness of eternal light⁶⁷ (Augustine, *On the Trinity* I). For it belongs to the Word to illumine and unveil the mind; and it belongs to Wisdom to make the mind wise; and it belongs to the Brightness of light to make the mind bright. And such minds are made to be spiritual sons of God. And when in this way Christ is born in us, then just as the sun accomplishes three things with respect to the earth, so too does Christ, who dwells

in us: in particular, He illumines, warms, and produces fruit. He illumines and brightens the mind qua intellect by means of its contemplation; and He kindles and warms the mind qua affection by means of its love and its fruition, two things that relate to the contemplative power in us. And, thirdly, He causes to be fruitful the practical power—[causes it] by means of the teaching of practical wisdom and by the exercise of the moral virtues, to the end that we may go and bear fruit and that our fruit may remain.⁶⁸

[28] Therefore, in order that, at the outset, Christ may be born in us, let us enter into contemplation, and let us go with the shepherds, at the beckoning of the angels, unto the house of bread, unto Bethlehem;⁶⁹ and let us see with the eye of the intellect and of the affections this Word that was made flesh.⁷⁰ Moreover, let us go humbly—with those three kings from the East and with the guiding star—toward the West. [Let us proceed] by means of the humbleness of our own mortification, in order that our soul may devoutly find in Bethlehem the humble Christ, the Bread of life.⁷¹ Let us behold! All the things that we see *there* are super-marvelous: the infant sucking on the most sacred breasts—[the infant] whom the heavens could not contain—and the mother, still a virgin. Let us behold the King of kings, wrapped in thick and ordinary swaddling clothes. Let us behold the adornments of the mother! Where are the wreaths? Where are the golden garments? Where, the servants? Where, the courtiers? Where the festive meals, the reclining sofas? Where, the cradle of the newborn King? Lo! All things are very humble! He who thunders amid the clouds lies in a manger. O you who rely on your riches, look at your poor King. O you who live in comfort and in fleshly delight, look at these [lowly] things. If Christ's action is our guiding-instruction, what do you suppose? It will happen [that] ..., etc. [29] Reflect on how it is that the mother handles the son, the Ruler of the world. O how often she kisses His holy hands, which a band links together! Reflect on how it is that the royal majesty of paganism devoutly adored Him by prostrating itself on the ground. And, you, what ought you to do for One who reigns in Heaven? Etc.

When the soul reflects in the foregoing way on the foregoing things, it laments with devout and loving remorse; and it asks of the mother permission to approach the child so that, with the Magi, it may kiss His feet. Thereafter, the soul asks more affectionately for permission to kiss the hands; thereafter, to kiss the cheek, etc. Then after it has tasted and seen that the Lord is sweet,⁷² it opens its vessels and,

with the Magi, offers the child three gifts; myrrh, by mortifying our members; frankincense, through the sweetness of prayer; gold, through purity of contemplation. For when such great beauty appears in the soul, Christ betroths to Himself the soul as an adorned bride. And then, daily, our gold is purified, illumined, and polished in the fire of contemplation and love. And on the part of the soul there arises a maximal desire directed upwards toward God—[a desire] to enjoy and possess its Bridegroom in eternal glory. And so, in this way the soul—united to Christ in this life, espoused to Him in the stable of humility through three gifts—is exalted, after death, unto an intuitive viewing of the essence that is present in the outward manifestation of the Glorious Trinity. And this intuitive viewing is ever-enlivening and happily-restive and solemnly-deifying.⁷³ Now, with Christ, our Bridegroom, our life will be hidden in God.⁷⁴ According to Colossians 3: “when Christ, your Life, appears, you too will appear in glory.”⁷⁵ And while we journey here below in faith, it suffices us to glory in hope.⁷⁶ [As] the Psalm [says]: “I will appear in Your presence in justice; I will be satisfied when Your glory appears.”⁷⁷ “For then we shall be like [Him], since we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope sanctifies himself, because He is holy.”⁷⁸ And because of the form of holiness that [the believer] puts on, God will then be known face to face.⁷⁹

May Jesus Christ, the Enlightener of nations, lead us by a guiding star unto this vision. Amen.

NOTES TO SERMON II

1. These words come not from Scripture but from the Breviary of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. See Part One of this sermon.
3. Seneca, *Liber XIV, Epistula 2* (90). See *Epistularum Moralium Libri XX* [Fridericus Haase, ed., *L. Annaei Senecae Opera quae Supersunt* (Leipzig: B. Teubner, 1853), Vol. III, p. 260].
4. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Libri sive Expositio in Librum B. Job*, Book XI, Chap. 13 (*PL* 75:963B).
5. See Part Two of this sermon.
6. Cf. II Timothy 3:7.
7. See Part Three of this sermon.
8. Numbers 24:17.
9. John 2:1-10.
10. John 1:6. Augustine, *Confessiones*, VIII, 9.
11. Colossians 2:16.
12. The allusion is wrongly to Messahalla. See, rather, Albumasar, *Introductorium in Astronomiam* VI, Ch. 2 (“De Naturis Signorum”). Augsburg, 1489. [The relevant passage is on p. 8 of Book VI; pages are without pagination.]
13. Paul Klopsch, editor. *Pseudo-Ovidius de Vetula. Untersuchungen und Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1967).
14. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, VIII, 8, 3 [See Vol. I of *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, edited by W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966; reprint of the 1911 edition)].
15. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, Book IV, Chs. 15-19 (*PL* 6:490-513).
16. An adaptation of this written (Latin) sermon was preached (in German) shortly after Christmas.
17. Cf. Acts 7:53.
18. Cf. Romans 3:22.
19. I Corinthians 2:8.
20. Augustine, *Epistola* 137, 3, 9 (*PL* 33:519).
21. Ephesians 2:20.
22. Luke 2:25-32 and 36-38.
23. This theme Nicholas later develops in his *De Pace Fidei*.
24. Matthew 2:2.
25. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In Evangelium Matthaei*, Homilia 2 (*PG* 56:637).
26. Micah 5:2. Matthew 2:4-5.
27. Cf. Jerome, *Commentaria in Isaiam Prophetam*, VI, 16, 14 (*PL* 24:248A): “Et in comparatione duorum malorum, levius malum est aperte peccare, quam simulare et fingere sanctitatem.”
28. Matthew 2:2.
29. Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Matthaicum*, Book I, Ch. 2 (*PL* 107:759BC).
30. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Epiphania Domini*, Sermon 2, n. 1 (*PL* 183:147CD).

31. I Paralipomenon (I Chronicles) 11:18.
32. Matthew 2:12.
33. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In Evangelium Matthaei, Homilia 2* (PG 56:638).
34. Apocalypse 8:10-11 (Revelation 8:10-11).
35. Deuteronomy 13:1-4. Nicholas's punctuation here differs from the Vulgate's.
36. Deuteronomy 13:5.
37. Psalms 39:5 and 30:7 (40:4 and 31:6).
38. Henry of Segusio [Cardinal Hostiensis], *Summa Aurea* (Venice, 1574), Book V, Column 1650.
39. Taken from Henry of Segusio, *loc. cit.*
40. *Loc. cit.*
41. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa-IIae, 96, 3, *ad 2.*
42. That is, men begin to wear the ring for reasons of health; later they become superstitious with regard to wearing it—thinking it to have magical powers, etc.
43. Cf. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, II, 23, 35 (PL 34:52).
44. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XVIII, Chs. 15-18.
45. Apulegius: i.e., Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, III, 24-25.
46. Pseudo-Clemens, *Recognitiones X*, 53 (PG I:1445-1446).
47. Nicholas Gauwer, i.e., Nicholas Magni de Jawor, *De Superstitionibus*. (See *Codex Latinus Monacensis 27417.*)
48. Gennadius Massiliensis (not Augustine), *De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus*, 83 (PL 58:999).
49. Isaias (Isaiah) 41:23.
50. John 8:44.
51. Job 41:24 (41:33).
52. Tobias 6:5-9.
53. Exodus 20:5.
54. Exodus 22:18.
55. Deuteronomy 22:6-7.
56. Titus 2:3-4.
57. IV Kings 1:2-4 (II Kings 1:2-4).
58. Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermon 278* (PL 39:2268-2269).
59. Nicholas's reference here is unknown.
60. Gratian, *Decretum, Pars II, Causa XXVI, Quaestio V, C. III* (PL 187:1346).
61. Acts 4:12.
62. Philippians 2:10.
63. Matthew 17:19.
64. Romans 11:36. Colossians 1:16.
65. Matthew 2:12.
66. Apocalypse 8:10-11 (Revelation 8:10-11).
67. Wisdom 7:26.
68. John 15:16.
69. "Bethlehem," in Hebrew, means *place of food*.
70. John 1:14.
71. John 6:35.

72. Psalms 33:9 (34:8).
73. The theme of deification is one that Nicholas takes up more fully in his treatise *De Filiatione Dei*.
74. Colossians 3:3.
75. Colossians 3:4.
76. Romans 5:2.
77. Psalms 16:15 (17:15).
78. I John 3:2-3.
79. I Corinthians 13:12.

Sermon III: Hoc Facite

(“Do this”)

[March 29, 1431; preached somewhere in the Diocese of Trier]

[1] “Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22).¹ [See] *Clementinae*, “Si Dominum in sanctis suis,” *De Reliquiis et Veneratione Sanctorum*.²

Honorable men, most beloved brothers in Christ! The devotional period is now present in which each one—even one who formerly was very indolent—ought to recall to mind, and to consider in diligent meditation and with a heart inflamed with the fervor of love, his own salvation.

An excusing [of myself]. With all pretense of eloquence spurned, with pleadings set aside, and although I am most unsuited with regard to knowledge and with respect to life, I will endeavor most simply and as best I can to arouse your minds by the grace of the Almighty—[to arouse them] along the lines of healthy meditations, so that by means of my meditation, which I have undertaken to express in words, a spiritual fire of affection may be kindled in each of you and thus your soul may glow vitally with the joy of divine love at this most sacred time of suffering. Accordingly, most Beloved, I make use of the teaching of [Pope] Urban on relics and the veneration of saints, his “*Si Dominum*.”³ At the outset of his stated aim regarding his commendation of the sacrosanct sacrament of the new law he uses the following beginning: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

[2] *Epilogue on three things*. We ecclesiastics ought especially to meditate, with greatest attentiveness, on three things at this season: viz., (1) on the memory of the very bitter passion of our Savior, and (2) on the salvific sacrament of the eucharist (given and bequeathed most graciously to us on this day through a testament), and, (3) thirdly, on the preparing of this same sacrament, along with the preparation’s four causes: viz., in terms of effect, of material, of form, and of the reception [of form].⁴ All of these things are disclosed in the aforementioned words of Christ our Savior.

The reason for [this] topic. Now, whom He loved He loved unto the end.⁵ And according to the doctors [of the Church] it is evident that after the supreme priesthood was conveyed to the Apostles by means of these words—[uttered] with respect to the preparation of this most sacred sacrament during the final hour of love, at the principal

evening meal, at the supreme meal of love—He did that supreme act than which He could do, and could give, nothing greater for the salvation of our souls. Therefore, I rightly direct this theme to you priests to whom my sermon is addressed and who are successors of the Apostles with respect to this consecrating power.

Subsidiary prayer. [We have] nothing from ourselves qua from ourselves,⁶ since God has made us and not we ourselves⁷ and since all our power is by the spirit of His mouth.⁸ Nevertheless, as regards this very excellent, divine, supernal, spiritual matter: the less we are *able*, the more we must implore God. With a sincere heart and a devout prayer we must seek the favor of the Incarnate Word's virgin mother, Mary, the intercessor and advocate for our prayers. [I ask] regarding myself that when I open my mouth, it may be filled with the spirit of wisdom; for you [yourselves I ask] that when your ear hears, your heart may obediently be inflamed. Accordingly, let us say with a single and pious mind: "Ave Maria."

PART ONE

Man's Creation and Fall and the Purpose of the Son of God's Incarnation Are Set Forth

[3] *The Trinity.* When—from eternity and in His essence and without inactivity or sluggishness—the Lord, the God of infinite goodness, made to be good what can be made good and loved what can be loved and understood what can be understood, He had *Making-good* and *Loving* and *Understanding* in the oneness of His essence. This altogether simple trinity is an altogether singular oneness. It is easy for someone who is alive to believe this, for if God is good without inactivity: then in His essence there is One-who-makes-good, whom we call Father; and in the same essence there is the correlate of the One-who-makes-good, viz., the God-who-is-makeable-as-good, whom we call Son; and there is each's Act-of-making-good (and loving), whom we call Holy Spirit. It was pleasing to God's goodness, which flowed out from His essence, to make-good and to create. Therefore, God created a threefold nature: a nature that is only immaterial, a nature that is only corporeal, and a mixed nature. The nature that was only immaterial—to pass through [this topic] briefly—remained, in part and through free will—standing upright in humble and loving subjection; but, in part, it fell because of pride, rebellion, and blasphemy.⁹

But God created man as a mixture of body and spirit—[created him] in the image and likeness of His most holy trinity and essence.

He adorned man outwardly with the delightfulness of Paradise; and inwardly He most perfectly filled him with a full knowledge of things. Indeed, as with the angels, He gave man intellect, will, and memory; as with brute animals, He gave man bodily senses. And just as this man [Adam] issued forth from the supremely good Beginning, so the Alpha and Omega,¹⁰ [viz., God,] equipped man for the Highest End. [God equipped him] (1) with reason, by means of which man subjugated the senses; (2) with will, by means of which man, in loving, entered into God; (3) with memory, by means of which man established himself firmly. God gave [man] an appetitive power and a power of desire by means of which powers man would, with delight and affection, remain upright in love. God gave [man] the [power] of anger, by means of which man would indignantly repel, with hope and boldness, things contrary to God, his Beloved. And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were exceedingly good.¹¹ From Him who is Best [come] only the best of things; for, [made] from nothing, they were, through the goodness of God, good in accordance with a likeness to the forms of them; [and, similarly, they were] great, true, etc., [in accordance with the corresponding forms]. Sadness, pain, etc., were in man only conditionally and potentially. Through sin they were actualized. There was a single oneness, a single harmony among all [three of] these powers. The senses obeyed the will and reason. And by the saints this harmoniousness is called original justice, which God bestowed on Adam.

[5] *The fall of man.* The first created human beings, (1) esteeming the foregoing [facts] lightly and (2) perverting the created-ordering that directed [them] toward God, and (3) separating themselves from God through a transgressing of the precept—being transgressors of the imperial, very just commandment through the eating of the fruit, they fell most gravely into the penalty attached to the commandment: viz., “At what time you eat [the forbidden fruit] you shall surely die.”¹² Not only [did they fall] but [so also did] the entire human race, which was hidden in them by a certain productive power or seminal cause. And, as Bernard says, “We fell at one and the same time into the mire and onto the pile of stones; hence, we were polluted with original guilt and were battered and broken and were gravely wounded” in all of the perfectly disposed powers and potencies of our soul.¹³ For by the just judgment of God, and after original justice was lost through the Fall, the soul’s powers and affections—having fallen from their [original] station—became

diminished and disordered. They were not altogether destroyed but functioned in a manner opposite [to the previous manner].

Do we not experience nowadays the fact that sensuality, the power of desire, and the power of anger are contrary to the will? And although the will cannot go beyond reason, frequently it acts against reason. All these powers are prone to evil and inclined toward desiring what is illicit. Reason is made blind and errant; often it uses things false in place of things true; and often it involves itself with idle curiosities and with things useless. The will loves things carnal more often than things spiritual. The power of desiring has lapsed into concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and carnal pleasures. The power of anger has lapsed, as disordered, into the pride of life and worldly glory. Hope is not placed in God but in riches and in one's own merits. We are made sad by the loss of riches, by the world's contempt [for us]. We are angry with our brother. See how it is that through the loss of original justice the entire man has fallen from the way of rectitude into discord! As a result of this disproportion among his powers and this turning away [from God] through the evil exercise [of them], man has contracted filthiness and a certain stickiness in the soul's desires and powers. Man was held back, having been pinned down, as it were, by this gluey lewdness; and like the Prodigal Son he went off into a distant land and wasted his entire provision through fornication. And departing very far from God, he made himself a keeper of swine; and he served the Devil, keeping the Devil's precepts. And in this way man came into a land of dissimilitude and [wandered] very far from God and was unable to turn back.

[6] *The reason for the Incarnation.* God sees that man cannot arrive at the goal of salvation, because justice opposes. Moreover, Adam and Eve, together with their descendants, could not of themselves—because they were dead as a result of the [condemnatory] judgment—rise up from eternal death. For nothing gives life to itself; rather, just as every creature exists from God, so too every creature has life from God. Therefore, man, created for life, is not restored unless he is elevated unto a likeness with [those] angels in whom there is no sin. [Man] cannot bring about this [state of likeness] except by means of a preceding complete-satisfaction, which must be [such] that there is given to God something (1) that is not owed and (2) that exceeds all that is not God.¹⁴ To sin is to dishonor God—something which a man ought not to do even if all the things that are not God were to perish [because of man's not dishonoring God]. Assuredly,

reason and immutable truth require that he who sins render to God, in place of the honor stolen, something greater than is that for the sake of which he ought not to dishonor God. Human nature, by itself, did not have this [payment]; yet, without satisfaction human nature was not able to arrive at its goal and at the Kingdom. Hence, God's goodness and love led Him to come down [from Heaven] for the sake of our salvation. His goodness and love are so efficacious that—in the midst of time (and, according to some men, in the midst of the world¹⁵) when all things kept half-silent¹⁶—the *One who loves* and *that which is loved* unite with an intermediate creature, viz., man, so that in this way there would be the common union of all creatures. [God descended] in order that through the union of God and man every creature would be exalted and would arrive at its end-goal. This Christ Jesus, the Incarnate Word, took onto Himself the extensive sentence of death in order to exempt us from death by dying our death.

[7] *The reason for [Christ's] sacrifice.* Now, because the infraction was infinite and the besmirching infinite, and because the crime of *lèse majesté* that was committed against God was infinite, it was necessary (according to the precept of Leviticus 9)¹⁷ that this Christ, the High Priest, approach the altar and offer a pure, acceptable, worthy sacrifice in order to make satisfaction for so infinitely great a wrong-doing. And there was found only one pure sacrificial victim, viz., Christ Jesus. Accordingly, He offered Himself for us and died, because He willed to. Augustine aims to say the foregoing things in *On the Trinity* IV, Chapter 12: “The one true Mediator reconciled us to God by means of a sacrifice of peace. In order to remain one with Him to whom He was offered, viz., the Father, He would make to be one in Himself those on behalf of whom He made the offering, [and] He would be the one who made the offering [for them].”¹⁸ [8] And in this [eucharistic] sacrament, Christ left a memorial of this sacrifice, so that just as He Himself bore [our] original sin ..., etc. Such excellent love has left after itself priests, and has instituted this sacrament, so that with this same body of Christ and sacrifice of Christ the priests may make offerings for the actual sins of the people—as will be touched upon here a bit later. In this way He wanted to leave behind for us this sacrifice which He offered for us on the altar of the Cross. And since (1) Christ Himself (our Priest and Sacrifice) and (2) He to whom the sacrifice was made were one: ... He left behind a sacrament in terms of food (because there is no greater union than the union of food and the one fed), so that priests, in making this sacrifice, would

be one with the sacrifice. However, this Immaterial Food changes into itself the one who has partaken of it. Augustine heard [the words]: “I am the Food of grown-ups . . . , etc. You will not change Me into yourself, as being the food of your flesh, but I will change you into Myself.”¹⁹ And in this way priests are, through this transformation, gods and sons of the Most High.²⁰ These topics are to be taken up below, in a different section.

PART TWO

The Theme of the Sermon Is Set Forth

(a) *Memory of Christ's suffering.*

[9] Let us here and now elevate our mind unto contemplating the mystery of the suffering and sacrifice [of Christ]. We have heard, Most Beloved, that our first parents became corrupted and abominable in and through their iniquities; and, hence, down to the time of our Lord Jesus Christ there was no one who did what is [perfectly] good. For in Christ the deity exalted, in the highest degree, the humanity—[exalted it] by means of a hypostatic union. And, consequently, every creature is united to God through [Christ's] human nature; and the one created world, because of the one Son of God's becoming incarnate, came to its end-goal through the Word-made-flesh. [Christ's] humanity, as united to the deity, was supposed to pay the greatest honor to God. And, thus, in order to [satisfy] God, Christ freely offered Himself on the altar of the Cross in supreme humility. O Christian soul, soul raised up from grievous death, soul redeemed from wretched slavery by God's blood: engage now in contemplation, arouse your mind, remember your having been raised up, redeemed, and set free;²¹ receive instruction, and learn the way of honoring God. Let each one take up his own cross, following this pathway of Christ,²² in order to be united to Christ. For unless one ascends through this Mediator, he will not come to his own end-goal. For he who humbles himself will be exalted,²³ and he who endeavors to safeguard his life in this world will lose it.²⁴ One does not come to this pathway except by means of perfect love, in which to live and to die is the one Christ.²⁵ To cling to Him and to place all one's hope in Him is a good thing. For He is the Life of the living, the Hope of the dying, the Salvation of all those who hope in Him. Do not forever fail to be mindful that Christ Himself died in order that by you an inheritance might be obtained in the Eternal Homeland, viz., [the inheritance of] seeing Christ—who is

God and man—face to face and without a symbolism.

[10] O how great that love was which caused God to descend, and caused a human nature to ascend, into a oneness of person! O how great was that love on the part of the God-and-man [viz., Jesus]! [It was so great] that our Priest, the King of kings, the true Shepherd of souls, being without any guilt, removed the sorrows of all earthly tribulation and, at length, offered His own soul and life for His sheep—[doing so] while lifted up from the earth, with hands extended on the Cross, in order by a most shameful kind of death to draw all things unto Himself.²⁶ O Lord, how sweet are Your words to my palate—sweeter than honey to my mouth!²⁷ You say: “If anyone thirsts after grace and love, if anyone wills to enter through the door, if anyone desires to have whatsoever thing, let him ask and he will receive abundantly.²⁸ I am the unfailing Fount; I am the Door; I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”²⁹ Cause my soul to taste the sweetness of Your most bitter suffering. O Lord, are You not the Light of lights? For in Your light we shall see such great light of glory.³⁰ How You were darkened on account of me, O Sun of justice³¹ and Glowing Gold!³² O Lord, You who are the Life of the living, how Your perfect complexion has been changed, how You have been made a worm, not a man, and made the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.³³ O Lord, are You not the true Samaritan, who heals our wounds? And only he whom You heal is [really] healed. How have You become so despised and infirm that from the sole of Your foot to the tip of Your head there is no soundness?³⁴ O Sweetness and Piety, since the human intellect cannot grasp You, open to me Your side so that I may enter into You. I know, O Lord, that I am safe nowhere except there from where there flowed blood and water, medicines, remedies, and sacraments for human salvation. O You who are the spotless Lamb led to the slaughter,³⁵ grant to me, inflamed with desire, to approach the altar of the Cross and to wash my robe in the blood of the Lamb.³⁶ O Lord, my soul is melted when I recall that beloved-You said on the Cross [that] the mystery of suffering is finished. For I faint with love; in You my soul begins to thirst in very many ways, etc.

[11] O Foundation of all humility, I see that life does not consist in reveling and drunkenness but in the Cross and in putting on the Crucified One.³⁷ For whatever is sought elsewhere is found only there. For so that through an assumed humanity You might furnish aid to all creatures, You did not assume an angelic nature, which lacks a body. Your humanity is a ladder by means of which creatures ascend

unto God. Of the finite to the infinite there is no proportion;³⁸ nonetheless, there is a symbolic concordance between creatures and Your humanity. Accordingly, by means of our love for You we ascend unto You and are transformed into You;³⁹ and, thus, by means of You, insofar as Your humanity is united to God, we are united to God. And in You, our Head, we are united [to God] through our ascent of love and Your descent through Your infinite loving-kindness and grace. Hence, Paul says to the Hebrews: All things exist in You and on account of You;⁴⁰ and we have nothing of ourselves qua of ourselves,⁴¹ because we are from nothing; rather, all things exist because of You. To You, O God, is given power in Heaven and on earth, because You are God and a man and the Victor over death. Thus, to the extent that we fell through Adam's sin, You were most powerfully able to restore us. Accordingly, by means of Your death, we have been translated unto life, even as the priest transubstantiates bread into Your Body on the altar.

[12] Who could measure the degree of Your suffering? For Your very noble and strong physical body suffered to a very great degree outwardly; and [You] felt pain inwardly and spiritually with human nature generally, with Your mother, with the saints who were going to suffer for Your sake, and with all the human sufferings of all future human beings. Because You knew and loved all men equally You bore all their sufferings in Yourself. And even as You willed to die, so [You died] by a most grievous death—one that had as much suffering as [is contained in] the deaths of all past and future men.

Ascend here [in contemplation] unto the many sufferings which resulted from His knowledge of future happenings, because of the fact that He knew that many men would be damned in spite of His suffering and knew of the many transgressions even of Christians and knew of heresies, sects, etc., wars, tribulations, etc. Who will give my head water and my eyes a fount of tears⁴² so that I may suffer, O Christ, with You, who died for me? Etc.

(b) *The instituting of the sacrament of the eucharist.*

[13] “Do this ...,” etc. In instituting this sacrament of the eucharist (which is a sacrament of good grace and of love on the part of God and of us) God manifested in it His very great love for us, and He especially inflamed our affection of love for Him. Christ said “Do this ...,” etc. God gave to the Incarnate Word, our Source of restoration, most sufficient power and wisdom; and in accordance with this [giv-

ing] He conferred on us the sacraments. And so, in abundantly giving remedies for diseases and gifts of grace, He instituted not only the sacrament that begets us into the presence of grace (viz., baptism) and the sacrament that increases us,⁴³ once begotten, (viz., [the sacrament of] confirmation) but also the sacrament that nourishes us, once begotten and increased (viz., the sacrament of the eucharist). Hence, these sacraments are given to all those who come to faith. But our nourishment, with respect to its grace-given being, is observed in each believer in terms of his continued devotion toward God, his continued love for his neighbor, and his continued delight within himself. Moreover, devotion toward God is exercised through the offering of a sacrifice; love for one's neighbor is exercised through the mutual partaking of a single sacrament; delight within oneself is exercised through the eating of one's provision for the journey. Therefore, Christ, our Source of restoration, gave [to us] this [eucharistic] sacrament as a sacrificial offering, as a sacrament of communion, and as our restorative provision for the way.

And because the Source of restoration is very wise, He arranged to present the sacrifice, the sacrament, and the viaticum according as befits the time of revealed grace, our capability, and the condition of the pathway. [14] And because the time of revealed grace now requires a pure and full offering, and because there is no such offering except the offering that was offered on the Cross, viz., the body and blood of Christ, it is necessary by means of this sacrament not only to *signify* but necessary also that in the sacrament the body of Christ truly be contained as a due offering for this time. Likewise, in the time of grace the sacrament ought not only to signify communion and love but ought [also] to inflame toward mutual love and ought especially to unite the members to the oneness of the Head, from whom mutual love flows into us by means of the diffusive, unitive, and transforming power of love. Hence, in this sacrament is contained the one Body of Christ, the immaculate flesh—[contained] as that which diffuses itself to us and unites us with one another and transforms us into itself⁴⁴ through very fervent love. Through this love [Christ] has offered Himself for us and has given Himself to us, and is present with us until the end of the world.

(c) *The executing of the sacrament of the eucharist
and the sacrament's four causes.*

[15] As the Devout Doctor⁴⁵ says, the following [truths] are to be held

regarding this sacrament: [viz.,] that in this sacrament not only are the true body and true blood of Christ signified but also they are truly contained under a twofold form, viz., of bread and of wine—[contained] as under a single sacrament, not a twofold sacrament. But this [transformation] occurs after the priestly consecration, which is done by means of the utterance, over the bread, of the verbal formula instituted by the Lord, viz., “This is my body,” and, over the wine, “This is the cup ...,” etc. By means of these words, uttered by the priest with the intention of executing [the sacrament], each [of the two] elements is transubstantiated (i.e., [is changed] according to its substance) into the body and blood of Christ Jesus—with the perceptible forms remaining, in each of which form the whole Christ is totally contained, contained not in a circumscribed way but in a sacramental way. In these [elements] Christ is set before us as Food. He who worthily receives it by spiritually partaking of it not only sacramentally but also by faith and love is more greatly incorporated into the mystical body of Christ and is renewed and purified within himself. But he who approaches [the sacrament] unworthily, eats and drinks judgment upon himself, not discerning the body of Christ.⁴⁶ [16] But [Christ is present] in the form of bread and of wine because (on account of the cloak of symbolism and on account of the merit of faith) it does not befit the condition of our [pilgrim-]pathway to view Christ unveiledly. Moreover, it is not fitting to chew Christ’s flesh with one’s teeth, because of our horror at barbarism and because of the immortality of His body after the Resurrection. Therefore, it was necessary that the body of Christ be handed down hidden in most sacred symbols and by means of fitting and expressive likenesses. And there is nothing more suitable for signifying the oneness of the body of Christ than is the wheat-bread [made] from many very clean grains and than is the wine [made] from grapes and berries. And so, [Christ] ought to be presented under these forms more than under others.

[17] Hence, according to St. Cyprian in a certain letter, Christ is the grain of wheat that, having been placed in the earth, yielded much fruit.⁴⁷ But bread is not prepared from many grains by themselves but from flour and water. Now, water signifies the people, as John says in the Apocalypse: “the many waters are many peoples.”⁴⁸ Hence, the union of the head of true grain and of water into a oneness of wheaten bread is the material of the sacrament. Then too, water is added to the wine of the cup because Christ, the true Vine, willed that we be united to Him through this sacrament. Hence, the wisdom

of God employed bread and mixed the wine [with water]. [18] Now, this [sacramental] refection is enlivening, because the refection of the spirit is the word of life. Likewise, spiritual refection in the flesh is the Incarnate Word, i.e., is the Word's flesh, which is a universal and health-giving food; although it is one flesh, all are healed through it. Therefore, because it is not possible to give any other universal and health-bringing spiritual food than the true body of Christ, truly it is necessary that His body be present in this sacrament, something which is required by the perfection of the sacrifice, the perfection of the unitive sacrament, and the perfection of the refectionive viaticum—all of which there ought to have been at the time of the New Testament and of revealed grace and of the truth concerning Christ.

[19] And because the true body of Christ cannot be divided into parts, the body [and] the soul and the deity are there as a single and most simple sacrament. And the entire body is present under the entire form [of bread] as well as under each part of the form, whether the form be whole or divided. And for this reason the body is not circumscribed there, as occupying a space, as having position, as perceptible by any human, bodily sense; rather, it is hidden from every sense, in order that there may be room for faith and merit. And in order that the body not be apprehended, the accidents have the entire operation that they previously had, although they are independent of their subject as long as they have within themselves the body of Christ. The body of Christ is present there as long as the accidents continue in their natural properties and are fit for being eaten.

[20] And so, four things are necessary for this sacrament: (1) that there be a consecrating priest, (2) that there be the required material (viz., bread and wine); (3) thirdly, there is required the [proper] intent of the consecrator and (4) fourthly, the [proper] form of words. Special or general intention is always required; attentiveness is not always required. If inattentiveness results from carelessness or neglect, the consecrator sins; if it results from infirmity, the case is otherwise [i.e., he does not sin]. Moreover, not only the intent of the consecrator but also that of the Institutor [viz., Christ, counts]. Accordingly, the priest would not transubstantiate all the bread in the market-place while pronouncing the words with the intention [to transubstantiate].⁴⁹ Although the priest could consecrate as many hosts as would suffice for the entire world, nevertheless it was not the intent of the Institutor that this was to be possible in jest or in folly. In the verbal formula the word “for” (“*enim*”) ought not to be omitted, since it is of

proper form, even though it is not necessary.⁵⁰

Likewise, the necessary material is wine and wheaten bread; the required material is non-leavened wheaten-bread and is wine mixed with water, because the one who instituted [this sacrament] used these. Christ, too, was without the leaven of sin; and water, which symbolizes the Church, is joined to the wine, i.e., to Christ, through love. Nevertheless, the water ought to be assimilated by the wine; otherwise, the consecration is impeded. For when we are converted to Christ, we are changed into Him and not vice versa. In the sacrament of the eucharist: the form of bread and the form of wine are the only sacrament; the mystical body of Christ is the only substance (*res*); the true body of Christ, [contracted from the Virgin],⁵¹ is the substance and the sacrament, being the substance of the first thing [viz., of the bread and the wine] and the sacrament of the second thing [viz., of the mystical body].

[21] *Symbols of the sacrament.* [We see such a symbol] in the offering on the part of Melchisedec,⁵² with respect to its outer form and its refection, a refection that occurred there antecedently and figuratively, even as it occurs in reality in this [eucharistic] sacrament. Likewise, [we see such a symbol] in the manna, wherein the effect of grace was symbolized. [We see it], furthermore, in the paschal lamb, which symbolized the freeing from bondage in Egypt, even as this [eucharistic] sacrament [symbolizes] the freeing from the Devil. Or again, [symbolizing occurs] in the many sacrifices about which we learn in [the book of] Leviticus. In these sacrifices there was signified the offering [constituted by] Christ's suffering [on the Cross], where He was the host, with respect to reconciliation, and was the victim, with respect to satisfaction for our sins, and was the holocaust, with respect to the maiming of His entire body. It would take a long time to explain everything regarding these topics. But one may consult William of Paris, *On Faith and the Laws*. Wine, [used] for indicating refection, was the symbol of Christ's blood (Canticles: "The king brought me into ...," etc.).⁵³ Water [symbolized] cleansing ("I saw the water flowing out").⁵⁴ Blood [was used] for signifying redemption (according to Hebrews 4: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission").⁵⁵

[22] From the following factors the worthiness of the sacrament is apparent: viz., that it was instituted by Christ, that it was prefigured both in the Law and prior to the Law, that it was foretold by the Prophets ("Man ate the bread of angels ...," etc.)⁵⁶ and observed by

the Apostles (“When you come together into one place, ...” etc.).⁵⁷ The excellence of the sacrament is maximal, since God, who excels all things, is present there and since the soul that excels all other souls is present there and since there too is present the body that takes precedence over all other bodies. For in Christ things in the heavens and on earth are united as something most noble.

A PRAYER

The wonders of the sacrament of the eucharist

[23] Let our mind now be elevated for pondering a bit the wondrous delights of this most sacred sacrament. Let us say: O Lord, how sweet the sweetness of Your goodness is! You will that in our partaking of life we daily proclaim Your death. What more were You able to give to man, who was dead through [Adam and Eve’s] eating than life through [eucharistic] eating? O Food of life, who was fastened to the Cross: who can mentally grasp Your most bountiful gift?, [viz.,] that You who are most high, most gracious, most noble, present Yourself in food. The following exceeds every degree of generosity and exceeds every measure of love: [viz.,] where what is given is identical with the giver. What other nation is similarly great? What other nation has its own gods who draw near to them, as You, the true God, are present to us in Your own substance but under another form? O Food that truly nourishes, refects, and most fully fattens not the flesh but the soul, not the stomach but the mind! O most noble memorial, to be recommended to intimate hearts, to be bound steadfastly to the mind and diligently safeguarded in the womb of the heart! In this commemoration there are present to us delights, joy, and tears. Let us weep while rejoicing devoutly. For a heart perfused with great joy sheds sweet drops by way of the eyes.

[24] When I elevate myself, O Lord, unto such a lofty reflection, I recognize that the light of my intellect can accomplish nothing; rather, You are He alone who can do all things. [Those who are merely] curious look for causes and reasons and signs, whereas I approach You through faith. What wonder that in such a terse utterance of words a transubstantiation occurs? Is not a certain seed, because of heat, turned suddenly into living animals called silk-worms? Is not a serpent enchanted by words, and does it not shut its ears in order not to hear the voice of the enchanters, lest after having heard the words it comply of necessity? Did You not, O God, make all things by means of a unique Word? (“He spoke and they were made.”)⁵⁸

Was not Lot's wife, as a result of looking, turned into stone or a pillar of salt? Do not certain fountains change pieces of wood into stones and change iron into copper? Who would be surprised at Your power? Does not our stomach change bread and wine into its own nature as flesh and blood? Does not a glassmaker bring forth from ashes of stone a beautiful glass vessel? Does not fire suddenly come forth from the striking of a flint-stone? What is astounding about the fact that You, who are both divine and human, are present in the sacrament as one who is not contracted in terms of the quantitative wholeness wherewith You hung on the Cross? Does not a stork ..., etc.?⁵⁹ Does not the eye of a small bird see a very large mountain, etc.? Is there not in a small mustard seed very great power and potentially a large tree, etc.? Did not Eliseus [i.e., Elisha], a great man, place each of his own [bodily] members on top of each of the [bodily] members of a dead boy (Kings 4)?⁶⁰ What is astonishing about the fact that [accidental] forms are supernaturally present without their [natural] subject, [i.e., substance]? Does not a diamond ..., etc.? A befiguring of the fact that the concealed sacrament ought to be given to us under [accidental] forms occurred in the figure of Jacob in the guise of Esau, when Isaac was deceived.⁶¹ Thus are all the senses deceived—sight, taste, touch, etc. But Isaac was not deceived in his hearing, because he recognized the voice that came from the interior regions. Similarly, faith is not deceived.

[25] What is astonishing, O my God, about the fact that the body and the blood are sacramentally present in different places as a whole [at the same time]? Is not a single word uttered by me heard and understood wholly and equally and perfectly by many people [at the same time]? For I know that it befits God to be everywhere, [whereas] it befits man to be in only one place [at a time]. Why is it strange if [it befits] Him who is God *and* [a] man [to be present] in an intermediate manner—not in every place [at once] and not in only one place [at a time] but in more than one place [at the same time]? Is not a single definition of “species” equally fitting for more than one individual? Did not the Word, who as a whole is with the Father from eternity and unto eternity, also descend as a whole into the womb of the Virgin? And did He not both come into the flesh as a single whole in order that men might partake of Him and remain wholly with the Father in order that He might feed angels? I am no less amazed that He is present as a whole in each aspect of the host when it is divided. For just as Christ is totally and indivisibly in many places [at

once], so He is present as a single whole in each aspect of the host, [i.e., is present as a whole in both the bread and the wine]. Does not something similar occur in the case of a mirror, which captures a single figure; and if the mirror becomes broken, its fragments likewise capture the entire figure. In things homogeneous: is not each part, for example, of water, also water, just as is the whole? Is it not the case that (1) [one man] who gathered more manna, which rained down in the desert, had no more than did another, and that (2) he who gathered less had no less [than did another]?⁶² Is not the soul that is in a small man as “large” as the soul that is in a big man, and is not the soul as a whole in the whole man and in his every part? [26] It is less amazing that although [the body of Christ] is [sacramentally] eaten every day, it is not diminished? For what is glorified and incorruptible is not corrupted after the Resurrection, because it is not turned into the nature of the one who is nourished, but, rather, the one who partakes spiritually of Christ is turned into Him by way of the mind’s ecstasy and love.

If many lights are lit from one candle, does not the light of [that] candle nevertheless remain undiminished? One ought rather to be amazed by the fact that the mystical body of Christ (i.e., the Church with the Bridegroom Christ as its head) is diminished by *not* being partaken of. Through partaking worthily a man is made a member of this [mystical] body; and, thus, through having been partaken of, the mystical body is made greater (I Corinthians 6: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”).⁶³ Hence, one who partakes unworthily augments the mystical body of the Devil,⁶⁴ even as knowledge that becomes more widespread becomes increased (Ephesians 4: “Let us in all respects grow in Him who is our Head, [viz.], Christ.”⁶⁵). Does not water flow daily from a fount and nevertheless is not diminished? Why is it strange [that the outflow] from the Fount of our Savior [should be undiminished]? What is strange about the fact that for some [individuals] the sacrament [of the eucharist] is beneficial unto health but for other [individuals] is harmful unto condemnation? From the same flower does not the bee extract honey and the spider venom? (One [and the same thing] is medicine for the one [individual] and death for the other.) Does not the same sun melt ice and harden clay?

[27] I have no doubts, O Lord. Grant that through this sacrament I may obtain the life that You have promised. O Lord, if one loves this life—which consists of a concordance between body and soul,

which life is full of miseries and is near to death, which life is momentary and bears no comparison with the subsequent eternity—how much greater [for us] to be in You, who are Eternal Life! O, [blessed are] those who approach this sacrament worthily, because they draw from the Fount of life! Woe [to those who approach] unworthily, because from the Fount of life they drink death! I see, O Lord, that this wretched life, full of weeping, deceives all men with its gladness, its riches, and its pleasures. When I reflect on losing You, Eternal Life, in order to possess a transitory, perishable life, I groan and tremble as a whole. This present life is ordained unto You. He who improperly makes use of this life does not come unto You. O what a mistake this is—viz., that the greater part of mankind serves You feignedly. Truth has perished and has been suffocated by falsity. O, priest, reflect upon your life; reflect upon your power; reflect upon your words and deeds; reflect upon the nobleness of your office, etc.

NOTES TO SERMON III

1. Luke 22:19.
2. See *Clementis Papae V Constitutiones*, Book III, Titulus 16 [Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (2nd edition, Leipzig, 1881 (Vol. II)), columns 1174-1177.]
3. *Loc. cit.*
4. This distinction stems from Aristotle, whose four causes are: efficient cause, material cause, formal cause, and final cause.
5. John 13:1.
6. II Corinthians 3:5.
7. Psalms 99:3 (100:3).
8. Psalms 32:6 (33:6).
9. The respective angelic nature of the good angels remained upright; the respective angelic nature of the evil angels fell.
10. Apocalypse 1:8 (Revelation 1:8).
11. Genesis 1:31.
12. Genesis 2:17.
13. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Coena Domini Sermo*, n. 3 (PL 183:272C).
14. This present line of reasoning is adopted from Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo*.
15. Galilee and, in particular, Jerusalem were considered to be the center of the world.
16. Wisdom 18:14-15.
17. Leviticus 9:7.
18. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IV, 14, 19 (PL 42:901). N.B.: Chap. 14, not Chap. 12.
19. Augustine, *Confessiones*, VII, 10, 16 (PL 32:742).
20. Psalms 81:6 (82:6).
21. Taken from the opening words of Anselm's *Meditatio Redemptionis Humanae*.
22. Matthew 16:24.
23. Matthew 23:12.
24. John 12:25.
25. Philippians 1:21.
26. John 12:32.
27. Psalms 118:103 (119:103).
28. John 7:37 and 10:9. Matthew 7:8.
29. John 4:13-14 and 10:9 and 14:6.
30. Psalms 35:10 (36:9).
31. Malachias 4:2 (Malachi 4:2).
32. Lamentations 4:1. Canticum of Canticles 5:11 (Song of Solomon 5:11).
33. Psalms 21:7 (22:6).
34. Isaias (Isaiah) 1:6.
35. Isaias (Isaiah) 53:7.
36. Revelation 7:14.

37. Romans 13:13-14.
38. This theme becomes central to Nicholas's conception of learned ignorance. See, for example, Nicholas's *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 3 (9).
39. The theme of the believer's being transformed into God is drawn from the tradition of mystical theology. See pp. 7-9 in the introduction of my translation of Hugh of Balma's *De Theologia Mystica* (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 2002).
40. Hebrews 2:10.
41. I Corinthians 4:7.
42. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 9:1.
43. Cf. I Corinthians 3:7.
44. See n. 39 above.
45. The *doctor devotus* is Bonaventure.
46. I Corinthians 11:29.
47. John 12:24-25.
48. Apocalypse 17:15 (Revelation 17:15).
49. See Hugh of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, VI, 12. [Falsely ascribed to Bonaventure, this work is found in Vol. VIII of *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, edited by A. C. Peltier (Paris: Vivès, 1866). The cited passage is on p. 209.
50. See Hugh of Strassburg, *op. cit.* The verbal formulae are "*Hoc est enim corpus meum*" and "*Hic ist enim calix.*"
51. See Hugh of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, *op.cit.*, VI, 12.
52. Hebrews 7.
53. Canticle of Canticles 2:4 (Song of Solomon 2:4).
54. Note Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 47:1.
55. Hebrews 9:22 (not Hebrews 4).
56. Psalms 77:25 (78:25).
57. I Corinthians 11:20.
58. Psalms 32:9 (33:9).
59. Does so large a stork originate from so small an egg?
60. IV Kings 4:32-35 (II Kings 4:32-35).
61. Genesis 27.
62. Exodus 16:14-18.
63. I Corinthians 6:15.
64. Interestingly, Nicholas speaks not only of the mystical body of Christ, who is omnipresent, but also of the mystical body of the Devil, who is ubiquitous.
65. Ephesians 4:15.

Sermon IV: *Fides autem Catholica*

(“The Catholic Faith”)

[May 27, feast day of the Trinity, 1431; preached in Koblenz]

[1] “Now, this is the Catholic faith: that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in oneness.” (from the Athanasian Creed)

The saints say that man fell from a state of innocence through the sin of his first ancestors and that, [as a result], darkness arose in the intellect and that greediness and covetousness arose in the will. But since man as recreated and regenerated was supposed to be restored and made righteous, his soul (in accordance with its higher part, which consists of the image of the Trinity) has to be made righteous by means of the three theological virtues.¹ Hence, just as the image of creation consists of a trinity of Persons and a oneness of Essence, so the image of re-creation consists of a trinity of fixed dispositions [*habitus*], together with a oneness of grace. Now, by means of these three fixed dispositions the soul is brought unto the Supreme Trinity in accordance with the three traits ascribed to the three Persons. Faith guides unto the *supremely true* by means of believing and assenting. Hope guides unto the *supremely difficult* by means of relying-upon and expecting. Love guides unto the *supremely good* by means of desiring and loving. Faith assents to God; hope trusts in God; love loves [God]. Faith [is centered] in the intellect or reason; hope [is centered] in the irascible [nature]; love [is centered] in the desiring [nature]. Faith pursues God in the present; hope accompanies God into Heaven; love embraces God forever.²

[2] And because, in accordance with the chosen theme, my sermon is on faith, and because the foundation of our salvation consists in faith, and because faith is a gift of God ...:³ let us pray ..., etc. [3] “Now the Catholic faith ...,” etc. My sermon to you, O Christians, is about a most serious matter, viz., about faith. It is not about just any kind of faith but is about the orthodox Christian faith, which is so great that it overcomes this world⁴ Since faith is the power by means of which those things that pertain to the foundation of religion are steadfastly believed (*Sentences*, Book III),⁵ I must first speak about the nature of faith and about faith’s disposition—[doing so] in accordance with the beginning of our theme: “*Fides*.” Secondly, I must deal with the topic of the nature-of-faith as it applies to the Catholic faith,

which is the belief that there is one God who exists in trinity, etc., ...⁶ And, thirdly, [I must deal with the topic] of the works of faith insofar as they are in our power; ([as it says] there [in the Athanasian Creed]: "... [that] we worship ..." ⁷). For [faith] is the just man's life: "The just man lives by faith" ...; ⁸ and "he who believes in me has life eternal ..." ⁹ Therefore, in order that someone live by faith it is required that faith be [in-]formed [by love] and not be dead faith, because "faith without works is dead, even as is the body without the spirit ..." ¹⁰ For faith's work is through love¹¹ And by faith hearts are cleansed¹² Since the effect of faith is so great, then (as will be evident a bit later) if we reverence it, we must attend to it with diligent care and must keep it in mind, lest we err and declare falsely that we are Christians, although we are not, and lest we lose the very great benefit of faith.

PART ONE

The Nature and Disposition of Faith

[4] As regards the first part, let us say with the Apostle that "faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that do not appear."¹³ For faith is the underlying foundation for the spiritual edifice of grace and glory. Faith is—ontologically, not chronologically—the first *habitus* of the virtues. Through faith's assent the things to be hoped for are in us. Faith persuades the mind, because it inclines the mind toward believing things that do not appear. It manifests by its own light past, present, and future things that do not appear.

[5] First of all, it was said that faith is a virtue. Hence, William of Paris in his [work] *On Faith and the Laws* [states] that to believe the improbable is characteristic of power and strength.¹⁴ For what is pleasant and useful presents itself forcefully to the will; and the uprightness of the one who possesses [these characteristics commends itself] to our love, so that pleasantness and usefulness make the object that has them desirable *per se*. Similarly, evidence and truth bring it about that they themselves are things believable *per se*, because they impose confidence [*fides*] and credibility; hence, it requires no effort to believe them. But when improbable things are believed, the belief is due to the strength of the believer and not to the fact that what-is-believed imposes itself. Just as what is bright is to sight, so what is probable is to the intellect and what is pleasant and useful is to the affections. Just as what is dark is to sight, so what is improbable is to the intellect. It requires no effort to see what is bright, since what is

bright is in no way opposed to sight but, rather, imposes itself. The case is similar as regards believing that which is probable. The fact that fire ignites dry wood does not require much power, because [dry wood] is ignitable; but much power is required if [the wood] is green. Similarly, our loving what is pleasurable, useful, or pleasant approximates [fire's] igniting what is ignitable. For pleasantness, usefulness, and splendor are three kinds of immaterial fire; and in human souls they produce three burnings: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life¹⁵—i.e., licentiousness, greed, and haughtiness. The ignorant are consumed by these three. As dry wood is consumed by a material fire, so the ignorant are consumed by means of an immaterial fire—[consumed] from the time of the original corruption, not from the time of the first creation.

Probability is a diffusion of dim and weak immaterial light; and so, it does not stabilize—as does the evidentness of truth, [which] strongly penetrates the intellect's certitude, fixes it, and renders it secure. And just as the will has concerning itself the aforementioned three immaterial fires, so the intellect has the two aforementioned illuminations of probability and evidentness. And so, from this [consideration] it is evident that to believe improbable things is characteristic of the strength and robustness of our intellect, even as to love things that are hurtful and vexing is characteristic of the strength and robustness of our affection. [6] Now, the light of strong faith is required; it penetrates the darkness of the many improbable things that pertain to faith, and it illumines them. And so, it is evident that our initial faith is a grace and is clothed with glory; and without faith glory has no place. And if it is needful that the whole man be religious, given that he wishes to obtain glory, then especially the head, viz., the intellect, must be religious through faith. For just as, necessarily, the will will struggle against itself if it strives to arrive at glory, so too the intellect will, necessarily, do the same thing. And as regards its operations, the intellect makes war only on believing. *Believing* and *reflecting* and *considering* approach the intellect forcefully, and the intellect receives [them] non-voluntarily, but not as things demonstrated. Likewise, [the intellect receives] things that have been proved, because, necessarily, it assents [to them]. But knowledge involves a deliberate investigation from books and from teachers; and so, it can be partly the result of effort and partly not, etc.

[7] Believing, [which is] the foundation of true religion,¹⁶ has, as opposed to itself, an array of disputings, dissuasions, contradictions,

as well as of improbability. This improbability is directly contrary to [religious belief] because where reason founders [because of the improbability], faith bridges the gap¹⁷ For faith is faith regarding things unseen¹⁸ Now, every war must be waged with warlike power, because without power one does not triumph. Therefore, faith is a power. [8] [We can discern that] in faith not all things are manifested, because if they were, there would be no dissension, no heresy. No one contradicts [statements] that are manifestly true, because where there is manifest truth, there is no power [to contradict]. Therefore, there is a power of faith on the part of a believer, because there is no evidentness with regard to the things believed. [9] Each thing is believed through persuasion. But God is believed in and through faith, without persuasion and proof. [Faith] honors God supremely in that it believes Him quite readily. Every [form of] superstition and idolatry, every sect and every faith weeds out with the sword and fire those who blaspheme their God or gods. Therefore, the Catholic faith teaches that God is believed-in without proof and without evidentness.¹⁹ [10] The intellect, because of its weakness, seeks props and means of proof, as if supporting itself by the aid of a cane while ambulating from one conclusion to another. But he who believes by his own power does not need a prop; and he believes the more strongly. [The situation is] comparable to a lover who loves his beloved by his own power more than because of the things that accompany his beloved; otherwise, his love, if it were lured away from [focusing on] the beloved, would be crooked and bent.

[11] An intellect that looks for proofs is like a seller who looks for a guarantee of payment and who, otherwise, does not believe. A heathen demands such a guarantee before he believes; but a Christian, knowing that a guarantee is wrested from God because of a deficiency of belief, does not demand a guarantee in order to believe in God, for a guarantee is deemed to be a sign of unbelief. Because of these props derived from proofs and guarantees, the intellect is judged to be infirm—just as a man, because of his many props, is judged to be weak on his feet. Now, canes do not cure one who is infirm; similarly, guarantees do not heal the intellect; hence, they also do not make the intellect strong. Faith is not to be sought by means of signs (as the Jews [sought it]) nor by means of wisdom or art (as the Greeks [sought it]) but, rather, as a result of virtue. For it is known more certainly by virtue than by art. Art is as a painting that displays the outer form; virtue is as a scent and a flavor that manifests inner [aspects].

[12] The closer that light is to the sun, the more noble it is; the more diminished it is and the more distant it is from the sun, the more ignoble it is. A similar [truth holds] regarding the heat of fire. Similarly, through grace faith descends from God as light from Light; probabilities descend through a distant light. Therefore, God's Light is more noble than is light that is reflected from creatures. Hence, "every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."²⁰ Accordingly, those things that are given beyond nature are stronger than are natural things, for they conduce to happiness. Hence, nothing is more certain than is faith. [13] Therefore, faith is a general good that is freely given by the grace of generosity and of beneficence. And it is a power holding the intellect upright and securing it, making it to stand by itself and to walk rightly along the pathway of salutary truth and without the maintenance or support of canes. Faith protects the intellect against the darts of disputings and against [the need for] props; and it gives the intellect support against the impulses and concussions of contradictions and opinions and against the severity of its own infirmity and sluggishness. And faith is a light of the intellect that triumphs over the natural lights of the senses—as is evident, in the sacrament of the altar,²¹ wherein the senses are triumphed over by faith. In this sacrament we believe in worthy God without any guarantee, and we believe in Him by means of the virtue of obedience. And this [believing] is the foundation of religiousness. And just as the intellect is the nobler part of the soul, so its religiousness—in regard to the works of God and in regard to honoring Him by faith—comes first. And no belief that demands more, viz., [that demands] guarantees, is worthy to be called faith.

[14] Now, the generation of Christians, which obediently suppresses its understanding and believes, obeys, and honors [God], is not a perverse generation that seeks a sign²² but is a people given to worshipping God. With head bowed, i.e., with the intellect bowed, it adores God. And so, faith descends from the Fount of life and enlivens the head of man, i.e., his intellect. Habacuc 2: "The just man lives by faith."²³

[15] *Whence the error against faith:* The error against faith arises first of all from the fact that someone does not believe anything unless he understands, for he thinks that his intellect is capable of understanding all possible things. However, the human intellect is measured and delimited by God, its Creator, who set the bounds of its capability. A second cause [of error] is a turning away [from faith], as

when one who loves something discards it and turns to something else. A third cause [of error] is the grossness of the intellect, just as one who has a thick and turbid eye does not see a hair. And so, he claims that there is no hair there where acute vision [detects it]. As Aristotle says: The inexperienced observe as one who is far distant.²⁴ It is necessary, then, to believe the learned and experienced. Moreover, there is a further folly: wanting the intellect to grasp things impossible for it [to grasp]—analogous to wanting to see with a human eye as with an eagle’s eye. Or again, there is the additional folly of those who want to have proofs [that serve] as stairs for ascending unto the Infinite One. Likewise, another cause [of error] is the sin or the neglect by which divine aid is not sought for [believing] the things that ought to be believed. For light does not enter in where someone sets up a barrier. Isaiah says: “Your sins have divided between you and your God.”²⁵ As a result of these errors such great darkness is produced in the intellect that the Sun of justice²⁶ does not illuminate the darkness unless the night recedes.

[16] Now, faith is God’s light and grace; it is not naturally present in [anyone], for nature works according to the manner of one who is a servant without freedom. For example, fire does not act in one way on one thing and in another way on another thing; rather, it acts in equal ways [on both]. Hence, too, even faith would be equally in all [individuals, if it were a natural endowment]. Moreover, because faith is a divine light that descends from God and that [does] not [arise] from things, there will be one true faith that descends from the one God—just as the vision from one eye extends itself unto many objects outside itself, and just as the rays of the one sun illuminate many objects. Moreover, there is one faith common to all believers, just as the articles of faith are common to all Christians. Now, all men are bound to a single divine worship that is owed [to God]. Therefore, there will be a single faith. And whatever is counter to this divine and owed worship and to [this] one faith is an error that is to be extirpated by fire and the sword.²⁷ All men, as creatures of one Creator, agree in their essential nature; likewise, they agree also in the divine worship [that they owe]. With respect to the basis of their subjection, all subjects are acquainted with their master, although they obtain different duties in the court of this same master. The situation is similar as regards faith.

[17] Now, a sign of belief is that you extend to God obedience and worship—[doing so] out of love that is upright and pure, for [such

love] is freely given and does not result from fear of punishment or from shame or from hope of reward. For upright and pure love is a sign that you believe Him to be good and to be worthy of your love because of His goodness. And in one who thus believes, there is most pure and most sincere love, as well as actual and most pure worship. And the love is voluntary because it is freely given; hence, it deserves a reward. And there is room for a reward in that situation only because of the preceding gift. But he who loves for another reason ([e.g.,] out of hope or of fear or because of a reward) is not, properly speaking, rewarded (for, in that case, his love seeks something outside of God), but he is given his wages, not a reward.

PART TWO

The Things That Are To Be Believed by the Catholic Faith

[18] Whatever things are to be believed about God are present in Him either *per se*, without respect and comparison to other things, or they are not. (1) [Exemplifying] the first [alternative] is our believing that He is Oneness, Trinity, Equality, etc. (2) [Exemplifying what is present] comparatively [is] our believing that He is Powerful, Wise, Kind. (3) In these [comparative conceptions] other [ideas] are included, as, for instance, His being called Father, Creator, Light, Leader, etc. From belief of these three [kinds] arise all the aspects of divine worship. Out of the loftiness of [His] wisdom arise [our] honoring, venerating, purifying, sacrificing, and adoring. These are nothing other than our inner and outer subjection and the humbleness with which we believe, with complete justification, that we are subject to Him as regards our being saved or lost. Herefrom come (a) bowing, genuflecting, prostrating, etc., and (b) petitions (which we most devoutly and with humble submission deliver into His power) and (c) venerating (by which we fearfully and only as cleansed and purified approach Him for serving Him and approach holy places, holy men, the relics of the saints) and (d) the attending to divine matters in silence and with lights and ornaments, etc.

Wisdom produces fear and shame, blushing, dread, etc. For when you believe that God knows all of your affairs better than do you, what are you if you are²⁸ without shame and fear? But if you were not to believe that He sees all things, you would be a heretic (even though this [proposition] is not listed in the articles of faith). For of any two opposites of which the one is a heresy, the other is, necessarily, an article of faith. Therefore, it is an article of faith that God sees all things

and that nothing is hidden from Him. Something similar holds regarding other [attributes]. From out of God's goodness, or loving-kindness, there arise, in our worship, thanksgiving, blessing (i.e., the summoning of good things), praising (i.e., a magnifying of the Creator), glorifying (which is preaching, proclaiming, disclosing, making-known). Glory is renown that is splendid, sublime, wide-spread. From out of God's loving-kindness, or mercy, there arise, in our worship, hope-of-pardon and thankfulness. The latter includes within itself (a) prayer for mitigating and removing evils, (b) prayer for obtaining good things, (c) affliction (for example, fasting and other forms of mortification), (d) sacrifice (for example, both spiritual and corporeal alms-giving).

[19] It is now evident that he loves God most purely who believes (1) that God is the Supreme Good and the Creator of all good and (2) that the entire universe (from top to bottom) has, comparatively, in a certain shading, a very faint trace of that Goodness. Accordingly, God is not loved purely unless He is known or believed to be thus. [20] Now, the articles of faith have been handed down to us in a fixed number for the purpose of our apprehending and believing [them]; and no one is excused from believing them. Moreover, no one, if he is of sound reason, has the excuse to offer (on grounds of his incapability) that he cannot with a general sense of credulity believe to be true all that is contained in the sacred writings and all that men who were instructed by the Spirit of God taught—and [that he cannot believe] to be true of God all that the Prophets believed about Him and that the saints believed had to be imitated. Those who are not of sound reason neither believe nor disbelieve. Thus, it is evident that the community of men is required to believe in a general way the principles of faith without contradiction or inconsistency. However, one departs from faith in two ways: when one does not believe to be true the faith which the Catholic Church preaches (or in some such way) and when one stubbornly disbelieves it or believes something contrary to it or dissents from one article in particular. And so, in regard to what is believed there is no difference between whatsoever simple individuals and those who are well-instructed; for in his own way each of them believes equally but rightly, because the simple man believes generally, whereas the well-instructed man believes particularly.

[22] The basis of faith is the fact that God exists. Moreover, thereafter [comes the principle] that there is one Originator, because every multiplicity has prior to itself oneness. Furthermore, nothing that

is first is compatible with anything else's being first; and two contraries are always preceded by another thing. This [assertion] goes against the Manichees, who posited two principles: one of light and the other of darkness.

[23] *What things faith is like.* Faith is like the ark of the testament, for in Exodus 25 it is said that the propitiatory does not exceed the ark. Likewise, propitiation is had by faith and never without faith. Faith is like a star of the firmament and a star of the sea, because the star shows to sailors the port of safety. And it is like the morning star that precedes the sun of justice²⁹ and like the star in the East that led the three kings to Christ. Faith is the foundational stone on which the Church is built. (Matthew 16: "On this rock . . .," viz., the rock of faith, because Peter confessed his faith: "You are the Christ, the Son of God," etc.)³⁰

[Faith], which comprehends all kinds of magnificent things, is like a mirror—because the Divine Majesty is attained through faith, the mirror without blemish (Wisdom 1)³¹—and is like the right eye. The left eye is reason, which makes judgments only about natural objects; the right eye is faith, which determines all things, both natural things and miraculous things. Now, someone who has lost his right eye is useless for combat. For his left eye is covered by his shield; and if he has no right eye, he can see nothing. Similarly, without faith no one engages without danger in the combat of spiritual war.

[Faith], is like a ring adorning a finger. In a similar way, faith adorns reason that is betrothed to God. (Osee 2: "I will betroth you to me in faith.")³² And faith is a silver ring, because it gleams by way of true knowledge and resonates by means of confession. (Romans 10: "With the heart one believes unto justice; with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.")³³ Moreover, faith is like the king's flag, which during the battle exhibits the king's presence, in order to terrify the enemy. In a similar way, faith frightens the spiritual enemy (I Peter 5: "... whom resist, you who are strong in faith").³⁴ And just as the [king's] flag is placed in the citadel of the city, so faith is situated in the citadel of the mind. (Isaias 11: "The Lord has raised a standard unto the nations.")³⁵ Furthermore, faith is a military shield, placed on the left side, that protects the heart from injury (Ephesians 6: "In all things taking the shield of faith.")³⁶ Likewise, faith is like the sun's rays, because without candlelight the sun is seen by means of its own rays; similarly, God is seen without proof, by faith alone. Hence, Ambrose [writes]: "In matters of faith we believe the pastors,

not the dialecticians.”³⁷ And because with respect to its own disk the sun is not seen except by an eagle, so God is seen only by a soul that is very devout and that is elevated by wings of contemplation. A blind man does not see the sun, but he believes him who does see it; and he does not see the pathway, but he believes the dog that guides him; furthermore, he does not see the pit [in front of him], but he believes his cane, which touches it. Similarly, the simple ones who do not see ought to believe those who do see, viz., the bishops. O how great the danger is if a blind pastor leads someone who is blind! (Matthew 11: “If the blind lead the blind, ...” etc.)³⁸

Or again, faith is like a sacramental pillar, like spiritual dawn, and like first light. It is like the pillar that led the people of Israel out of Egypt and that was a light for them; similarly, faith lights [the way] for believers. Moreover, just as dawn is detestable to thieves, so faith is detestable to demons. And faith is like the first created primordial light, which as first-born ought to be blessed, etc.

PART THREE

The Works of Faith

[24] True confession ought to be [made] in faith—lest it say something other [than in faith] and live otherwise [than in faith]—so that the faith may be living faith and not dead faith. A fictional object is not really a thing, even as a dead man is not considered to be a man. Moreover, a depicted lion and a forged denarius exist fictively, not truly. (Corinthians 1: “They profess that they know God; yet, they deny [Him] with their deeds.”)³⁹ Such [false professors] are like a chimera. True faith is a good denarius, one that is good for purchasing Paradise; and true faith is a real tree that produces leaves of divine love and leaves of beneficial confession, flowers of honorable conduct, and the fruit of good works. Furthermore, faith ought to have magnificent devotion; for when natural reason fails, faith trusts in God alone, even as aged Abraham believed God, who promised that from his aged, barren [wife] there would be born a seed in and through whom all nations would be blessed (Genesis 15). Thomas did not have such faith, because he wanted to touch ..., etc.⁴⁰ As regards such faith St. Gregory says: “Faith does not have merit ...,” etc.⁴¹

Likewise, great faith ought not to fail during hardship; rather, it ought to grow stronger. (Matthew 4: “If you have faith as a grain of mustard ...,” etc.)⁴² The more a grain of mustard is threshed, the more

vigorously it thrives. Such was the faith of the martyrs, who through faith conquered kingdoms. (I John 5: “This is the victory that overcomes the world, viz., your faith.”)⁴³ Peter, who when he saw the strong wind was afraid, did not yet have faith. (Matthew 14: “Why did you doubt, O you of little faith?”)⁴⁴ Likewise, when the righteous who lack faith see the strong wind, they immediately waver and sink into the sea of despondency, which is a dead sea, in which nothing can live. Faith is great through its continuedness and uninterruptedness, just as in the case of the woman who was in Cana of Galilee. (Matthew 15: “O woman, great is your faith.”)⁴⁵

[25] Likewise, [there are] three creeds: that of the Apostles for instructing in the faith, the Nicene Creed for explaining the faith, the Creed of Athanasias for defending the faith. Moreover, faith is supposed to have universal perfection; i.e., [there ought to be] twelve articles of faith, even as there were twelve Apostles, each of whom laid down an article. Not only are we to believe God—to believe, i.e., that those things that He speaks are true (as also Peter, etc., is believed) but we are to believe in God (as Augustine claims); i.e., in loving-belief we are to go unto Him and be incorporated into His members. Bad and simulated faith (as states Ambrose in his book *On Faith*) is like mixing gypsum with water—a mixture that deceptively resembles milk.

Jottings on Faith and Reason

[26] Ramon: “Faith is a good *habitus*, [i.e., fixed disposition], that comes through God-given goodness, in order that through faith those objective truths which the intellect cannot attain may be apprehended.”⁴⁶ Faith is great with respect to magnitude; and so, the more of faith there is, the better faith is. Now, a Christian believes more greatly about God because he believes that God is trine and one, incarnate, etc., and believes in the seven sacraments. However, the Incarnation and the like seem to an unbeliever to be things impossible. The intellect can have a fixed disposition (*habitus*) for faith and a fixed disposition (*habitus*) for knowledge. And it has a fixed disposition for faith in order to acquire a fixed disposition for knowledge. As Isaias says: “Unless you believe, you will not understand.”⁴⁷ Accordingly, a Catholic can understand more about God than can an unbeliever. Faith is a power accompanied by righteousness (*iustitia*), since it is right (*iustum*) to believe about God those truths which the intellect cannot attain. The Catholic faith asserts more true things about God than [any] other faith; therefore, it is a truer faith. Faith

together with hope and love produce delight.

[27] Faith is a fixed disposition by which a Catholic believes that there is clarity in divine matters, so that it prepares a light for the intellect, in order that the intellect may understand clearly, and not confusedly, acts of divine reasoning and, thereby, may understand the agent and the doable [act]. The Catholic faith says that God can, in and of Himself, act to the extent that He can exist, because “with God all things are possible.”⁴⁸ The faith of unbelievers says that this [viz., what is claimed by Catholics] is impossible; therefore, [the faith of unbelievers] denies the [doctrine of] the Trinity. The Catholic faith is a better means for the intellect to be illumined for attaining the loftiness of God, even as air is illuminated by the light of the sun, so that our visual power can see color and shape. Faith is tranquility of the intellect as a result of believing; but it is a secondary tranquility, because the primary tranquility comes from [the act of] understanding. Nevertheless, faith is superior to [the act of] understanding, because faith believes more greatly than [understanding] understands. To understand occurs with effort and by stages; however, faith is not [like this]. Faith has the enlightenment of truth, which elevates the soul; and it has the correctiveness of authority, which secures the soul. Both of these [characteristics] come through Christ, who is the Splendor and the Word.

Jottings on Proving the Trinitarian Faith

[28] The initial considerations for proving the truth of the Catholic faith are rather general: [viz.], (1) that [the Catholic faith is] God’s instruction, God’s words, and (2) that in its precepts there is nothing except what is honorable and fitting, in terms of every law. There is (3) the death and martyrdom of the martyrs, (4) the unwaveringness amid suffering, (5) the wisdom infused generally by the Holy Spirit. There are (6) the miracles, (7) the resuscitation of the dead by the power of this faith. And there is a greater miracle: [viz.,] that at many turns persecution is instituted by emperors and tyrants for the purpose of removing [faith] from the world, but faith has always increased between the hands of raging tyrants.

[29] In the Trinity there are three persons of the divine nature. The first Person is from no one; the second Person exists from the first person through begottenness; the third Person exists from the first two through being breathed out. This trinity does not preclude a oneness of essence or the essence’s simplicity, immensity, eternity, unchange-

ableness.

Rationale for the Trinity: He who would believe that God is not able to impart Himself supremely would deny in Him power. He who would believe in this [ability-to-impart] but would say that God was unwilling to do it would deny His mercy. He who would confess God's ability and willingness but would say that He lacked the knowledge would deny His wisdom. Therefore, since He was able, willing, and knew how to, He ..., etc. Dionysius: It is the nature of the good to flow forth. The Father is the Fount of goodness from which the Son flows forth; and through liberality and loving-kindness the Holy Spirit emanates from both [the Father and the Son]. The Trinity is evident in the Scriptures. Isaias [says]: "Holy, Holy, Holy"; and there is added: "Lord God"—in the singular.⁴⁹ In Genesis [we read]: "Let us make man according to our image"—["image" being used] singularly.⁵⁰ In the Psalms [we read]: "May God, our God, bless us,..." etc.⁵¹

Jottings on the Principal Names of God

[30] There shines forth in creatures a trace of the Trinity: In the magnitude of creatures the power of the Father shines forth; in the arrangement of creatures the wisdom of the Son shines forth; in the equipping of creatures, the goodness of the Holy Spirit shines forth. In every individual thing there is oneness, beauty, and usefulness; and likewise, there is being, power, and operativeness. In the sun there is being, splendor, and heat; in the soul there is memory, intellect, and will. As regards the three hierarchies [of angels]: they are a trinity. And in each hierarchy there are three orders.⁵² A trinity is there present in oneness (and it is generally present in all creatures), because "there are three ...," etc., as you know from elsewhere.⁵³ [31] An abstract essential name is not taken as a designation of a Person [in God]. Hence, the following [statement] is false: "An Essence begat an Essence." However, concrete essential names are rightly [taken as designating the Persons in God]: for example, "God from God." There are two principal names of God: viz., "He who is" and "the Good." By means of the first name there is signified God's absolute, infinite being. By means of the second name there is indicated the divine being qua Cause; for God made all things on account of His goodness. By means of the [grammatical] neuter-gender, substantive things are expressed; by means of the masculine gender the person [is signified]; by means of the feminine gender things conceptual are expressed.⁵⁴

*Jottings on the Manner of Knowing That
the Incomprehensible God Is One and Three*

[32] Those who are willing to say something deeper about our comprehension of God [say] that although faith does not have merit, etc., nevertheless when faith comes first it is elevated by means of understanding—just as if water were mixed with olive-oil, then the olive-oil of faith would be enhanced by the water of understanding. However, as Augustine says, the human mind’s acuteness is weak; the mind is not established in such excellent light unless it is cleansed by the justice of faith.⁵⁵ Bernard: “God is present in non-rational creatures in such a way that, nevertheless, He is not apprehended by them. He can be apprehended cognitively by all rational creatures. But by good men only is He apprehended through love.”⁵⁶ We can know about God *what He is not* but not *what He is*, for He is great without quantity, good without quality, etc.⁵⁷ In Heaven God is known in terms of His essence—known in proportion to the worthiness of one’s merits. Hence, Augustine [says]: “We shall behold the essence of Your majesty—each one [among us beholding it] clearly to the degree that he has lived purely here below.”⁵⁸ There is an illustrative example in the case of the ocean, which offers itself to sight but, nevertheless, cannot be seen in accordance with its entire scope. And this fact obtains both because of the breadth of the ocean and because of the disproportionality of our sight to so vast a surface. Keep the following in mind: Here on earth we can know God with respect to the fact *that He is*; in Heaven we can know Him *as He is*;⁵⁹ but neither here nor there can we ever know *what He is*, because He is incomprehensible.⁶⁰

[33] Now, those who will to arrive at a knowledge of God must first of all cast off the darkness of sins and must put on the armor of light. They must cast aside considerations of natural reason, which are as the light of decaying wood giving light at night but of no use during the daytime. They must set aside mutable goods and cling to the Immutable Good. Thereupon, [a believer] attains a knowledge of God either through infusion or through rational inference or through [a consideration of] creatures, which are a mirroring of the Creator in the present era, just as God is the Mirror of creatures in the future [age]. At times God is known as is wine, which is known by our hearing of it, by our seeing it, and by our tasting it. You know of [God] by hearing of [Him] from a preacher. When theologians read [of Him, they know] by sight. When good men love [Him, they know] by taste.

“Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.”⁶¹ According to Dionysius, God is known through eminence, so that when power is found to be in a creature, supreme power is to be ascribed to God—and similarly regarding other [attributes]. Although all things are in God, from God, and through God, He is incomprehensible on the basis of [inferences] from creatures. For He walks upon the wings of the winds, i.e., above the understandings of angels.⁶² Furthermore, recall to mind how Augustine, seeking God, asked of the earth whether it was God and asked of the air [whether it was God]. They replied: “He made us,” etc.⁶³

[34] In God power, being, might, wisdom, etc., are the same thing. God is infinite to such an extent that if there were infinite worlds, He would fill them [by His presence], because He has, and can have, no end. Rather, although delimiting all things, He Himself is undelimitable, because He is not absent from any place nor is He localized at any place. Wherever He is present, He fills all things. And before the creation of the world He existed in and of Himself, even as He exists today. Through nature He is everywhere; through grace He is present with those who are good. “He who abides in me and I in him brings forth much fruit.”⁶⁴ Likewise, through His glory He is present, in what is reasonable, as truth; present, in what is desirable, as goodness; present, in what is emotional, as graciousness. Similarly, through union He was united, in the Virgin’s womb, to human nature—[united] in the tomb to His flesh; united in Hell to His soul. He exists in and of Himself as Alpha and Omega; He exists in the world as a king in his kingdom. He reigns and commands everywhere ([says] Bernard). He reigns over angels as Comeliness (insofar as He is Truth) and as Tastiness (insofar as He is Goodness). He reigns over the Church as the head-of-household [governs] the household. He reigns over the elect as Liberator from evils; over those who are good He reigns as Helper; over the reprobate, as Terror and Horror; over the believing soul as King in His kingdom, as Fount in His gardens, as Light in darkness, as a ruby in a ring.

Moreover, God is eternal. No time or measure of time befits Him, who is without beginning and end. Pope Leo [writes]: Nothing can be added to or subtracted from the simple nature of Divinity, for [that Nature] is always that which it is. Living and understanding are proper to it and are co-eternal with it and are the same thing as it. Yet, [that Nature] is manifold in its gifts. The excellence of the Divine Worthiness is so great that the mind that endeavors to conceive of God fails, since He is incomprehensible. The senses do not perceive [Him],

since He is invisible. The tongue does not explain Him, for He is ineffable. Place does not confine Him, because He is undelimitable. Scripture does not explain Him, since He is inestimable. Might does not attain Him, for He is inaccessible. And because there is no comparative relation of the finite to the infinite,⁶⁵ creatures cannot apprehend Him. He alone is omnipotent; He alone is omniscient; He alone knows Himself; though He is the Worker of miracles, He is quiet in His workings.

[35] Every multiplicity is originated from what is one. Every order has an *earlier* and a *later*. Everything imperfect takes its origin from what is perfect. Every union of different things has as the cause of its persistence some one, ultimate thing that we say to be God. And because this God is most powerful, most wise, and most good, He *is able to*, He *knows how to*, and He *wills supremely to*, impart Himself. But this [imparting] is a giving of the fullness-of-His-majesty to another. Therefore, from eternity God the Father begot a co-equal Son, to whom He imparted the essence of His divinity. Isaias [says]: “Shall I, who bestow on others [the gift of] begetting, be barren?”⁶⁶ This is most perfect begetting, where the Begotten One is in every respect like Him who begets. And so, power is ascribed to the Father; wisdom, to the Son. And the Father is said to have made all things in wisdom⁶⁷—i.e., by means of Wisdom, which is the Son. The Son is the Image-of-equality, begotten of the Father; man is a created image that imitates; the world is a created image that represents and that is a mirroring of the Creator. As the Apostle [says]: “Now we see through a mirror.”⁶⁸ The world was made in the likeness of God because God had no other exemplar than Himself. Properly speaking, the corporeal creature is a vestige of God, a likeness of the immaterial Creator. [According to] Ezechiel: “You [were] a seal of resemblance . . .,” etc.⁶⁹

Furthermore, emanation in the case of God is twofold: one kind is by means of nature, and it is a begetting; the other kind is by means of an act of will, and it is fittingly called procession but is properly called breathing forth. Now, the Holy Spirit is Love; accordingly, He proceeds by means of a volitional act from both [Father and Son]. From the Father He proceeds mediately and immediately: immediately from the Father and also mediately, because the Son breathes forth the Holy Spirit, and the Son has this [assignment] from the Father. The Holy Spirit is Essential Love insofar as He is one God with the Father and the Son. Because these three [Persons] are one in essence, they love one another with an Essential Love, a name given to the

Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is Personal Love, because He is the Bond between the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son love each other with a Love that proceeds from them—a Love which is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called Love in the sense of exemplar-cause. For not only is the Holy Spirit the Efficient Cause of the freely-given love that is in us but also He is the Exemplar and the End-goal [of such love]. The love that is present in us comes from the Holy Spirit as Efficient Cause, insofar as He is God. Or again, the Holy Spirit is said to be the Love—in the sense of Exemplar-Cause—by which we love God and our neighbor, even as Love (i.e., the Holy Spirit) proceeds from both [Father and Son]. But at times “love” is construed formally in the sense of inherence—as when love of virtue is said to be a fixed disposition in the soul, a disposition by means of which we love God and our neighbor. According to this mode the Holy Spirit is not called love.

NOTES TO SERMON IV

1. "... the three theological virtues": viz., faith, hope, and love.
2. Hugo of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, Book V, Chap. 18. [Falsely ascribed to Bonaventure, this work is found in Vol. VIII of *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, edited by A. C. Peltier (Paris: Vivès, 1866). The cited passage is on p. 178.]
3. Ephesians 2:8. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, Part III, De Consecratione, Distinctio 4, Canon 145 ("Gratia"). [See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (2nd edition, Leipzig, 1879 (Vol. I)), column 1408.]
4. I John 5:4. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, "Sciscitantibus"; Part II, Causa 15, Questio 8, Canon 5. [See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (2nd edition, Leipzig, 1879 (Vol. I)), column 760.]
5. Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, Book III, Distinctio 23.2 (PL 192:805).
6. *Decretalium D. Gregorii Papae IX Compilatio*, Book I, Titulus I ("De Summa Trinitate et Fide Catholica"), "Firmiter", etc. [See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (2nd edition, Leipzig, 1881 (Vol. II)), columns 5-6.]
7. See this present sermon's opening quotation.
8. Habacuc 2:4 (Habakkuk 2:4). Hebrews 10:38. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Causa 24, Questio I, Canon 29 ("Ubi sana ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 977]. See also Part II, Causa 33, Questio III (Tractatus de Penitencia), Distinctio 4, Canon 11 ("In domo ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 1233].
9. John 6:47. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Causa 33, Questio III (Tractatus de Penitencia), Distinctio 2, Canon 14 ("Karitas ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 1194].
10. James 2:26. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Causa 1, Questio I, Canon 28 ("Fertur ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 370]. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Causa 33, Questio 3 (Tractatus de Penitencia), Distinctio 2, Canon 40 ("Si enim, omnis, inquit ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 1203, lines 15-16].
11. Galatians 5:6. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Causa 28, Questio I, Canon 4 ("Uxor ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 1080]. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part II, Causa 33, Questio III (Tractatus de Penitencia), Distinctio I, Canon 52 ("Potest fieri ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 1171].
12. Acts 15:9. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part III (De Consecratione), Distinctio 4, Canon 150 ("Verus ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 1410].
13. Hebrews 11:1.
14. William of Paris (i.e., William of Auvergne), *De Fide et Legibus*, Part I, Chap. 1. [See Vol. I (Paris, 1674) of *Guilielmi Alverni Opera Omnia*, p. 2^b, lines 15-13 from bottom. (Reprinted in Frankfurt a. M., Germany by Minerva Verlag, 1963.).
15. I John 2:16.
16. This idea is repeated in section 13 below.
17. Nicholas, in his text, refers to Gratian's *Decretals*. The passage corresponds to *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, *op. cit.*, Part III (De Consecratione), Distinctio 2, Canon 69 ("Revera ...") [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, columns 1339-1340]. But the words "ubi ratio deficit, fides supplet" are not found there. See, rather, Augus-

tine, *Sermo* 190.2.2 (PL 38:1008).

18. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani, op. cit.*, Part II, Causa 33, Questio III (Tractatus de Penitencia), Distinctio 4, Canon 11 (“In domo ...”) [Friedberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, column 1233]. Also note Hebrews 11:1.

19. Distinguish “without evidentness” from “without evidence.” What is to be believed is not self-evident; rather, it is supported by some measure of evidence.

20. James 1:17.

21. “... in the sacrament of the altar”: i.e., in the eucharist.

22. Matthew 12:39.

23. Habacuc 2:4 (Habakkuk 2:4).

24. Aristotle, *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, 1 (164^b26-27).

25. Isaias (Isaiah) 59:2.

26. Malachias 4:2 (Malachi 4:2).

27. This idea reached its extreme in the Spanish Inquisition.

28. Ms. Vaticanus Latinus 1244 here has “es” (vs. “est” in the Heidelberg Academy’s printed text).

29. See n. 26 above.

30. Matthew 16:18 and 16:16, respectively.

31. Wisdom 7:26 (not Wisdom 1).

32. Osee 2:20 (Hosea 2:20).

33. Romans 10:10.

34. I Peter 5:9.

35. Isaias (Isaiah) 11:12.

36. Ephesians 6:16.

37. Ambrose, *De Fide ad Gratianum Augustum*, presumably I, 13, 84 (PL 16:571).

38. Matthew 15:14 (not Matthew 11).

39. Titus 1:16 (not Corinthians 1).

40. John 20:24-25.

41. Gregory the Great, *XL Homiliae in Evangelia*, Book II, Homilia XXVI, 1 (PL 76:1197C).

42. Matthew 17:19 (not Matthew 4).

43. I John 5:4.

44. Matthew 14:31.

45. Matthew 15:28.

46. Ramon Lull, *Liber de Praedicatione* (edited by A. S. Flores), 3rd Part of 2nd Part of Distinction I (De Novem Virtutibus, Deductis per Principia), section 5. [See Vol. III in the series *Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina*, edited by F. Stegmüller (Palma of Majorca, 1961), p. 243.]

47. Isaias (Isaiah) 7:9.

48. Matthew 19:26.

49. Isaias (Isaiah) 6:3.

50. Genesis 1:26.

51. Psalms 66:7 (67:7). The word “bless” is used singularly: “benedicat” (in Latin translation).

52. Cf. Cusa’s *De Ludo Globi*, II (77-78).

53. I John 5:7-8.

54. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, 31, 2, ad 4.
55. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, I, 2, 4 (PL 42:822). In citing Augustine, Nicholas was influenced by Hugo of Strassburg's *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, *op. cit.* [n. 2 above], Book I, Chap. 16.
56. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de Tempore*, "De Laudibus Virginis," Homilia III.4 (PL 183:72D-73A). Nicholas, in citing Bernard, was influenced by Hugo of Strassburg's *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, *op. cit.* [n. 2 above], Book I, Chap. 16.
57. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, V, 1, 2 (PL 42:912). See also Hugo of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, *loc. cit.*
58. Cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Book XXII, Chap. 29 (PL 41:796-801). See also Hugo of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, *loc. cit.*
59. I John 3:2.
60. Hugo of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, *op. cit.* [n. 2 above], Book I, Chap. 16. See also Cusa, *Sermo XXXII* (1:7-16). Cf. his *Sermo XXIX* (11:22-23).
61. Psalms 33:9 (34:8).
62. Psalms 103:3 (104:3).
63. Augustine, *Confessiones*, X, 6, 9 (PL 32:783).
64. John 15:5.
65. Hugh of Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, *op. cit.* [n. 2 above], Book I, Chap. 16.
66. Isaias (Isaiah) 66:9.
67. Psalms 103:24 (104:24).
68. I Corinthians 13:12.
69. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 28:12.

Sermon V: Ne Timeas

(“Fear Not”)

[June 24, feast-day of John the Baptist; 1431;
preached perhaps in Koblenz]

[1] “Fear not, Zachary, for your prayer is heard.”¹ ... “And the child grew and was strengthened in spirit and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation unto Israel,” etc....²

Inasmuch as I must speak of him who is greater than, and more than, a prophet—[of him who is] a messenger, a virgin, an eremite, a preacher, and a martyr³—let us invoke God’s grace. [2] “The child,” i.e., John the Baptist, still in tender years, “grew” with respect to an increase of his body and “was strengthened in spirit” with respect to an increase of grace and of virtue. He dwelt “in deserts,” being separated from other men, lest he be defiled from association with others and so that he might meditate more freely. And [by the Scriptural passage] it is shown that the contemplative life was to be primary [for him] “until the day of his manifestation,” etc., when, in fact, he began to mix an active life with the contemplative life by preaching to the Israelite people (as is indicated in Luke 3 as follows: “In the fifteenth year of the emperor Tiberius,” etc.).⁴ Today, [the feast-day of John], we must rejoice, because Gabriel foretold that “many will rejoice over his birth.”⁵ In praise of John the Baptist what can be said more effectively than that which Truth said in Matthew 11: “Among those born of women there has not arisen a greater [than John the Baptist].”⁶ And “he was sent by God,” etc....⁷

[3] First of all, I must, in accordance with the narrative about the child, speak of how he was born and of the kind of life he led. He “grew” in body. (Here [I will speak] against the gluttonous.) Secondly, [I must speak] of grace, for “his name is John,”⁸ and grace increased in him, for “he was strengthened in spirit” daily. (Here [I will speak] of the manifold grace that was in him; here [I will also speak] of the doctrine of having grace, etc.; here, too, let the theme of the spirit of prophecy be touched upon.) Thirdly, [I must speak] of the contemplative life and of the active life, because [John] was in the deserts until his manifestation. (Here [I will speak] of *desert* in a three-fold sense.)

PART ONE

*John the Baptist according to the Narrative;
and on Gluttony*

[4] As regards the first [topic]: let the Gospel speak for itself, as to how the one who was born on this day entered the world full of the Holy Spirit, even though, initially, he was conceived in sins, since [from the human race] “he rose forth.” [Let it speak] as to how the child of tender years led his life most wisely and most virtuously and how the prayer of his father, Zachary, was heard (“Fear not, Zachary,” etc.).

[5] There was in the days of Herod, the King of Judea, a certain priest named Zachary, of the order of Abia. And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both *just* before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame. And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren. And they both were well advanced in years. And it came to pass, when Zachary executed the priestly function in conformity with the ordering characteristic of a priest in those days, he went out dutifully in order to offer incense after he entered the temple of the Lord. And a whole multitude of people was praying outside, at the hour of incense.

And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zachary, seeing [him], was troubled; and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, for your prayer is heard, and your wife, Elizabeth, shall bear you a son; and his name shall be called John. And he will be to you joy and gladness, and many will rejoice over his birth. For he shall be great before the Lord, and he shall not drink wine or strong drink. And he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even in his mother’s womb. And he shall convert many of the children of Israel unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, in order to turn the hearts of fathers unto their children and to turn the unbelieving unto the practical wisdom of those who are just. [Thereby he will] furnish the Lord with a perfect people.

And Zachary said to the angel: Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. And the angel answered: I am Gabriel.⁹

[6] As regards the second [topic] of the first part, viz., how John grew physically: his [way of] life must be mentioned, because [he ate] locusts, etc.,¹⁰ and drank neither wine nor strong drink nor, in general, any intoxicating drink. Here I must touch upon gluttony and drunkenness. St. John, for many reasons, took care to avoid gluttony, because (as says the gloss on Matthew, Chapter 4) “in Christian combat action is taken, first of all, against gluttony; one would labor in vain against other vices if gluttony were not beforehand reigned-in.”¹¹ And another gloss says: If the Devil is overcome with respect

to gluttony, he does not tempt with regard to lust.¹² Now, gluttony is [one's taking] immoderate pleasure in food and drink. Because of this pleasure the first parents of the human race lost the happiness of Paradise and were cast down into this present miserable life, where every man is born through a sinning, lives by toiling, and dies through affliction. Gluttony rules over a man in three ways: (1) when the man because of gluttony [inordinately] anticipates the established [meal-]time; (2) when he orders [his servants] to prepare for him foods that are more sumptuous than bodily necessity and personal condition require; (3) [when and] if, in eating and drinking, he consumes too much as a result of his intemperate desire.

[7] This vice [of gluttony] is odious for many reasons. First of all, nature opposes it—for which reason man has, relative to the size of his body, the smallest mouth of all animals. Secondly, there is [the consideration drawn from] the tranquility of demons.... A legion of demons said to Christ: "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."¹³ Here the gloss [reads]: "When anyone lives as do swine, the Devil receives power over him."¹⁴ Thirdly, there is the injury of corrupting one's neighbor, who readily imitates. Romans 13: "Do not destroy with your meat him for whom Christ died."¹⁵ James 2: "In their feasts they defile not only themselves but also others by their example."¹⁶ Fourthly, the gluttonous one spends needlessly that which he ought to give to the poor. Bernard: "Do not suppose that your spending is without obligation; whether you like it or not, you are a debtor to your neighbor."¹⁷

Moreover, from winebibbery and drunkenness arise outcries and afflictions. Proverbs 15: "Drunkenness is riotous"¹⁸ Likewise, [gluttony] insults God, because [the glutton] makes his own stomach to be god. According to Philippians 3: "... whose stomach is their god."¹⁹ Augustine in a gloss [writes]: "That is worshiped which is loved above [all] other things."²⁰ Similarly, [gluttony] makes of the temple of the Holy Spirit the kitchen of the Devil. According to II Corinthians 6: "You are the temple of the Holy Spirit," etc.²¹ Furthermore, [gluttony] mars the image of the Trinity in man; for it blackens the face more than does coal. Jerome: "Nothing so blocks the intellect as do reveling and drunkenness." Moreover, [gluttony] distances [us] from God and causes [us] to forget Him. Osee 13: "They were satiated, and they withdrew their heart and have forgotten me."²² Therefore, the Psalmist expresses the desire: "Bind their jaws, so that they may draw near unto You"²³ —as one who hungers is brought to

his master. Likewise, the gluttonous despise God, as did Esau. (Genesis 25: “[Esau] went his way, taking little thought of his having sold his birthright.”)²⁴ Hence, [in the book of] Lamentations [it is said]: “They have exchanged all their valuables for food.”²⁵ Similarly, [gluttony] defiles the mouth, in which uncleanness is most vicious and [which is] a member designed for the worship of God. Furthermore, the first prohibition of gluttony was made in Paradise: “Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...”²⁶

[8] Moreover, many evils [recorded] in the Old and the New Testament resulted from gluttony: Eve, who was deceived, deceived [another]; Noah became drunk and naked; Lot committed twofold incest ...;²⁷ Esau sold his birthright; Absalom during a feast killed Amnon his brother;²⁸ Pharaoh hung his baker, after a great feast.²⁹ Likewise, because of this vice [of gluttony] the children of Israel incurred God’s wrath. [As the] Psalm [says]: “Their meat was still in their mouth.”³⁰ And Job’s children, while drinking wine, were taken captive.³¹ (Gregory’s rationale: “... because during feasts the mind’s good intent will be less active, is less guarded.”³²) Similarly, John was beheaded by Herod at a feast. Furthermore, the spirit is weighed down [by gluttony]: “See to it that your hearts not be weighed down by winebibbery and drunkenness.”³³ Gregory: “The more the body is stuffed, the more the soul is diminished.”³⁴ Jerome: “He who revels in pleasure is a living dead-man; he who is given to drunkenness is dead and buried.”³⁵ Drunkenness is the paltry tomb of reason.

Furthermore, talkativeness stems from [inordinate] banqueting. Gregory, in his homily on the wealthy glutton, [says]: “The primary fault of talkativeness attends those who are feasting carously.”³⁶ Likewise, lasciviousness arises [out of gluttony]: “[The people] ate and drank and rose up to play...”³⁷ Licentiousness comes from gluttony: “They were satiated, and they committed adultery...”³⁸ According to Philippians 9: “Do not be drunk with wine, in which there is licentiousness.”³⁹ Proverbs 20: “Wine is a licentious thing.”⁴⁰ Similarly, [from gluttony] arises a lack of compassion: The wealthy glutton had no pity on Lazarus.⁴¹ Furthermore, drunkenness removes wisdom. Proverbs 20: “Whoever delights in drunkenness will not be wise.”⁴² Job 28: “Wisdom is not found in the land of those living in pleasure.”⁴³ Jerome: “A fat belly produces dense senses.”⁴⁴ Drunkenness causes one to rage: Osee 7: “The princes began to rage [because of wine].”⁴⁵

[9] Moreover, St. John was especially wary of winebibbery, be-

cause although the world's wine is pleasant and delightful at the beginning, it kills in the end. Proverbs 22: "Look not upon the wine when it is yellow in the glass and when its color gleams. For the wine goes in pleasantly, but very shortly it will cause burning like a snake-[bite]." ⁴⁶ Likewise, drunkenness removes all caring and takes no thought of obligations and errs in all its tasks. Isaias 19: "The Lord mingled in the midst of Egypt a spirit of giddiness and caused Egypt to err, as a drunkard staggers." ⁴⁷ Accordingly, drunkards become impoverished, because they live without concern and without orderliness. Similarly, drunkenness and winebibbery are on sale in the tavern of the Devil. Hence, the Devil by means of three dice—viz., the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life⁴⁸—robs the world within his tavern. Furthermore, in his tavern, where he plays with the die of lust and supplies the wine of drunkenness, the Devil has promoters—viz., sorceresses and procuresses, etc.—who incite to winebibbery and licentiousness. Regarding these accursed couplers it is said in Joel 3: "They have placed a boy in a brothel and have sold a girl for a price, in order to drink wine"⁴⁹ —a boy, viz., pure and innocent affection, and a girl, viz., a spotless soul.⁵⁰ These procuresses mix wine in the Devil's tavern, and they deceive. Isaias 1: "Your wine is mixed with water," because no pleasure is pure, as states Boethius.⁵¹ And Seneca [says]: "Those things which you seek as if they caused gladness are a cause of grief."⁵² Proverbs 13: "Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and mourning takes hold of the end of joy."⁵³

[10] [Let us be mindful of] the example of the alcoholic rich man who asked his soul why, when he was sick, it would not stay. And because it did not desire to stay, he told it "Go to the Devil!" etc. You who desire to be good and who wish to discern the true: flee such mordant wine on the ground that it is a partner of death. There is no greater tormentor of men than is the liquid of the vine, [viz., wine]: the ears become deaf; then the tongue stammers. Tell me, tell me, O Drunkard: are you alive or are you oppressed by death? Behold, you are lying there pale; you are resting there utterly mindless. You are aware neither of good things nor of bad things, neither of things hard nor of things soft."⁵⁴ [11] Moreover, hunger, sleeplessness, and even infirmity follow upon drunkenness and frequent⁵⁵ winebibbery. Ecclesiasticus 37: "In many meats there will be sickness, and many have perished because of winebibbery."⁵⁶ Many [have become] stooped, lame, leprous, etc. Likewise, this pleasure [of excessive eating and drinking] is more bitter than is death, because it kills by means [both] of

bodily death [and] of mortal guilt and damnation. Similarly, it infects, suffocates, harshly afflicts, is scarcely cured, requires many expenditures, brings about a servitude of most menial labor when one attempts to fill a single sack [viz., the stomach]. Then too, the “pleasure of the throat has a breadth of scarcely two fingers.”⁵⁷ Therefore, [gluttony] is equivalent to quinsy of the throat, which chokes a man. And [the throat] is a region that is like a sickness that requires many expenditures. Ecclesiastes 5: “All the labor of man is in regard to his mouth.”⁵⁸ And [the stomach] is like a sack with a hole in the bottom. Proverbs 12: “The stomach of the wicked is insatiable.”⁵⁹ Aggeus 1: “He has earned wages and put them into a bag with a hole.”⁶⁰

The wanton are like swine whom the Devil feeds here [on earth] so that he may consume their shanks in Hell.

He is a butler
 Who is fat as ham.
 He presently is dying a
 death that is eternal.
 (Verses made by the Devil, etc.)

Gluttony is the Devil’s bridle. For when a man sets out to guide himself by means of gluttony, he proceeds unto all [other] sins, etc.: licentiousness, thievery, etc.

He wants to consume more than
 his plow can provide, etc.

[12] Holy John [the Baptist] despised the world’s wine and its inebriating drink, etc.; and he chose God’s wine, viz., the wine-of-remorse (which is also penance and martyrdom) and the wine-of-gladness (i.e., contemplation of the saints). A man cannot at one and the same time drink God’s wine and the Devil’s wine. God’s wine would not taste good to him, because he would have the palate of one who is feverish. God’s wine, at first, is acidic and, later, is mild. Hence, [we read] in the Canticles: “Drink my wine together with my milk.”⁶¹ “You have shown Your people hard things.”⁶² This wine is sold in the shop of confession, because [the confessional] is God’s pantry. In Genesis 49 [the following] is said as regards Juda, who symbolizes confessing: “He shall wash his robe in wine.”⁶³ The soul is a grape squeezed by the wine-press of the Cross and of penance; the torment of the soul (e.g., the shame of sin, the fear and the pain of Hell) is [like] the [squeezed-out] wine of the grape. And this wine [of penance] cleansed the robe of Juda, i.e., the robe of confessing. This wine intoxicates, because it causes one to put off the old man.⁶⁴ “Those were

drunken who rid themselves of their goods and placed [them] at the Apostles' feet."⁶⁵ "Behold, we have left behind all things," etc.⁶⁶

Moreover, [God's wine] rids [one] of all shame—as is evident in the case of Mary Magdalene, who felt no shame [in the presence of] the banqueters....⁶⁷ Preachers are heralds of this [divine wine]. And so, at first, they are supposed to drink as does a physician. As Augustine said: The physician drinks beforehand, so that later he will not quiver as does one who is sick; and Christ drank first of the cup of suffering.⁶⁸ He who does not with Christ drink of the cup of suffering does not love the Lord. But because our sins are pressuring [us], more men hasten to the Devil's tavern than to God's tavern; the reason is, perhaps, that that which is sold at a higher price is sought-after more eagerly. The Lord makes a good business transaction, because He saves us without payment [on our part]. Isaias 55: "Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without any cost,"⁶⁹ for "the sufferings [of this present time] are not worthy ...," etc.⁷⁰ He who lives in penance has jars full of this [divine] wine. [13] The wine of gladness is God's delightful grace. Concerning this wine it is said in Esther 1 that no one is compelled to drink [of it], because services that are compelled are not pleasing to God.⁷¹ "I will sacrifice to you willingly."⁷² "My vows are within me, O God; I shall keep them ...," etc.⁷³ Nevertheless, one is summoned, as in the Canticles: "Eat, my friends, and be intoxicated!"⁷⁴ "They shall be intoxicated from the abundance of Your house ...," etc.⁷⁵ And regarding the Apostles, upon whom the Holy Spirit fell, it was said: "They are drunken."⁷⁶

Hail, full of grace: Stephen, full of grace.⁷⁷ I will speak a bit later of this grace, for John was a vessel of grace, etc.

PART TWO

*The Name "John"; and [Discussion] here
of the Different Meanings of "Grace".*

(a) *The divisions of grace.*

[14] "He was strengthened in spirit," because [he was] John, i.e., he [was] "he in whom there is grace." In Sacred Scripture "grace" (*gratia*) is understood in a threefold way. [First of all,] it is understood as the love by which one individual holds another to be pleasing. Hence, in the Scriptures it is often said: "If I have found grace in your eyes" Secondly, it is understood as a free gift. Thus, we say: "I do this favor [*gratia*] for you." Thirdly, it is understood

as the recompense for a gift and is called an act of thanks (*gratiarum actio*): “Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.” Now, John was full of *grace*, construed in the second sense; for [grace in this second sense] is the twofold effect of grace in the first sense and is a threefold stimulus.

God’s love is twofold. [There is] a general love by which He loves all things, in accordance with the [verse]: “You, O Lord, have hated none of the things that You have made.”⁷⁸ The other love is a special love by which God especially loves rational creatures, whom He leads back unto a supernatural friendship and participation. And in accordance with this [distinction], “grace” is construed in a twofold way: First, [it is construed] generally as standing for any gift that proceeds from that general love; and in this sense natural gifts and fortuitous gifts are rightly said to be graces. In a second sense “grace” is construed as specially standing for a supernatural gift that proceeds to rational creatures from God’s special love, so that rational creatures are brought unto God by means of a supernatural friendship; [this is the applicable sense of “grace,” no matter] whether such goods were actual mental motions by means of which rational creatures are moved by God unto knowing something, willing something, and doing⁷⁹ something, or whether such goods were in the soul as permanent dispositions that are the sources of the aforesaid acts. Furthermore, in accordance with this [twofold sense] we usually distinguish three kinds of divine goods: viz., natural goods, fortuitous goods, and gratuitous goods.

[16] Now, such a leading back of the spirit unto God occurs in a double sense: viz., mediately and immediately. (It occurs in the first way so as to dispose toward true friendship and union with God; it occurs immediately in the sense that through it the spirit is united to God in friendship and in joy. Therefore, we customarily distinguish two senses of “grace”: viz., the freely given and the making-pleasing. (1) Freely-given grace corresponds to general grace, because the latter is conferred freely. But it differs [from general grace] in that it is given for the purpose of acquiring the grace that makes one pleasing. Examples [of free gifts of general grace] are the divine impulses, and good operations, by which someone is prodded to convert. And, likewise, there are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, according as it is said: “There are diversities of graces. To one [person] is given the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge . . .,” etc.⁸⁰ (2) [The grace that] makes-pleasing is freely given, and it makes the spirit pleasing

to God; without this grace no one can please God. If from one who is unpleasing there is to be made one who is pleasing to God, then a change must occur. Change cannot occur in God; therefore, it must occur in the creature. Accordingly, a supernatural gift is infused. This [infused] grace is said to be the grace that makes one pleasing. And rightly so. Just as creatures have forms and powers through which they obtain natural perfections, so too the rational creature foresees, through grace, that through grace he will obtain supernatural [gifts].

[17] It is evident that one who does not have grace cannot worthily merit it; otherwise, if grace were from merit, it would not be grace. Yet, grace is altogether fittingly given, because to Divine Goodness it is fitting and suitable that when someone does his best, then God opens His hand and generously pours forth His gifts. For when a sinner endeavors to please Divine Goodness, he no doubt obtains grace; for [God] stands at the door, etc.⁸¹ And in proportion to [a sinner's] having endeavored to be greater and more perfect, grace is infused to him. One who has grace can worthily merit its increase, as well as meriting the Kingdom of Heaven. [Here] we consider merit not according as it derives from ourselves (for, as such, "the sufferings [of this present time] are not worthy ..., " etc.)⁸² but as it is acquired by the Holy Spirit's special activity and by our co-operating [with Him], so that in this way our work is made to be something supernatural, and it obtains a supernatural end, viz., glory. Whatever our teachers ascribe to grace [is ascribable] also to love. Just as grace makes one pleasing, so love makes one precious.

[18] Prevenient grace works in us; infused grace makes pleasing: "My God, His mercy goes before me."⁸³ Subsequent grace co-operates, when free will works with it. Psalms 22: "Your mercy shall follow me."⁸⁴ [This grace is], at one and the same time, subsequent and co-operating, because grace and free will work together. St. Thomas posits five effects of grace: "the first effect is the soul's being healed; the second is the soul's willing the good; the third is its doing the good that it wills; the fourth is its persevering; the fifth is its persevering unto glory."⁸⁵ The first effect of grace is prevenient; the last effect of grace is subsequent.

[19] Now, John, whose birthday is today, was full of grace. For he was not born a child of wrath,⁸⁶ even though he was conceived as such a child; but he was sanctified in the sixth month [of gestation] at the time of the visit of Blessed Mary, when the infant leaped in [Elizabeth's] womb⁸⁷—sanctified not only by common grace as are

others whose sins are forgiven and [who] are strengthened for doing good works. Rather, he was given the ability to avoid all mortal sins and to avoid the frequency of venial sins—[a gift] that was conferred on no other of the saints (say our teachers) except for the Virgin Mary. Nor was this [gift] given to Jeremias, although he was sanctified in the womb.⁸⁸ This was the promise of [the angel] Gabriel, by which he promised to Zachary that from the womb John was to be filled with the Holy Spirit.⁸⁹ Yet, in no holy man—except for Christ, the Fount of grace—was there ever so much grace that he could not obtain a greater abundance thereof. Accordingly, “the child [John] grew and was strengthened in spirit.”⁹⁰ Now, “fullness-of-grace” conveys the idea of a perfection of virtues and of graces—a perfection such that it elevates the virtuous and holy mind away from earthly desires, and removes and conquers every inordinate passion, and renders one, in the midst of men, as free of passion as is an angel.

[20] The philosophers, knowing only humanly acquired virtues, posited as perfect the virtues that they said to be characteristic of a purified⁹¹ mind; for [these virtues] were only in a soul that was purged of passions and of inordinate desire. And these same virtues they called heroic, i.e., divine, because men who had them were, in comparison with others, gods.⁹² And these men were fully virtuous in regard to all virtues; for no one is said to be virtuous who lacks even a single virtue. Nevertheless, the philosophers did not deny that these men could still increase in virtue.⁹³ However, the perfection of this mode [of virtue] consists in the fact that by means of these virtues someone is moved to virtuous deeds all the more quickly and perfectly, all the more fervently and delightfully. And so, [John] is of greater distinction because of the freely-given virtues and because of God’s grace. [21] Therefore, being filled with both prevenient and subsequent grace, John increased continually in all the virtues—in the theological virtues as well as in the cardinal virtues.⁹⁴ For as a little child he left the world behind, etc. Each of those who saw in the child such a wondrous origin, such a marvelous life, such established strength, such virtuous resolve rejoiced, saying: “Who, do you suppose, this child will be?”⁹⁵ For he was strengthened to such an extent that he was strengthened above all others who existed (except for the glorious Virgin)—strengthened with respect to prevenient grace, with respect to grace that makes pleasing, with respect to sanctification and conduct and glorification. For although the grace of sanctification was not so extensive that in the womb it altogether extinguished

the susceptibility to sin so that [later] he could not be inordinately influenced as regards creatures, nevertheless it was extensive enough that it weakened the susceptibility and strengthened the spirit and bound the spirit to God with a bond of love—doing so to such an extent that John’s spirit could never be turned away from God.

Turning away from God is the essence of mortal sin; turning toward creatures is the essence of venial sin. Only the Virgin Mary had this prerogative.⁹⁶ Therefore, John, who was not able to sin mortally, fled [into the desert], lest even by frivolous conversation he could mar his life by sinning venially. John was the prophet of the Most High (“You shall be called a prophet of the Most High”)⁹⁷ and even greater (because “of those born ...,” etc.).⁹⁸ And [he was] “more than a prophet,”⁹⁹ because not only did he foretell [the coming of Messiah] but he pointed [Him] out with his finger (“Behold, the Lamb of God,” etc.).¹⁰⁰ He was a messenger (*angelus*): “Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before you,” as the Lord said through Malachias.¹⁰¹ This [messenger] was John, who in the desert prepared the way of the Lord. Behold, the purity of John’s life! For he was a child and a messenger (*angelus*), etc. “He [was] more than a prophet” with respect to the ordering of his life. [He led] a life strict and solitary, chaste and poor—[a life characterized by] a garment of camel’s hair (i.e., a hair-shirt), by meals out of locusts and honey and water (in small portions), by speaking and working, etc.

[22] O What kind of man he was! And how great he was!—him who, in all his conduct, lacked not a single one of heaven’s or earth’s perfections. Because of such great gifts of grace, because of such great merit, because of such fervent, inflamed love, you, [O John], obtained eternal, infinite, immense glory. For after the fashion of the glorious Mother of God, John ascended very highly in glory with respect to an essential reward, which consists of the beatific vision and of the enjoyment and possession of the Blessed Trinity. In regard to an incidental reward he obtained, as well, that which someone obtains not because of his love but because of various deeds that love commands: [viz.,] an aureole, i.e., a crown that is small in comparison with the essential reward. [He obtained it] by reason of his victory (for he conquered), even as at one time victorious combatants were crowned. Against three things in the world—against the flesh, the world, and the Devil—the soul’s battle is threefold and is in accordance with its threefold power: the appetitive power, the irascible power, and the rational power. Accordingly, there are three aureoles. The first aureole is the

one belonging to virgins. It is given to those who overcome the flesh through most excellent activity of the appetitive power; for it is difficult to mortify all sexual activity for God's sake. The second aureole is the triumph of martyrs over the world by means of most excellent activity of the irascible power; for it is difficult to choose death for God's sake. The third aureole is that of teachers. It is conferred for one's very worthy triumph over the Devil by means of most excellent activity of the rational power. For it is the responsibility of a teacher to repel—by means of his erudition in faith and morals—the Devil not only from his own heart but also from the heart of his neighbor. Now, the aureole as concerns virginity is enhanced by martyrdom and teaching. John was a most chaste virgin, a most glorious martyr, and a most excellent teacher. Hence, in the hymn [it says]: “Lo, thirty garlands . . .,” etc.¹⁰² For John is an ark of testimony¹⁰³ in the tabernacle—an ark gilded inside and out; he is a crown because of his virginity; he is an altar of the Lord, etc.

PART THREE

On John, Who Was in the Desert; and [Discussion] here of the Contemplative Life and the Active Life

(a) *The steps of contemplation, and a comparison of contemplation with the active life.*

[23] “He was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation.”¹⁰⁴ “Desert” is taken to mean *contemplation*. Exodus 3: “And while Moses attended the sheep in the interior of the desert, the Lord appeared unto him.”¹⁰⁵ For when a man forsakes all things for God's sake, then God appears to him. And the desert is the Sinai desert, where God rained down manna on the *children of Israel* (i.e., on *those who see God*).

[24] The doctors [of the Church] posit various steps of contemplating God and of ascending unto God. At times, the mind of him who is contemplating is directed towards perceptual and imaginable objects; at times, it is directed towards those things which can be known only by reason; at times, towards those things which can be known only by intellect. And each [such] stage has two steps. The *first step* [of these six steps] is in terms of the imagination and accords with the imagination. Indeed, [it occurs] when we, as dazed, simply gaze on perceptual objects, noting how large they are, how varied, how beautiful, how delightful, etc. And in all these objects we admiringly

venerate, and venerationally admire, God's power, wisdom, goodness, etc. The *second step* is the imagining—on the basis of philosophic inventiveness or of the teaching of the divine books—of the principles and causes of objects. The *third step* [is taken] when by means of the natures and the properties of perceptible objects the imagination ascends to things spiritual, so that “as cinnamon and aromatic balm...” etc.¹⁰⁶ “My spirit is sweeter than honey.”¹⁰⁷ Similarly: “Your name is as ointment poured forth,” etc.¹⁰⁸ “The voice that I heard was as the voice of harp-players playing their harps.”¹⁰⁹ And so on. The *fourth step* occurs when we ascend above the imagination by means only of reason—i.e., when by means only of spiritual things we ascend unto God. The *fifth step* is beyond reason but, nevertheless, is neither out of line with reason nor contrary to reason, as, for example, in the case of the simplicity of God's essence ..., etc. The *sixth step* is beyond reason but also at times is out of line with reason and at times is contrary to reason—as, for example, with regard to the articles of faith, etc.

[25] This contemplative life is the best life because through the soul's most noble power, viz., the intellect, [this life] is occupied principally with the best object, viz., God, and is occupied, secondarily, with God's works, insofar as the divine goodness shows forth in them. Moreover, [the contemplative life] perfects a man with respect to his most noble part. It very greatly makes a man [God-]like. [This likeness] begins in the present life and is perfected in the next life: “We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”¹¹⁰ The *active* life will not be present in our future, Heavenly abode, because merciful works, preaching, resisting temptations will have no place there. However, the *contemplative* life will not be removed but will remain eternally in the saints, because, according to the statement of our Savior, the saints' essential reward and essential happiness consist in their contemplating God: “This is true life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.”¹¹¹

[26] Contemplation, in an unqualified sense, is better than is activity, even though not every contemplative life is better than is any given active life. For example, the activity of preaching and of teaching, which derives from contemplation, is preferable to simple contemplation; however, with regard to other outward works that are works of mercy, activity is not preferable. Nevertheless, in certain respects, activity is to be preferred on account of the needs of the present life—just as in an unqualified sense wine is better than water, al-

though in particular cases water is preferable. Moreover, the contemplative life is, in an unqualified sense, of greater merit than is the active life, because it immediately and directly has to do with our loving God, whereas the active life has to do with our loving our neighbor. Now, goodness is measured by love. Therefore, [if] one man engages in an active life out of greater love than has another man who engages in a contemplative life, the former man is preferred. In and of itself the conducting of an active life can never be more worthwhile than is contemplation. Accordingly, St. Augustine says: “Love and truth require holy leisure. Love’s obligations undertake just tasks. If no one imposes a responsibility, time is to be found for discerning and examining the truth; but if a responsibility is imposed, it must be undertaken on account of love’s obligation. But not for this reason is delight in the truth to be altogether left aside, lest that pleasantness be eliminated and the obligation become oppressive.”¹¹² Therefore, that blessed man John, whose help is from You, determined in his heart to take ascending steps, by way of contemplation, in the valley-of-tears of the desert in which he was, etc.¹¹³

(b) *The means of attaining the final goal; and the threefold ascension unto God.*

[27] O most holy John, you have lived your life very harshly. And it is said in the Gospel that from your day [onwards] the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence.¹¹⁴ And you proclaimed as a voice in the desert: “Do penance, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”¹¹⁵ And you said, further, that the axe is placed at the root of the tree; and every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and put into eternal fire.¹¹⁶ And you add that “the winnowing-fork is in God’s hand, and He will cleanse His floor and will gather His wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”¹¹⁷ Therefore, teach me, and procure for me, the pathway of Your commandments, so that before the tree is cut down I may hasten ..., etc.

[28] Now, in order that you, [O Christians], may obtain some fruit from your life, organize your manner of considering and meditating upon your end—[organize it] in such a way that when the end is given, the means to the end are considered. “Therefore, be still and see!”¹¹⁸ Glory is your end. Consider the means to glory. If you place before your eyes the greedy desire for many things, it is obvious that this is not the [right] pathway, because it is said: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures where moth and rust destroy and where thieves

break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven ...” etc.¹¹⁹ The wanton are far removed from this [right] pathway, because “he who sows in the flesh shall reap corruption, [but] he who sows in the spirit shall of the spirit reap eternal life.”¹²⁰ [Also] far removed from this pathway are the idly curious, to whom it is said: “Seek not things that are seen but, rather, things that are not seen. The things seen are temporal, but the things unseen are eternal.”¹²¹ And this pathway is not in the world, because to all it is said: “Love not the world, because what is in the world is the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes or lust for worldly success.”¹²²

To those who desire great things it is said: “What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world ...?” etc.¹²³ To the greedily rich it is said: “Do not trust in iniquity. If riches abound ...,” etc.¹²⁴ To those who exceedingly love their wealth it is said: “They have slept their sleep,” etc.¹²⁵ Of the exalted it is said: “[Even] if you are exalted as an eagle and you build your nest among the stars, I will cast you down therefrom, says the Lord.”¹²⁶ To the avaricious it is said: “Those who wish to become rich fall into temptation and into the snare [of the Devil] and into many useless desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition. The root of all evils is avarice; certain who are avaricious have erred from the faith and have entangled themselves in many sorrows.”¹²⁷ To those loving this present life it is said: “Light is pleasant; and it is delightful for the eyes to see the sun. If a man live many years and have rejoiced in them all, he must remember the darksome time and the many days ...,” etc.¹²⁸ To the lazy it is said: “Go to the ant, O Sluggard, and consider her ways and learn wisdom. Although the ant has no guide or master or captain, she prepares food during the summer ...,” etc.¹²⁹ Consider the perils and the labors of merchants; consider the toils of students. Yet, knowledge inflates, and only love edifies.¹³⁰ Consider this entire life, whose actual course is like a ship on a stormy sea. See what kind [of man] you ought to be, O Sailor, in order to draw near to port.

[29] If you wish to arrive at your end-goal, determine to take ascending steps in the valley of tears.¹³¹ You have departed far from God. You were atop a most high mound of delights, having been created in the image of God [and] in a state of innocence, where all the powers of the body obeyed the soul. You departed, O Man, into sin; you, O Man, contracted original sin from your parents. There arose in you deformity, suffering-and-death, proneness to evil, and avarice, etc. Enticed by inordinate desires, you departed [from God], and you

clung to the world, and you took pleasure in the world, and you brought upon yourself sliminess as a result of your inordinate affections. Stuck in the mud of the pit because of sinning mortally, you departed very far. If you desire to rise up, determine to take ascending steps in the valley of tears. Reflect on the mortal sins within you—on how greatly they displease God. [You have] as much pride as would expel Lucifer from Heaven, as much gluttony and disobedience as [would expel] Adam from Paradise, as much licentiousness as would overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah.

Consider that God, an upright Judge, will, without doubt, judge you according to your works. Consider your past and present sins. Who will count your sins, which you have committed with heart, mouth, and deed? See how Divine Justice will adjudge you, who have sinned so gravely against most benevolent God. Think of your vain desires, your waste of time, etc. Prostrate yourself in prayer with such remorse that God will give you a correcting of your life. Examine your inner man. Etc. Moreover, reflect with grief every day after compline on your excesses for that day, and so arrange your thoughts that in no respect you adulate yourself, flatter yourself, or excuse yourself.

[30] But after you have thus reflected, begin to dispose yourself for ascending, and arrange your exercises in [accordance with] the way in which you wish to conduct yourself, and keep to that ordering. [Arrangements that are] changing, inconstant, and wandering make no progress in any respect. “Do all things,” said God to Moses, “according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mount.”¹³² Just as one-who-wants-to-build-a-house first conceives [of the house] in his mind ..., etc. Likewise, let your disposition be in one manner as regards the *end* and in another manner as regards the *means* to the end. Let purity of heart be your end-goal, and let love be irremovably impressed on, and implanted in, [your heart]; and, in no event, depart from love and purity. And then steer your ship—the ship of your life—into this port, lest you wander about in uncertainty. First of all, ascend unto [the level of] *heart*; secondly, unto a *pure heart*; thirdly, unto a *pure heart that is inflamed* [with love]. You have filled up the measure of mortal sin by means of a threefold descent: (1) through turning away from God out of pride (in which the formal definition of “sin” consists), (2) through turning to creatures out of delight, (3) through working against the law of God.

Rise upwards by means of a threefold gradation. First of all, turn your heart away from creatures, and have [as your] most firm pur-

pose—even if you were to die a thousand times—[the purpose] of serving God and of not subjecting yourself to creatures. And grieve over your having turned away [from God], etc. Indeed, such a gradation is called contrition, when a hard heart is thus softened and is made contrite and is desolidified. Secondly, because while you were arrogantly despising, you despised God: it is necessary that you humbly submit yourself to the man who is the vicar of God and who has the keys [to the Kingdom]. And humbly, contritely, and grievously you must confess your sins to him as to Christ the Lord, our Judge, etc. Thereupon, in accordance with the purpose of your remorse and in accordance with your humble ashamedness: your sins, when confessed, are remitted to you. Thirdly, just as through sinning you have shown your members to be instruments of the Devil, so make them to be instruments of righteousness unto sanctification,¹³³ in order to cure opposite things by means of opposite things. Do things opposite to those wrongs which you have committed; [do them] in accordance with the counsel of a priest. And [hereupon] there is satisfaction [for sin], and [hereupon] you [will] have returned unto your heart.¹³⁴

[31] In order to ascend unto a pure heart, you must know that impurity consists in three things. [First of all, it consists] in inordinate affection for the vilest things—e.g., for vainglory, for honor and praise, for gluttony, licentiousness, etc. Secondly, [it consists in] not loving things that are to be loved but, instead, [in the having] of affections and appetites so impure and unclean that they know nothing of spiritual and Heavenly things. Thirdly, [impurity consists in] faintness of heart whereby even a man who is to some extent purified and restored is, nonetheless, not fit to cling to God through perfect love, because the vigor of love is lacking [to him]. We mount up against the first impurity by means of our *fear* of the Lord, who shakes the heart violently, as it were, and breaks it free from harmful affections. We prevail over the second [impurity] by means of *hope*, because through hope the heart is elevated unto the tasting of Heavenly things. From the level of fear we mount up against the third impurity by means of *love*.

(c) *The states and conditions of life.*

[32] Consider the state of your life! *If you are a male* (since courage is characteristic of a male ... and since “male” [“*vir*”] is derived from “virility” [“*virilitas*”]),¹³⁵ then consider [the following]: whether you have overcome your lusts and have put aside the things that are char-

acteristic of a child.¹³⁶ According to I Corinthians 13: “When I became a man, I put away [childish things];...” etc.¹³⁷ [Consider] whether you are virtuous in your manner of life, whether just as you are a male by sex, so in regard to your affect you are not of the effeminate. Job 36: “Gird up your loins like a man.”¹³⁸ Etc. *If you are a female*: [Consider whether you are submissive to your husband (in accordance with I Corinthians 11).¹³⁹ [Consider] whether you are silent,¹⁴⁰ not wandering, not idle, not nosy¹⁴¹ —whether you are vain in terms of appearance,¹⁴² whether you are sober and abstinent from wine, since from wine there results shamelessness, etc. [Consider] the example of Augustine’s mother, etc.¹⁴³ [Consider] whether you are living modestly and chastely; for in women modesty fosters all honorable acts and is compared to the sun’s illumining the world....¹⁴⁴ And as regards women’s chasteness, [consider] the many examples [pointed to by] Valerius, Gualensis, Ambrose. Let the adornment of women be honorable, without cosmetics being added. Chrysostom, [commenting] on Matthew, [says]: “It is dangerous to add anything to a royal image: you offend God; you undermine sobriety; you kindle the flames of jealousy ...,” etc.¹⁴⁵ [Take] the example, from William of Paris, about the woman who dyed her hair, etc.¹⁴⁶

If you are obliged to rear children, take care that you not be a nursemaid who is drunken, talkative, lascivious—lest you instill into a new head seeds..., etc. Rear soberly; instruct in God’s law, etc. Pubescent boys, because of their inclination towards lust, are to be kept busy with obligatory tasks, lest, like the unplowed earth, they produce thorns and thistles. They are always to be saddled with some task and to be tamed by honest work. [Consider] the example of the philosopher and the example of the two dogs, one of which was a greyhound [i.e., a hunter of hares] and the other of which was a dog of the kitchen; etc. *If you are an adolescent*, determine whether you have grown in virtue as well as in age. In an adolescent paucity of words, continence, and a sense of shame are praiseworthy. Be subordinate, obedient, obliging. Let men be the more virtuous because of their strength. [Let] an old man [be] the more virtuous the older he is. Seneca: “I am grateful for my old age; I cannot keep from willing to do all that I was supposed to.”¹⁴⁷ In old age the intellect ought to work hard and steadily, etc. Let there be steadfastness and patience in these [works]. Let the intellect’s desire be [for the following: viz.,] to forswear all past pleasures, to keep track of time, and to settle one’s accounts before one is called to judgment.

[33] Consider your condition, no matter whether you are a nobleman or not. For since you are but earth and ashes¹⁴⁸ and were born in the same way as were all others, you must not for that reason praise yourself. There is no nobleness of the flesh unless there is nobleness of morals. “With God there is no preferential consideration of persons.”¹⁴⁹ It is of no benefit to you what kind of person your father was, etc. *If you are of noble stock* but do not live nobly, you are like a filthy place that is shined upon by the sun. O house belonging to so ill-matched an owner! Etc. He is noble who is made noble by his own virtue. Seneca, *Epistle 43: Philosophy made Plato noble*.¹⁵⁰ Gregory, Book II of his *Dialogues*, Chapter 9: “Nobility of race is, for some men, accustomed to give way to ignobility of mind.”¹⁵¹ And such men make for themselves, in regard to their nobility, a shield or a fortress, as it were, for sinning and for defending themselves amid their sins. [They are like] those who have their liberty as a cloak for malice....¹⁵² *If you are not [by birth] noble*: strive to be noble in your practices. Through the virtues, many have risen from least status to maximal status, as did very wise Socrates, who was from a mother who was a midwife and from a father who was a worker-with-marble. Etc.

[34] We are not to glory over our natural gifts; rather, [these gifts] are to be governed by the rules of the virtues infused by grace. The [natural] gifts with respect to the soul are intelligence and memory; the [natural] gifts with respect to the body are health, beauty, strength, nimbleness, etc. Let men not be wise when it comes to doing evil.¹⁵³ “The children of this world are wiser than are the children of light.”¹⁵⁴ Do not misuse your beauty, O woman, by shamelessly seducing men. Proverbs 11 [speaks of] “a golden ring in her nose; a woman comely and foolish.”¹⁵⁵ Although a swine have a golden ring in its nose, it excretes no less dung, etc. Thus, a woman shows her beauty to every fornicator, and she mingles it with all ugliness, although she ought to cover and conceal it ..., etc. [Recall] the example of the very handsome young man (as Ambrose relates in Book III of his *On Virgins*) who caused his mouth to fester, in order to appear displeasing.¹⁵⁶

[35] The rich are to be admonished not to acquire [wealth] unjustly—through usury, deceit, robbery, the mammon of iniquity.¹⁵⁷ “For those who wish to become rich fall into various temptations....”¹⁵⁸ Jerome: “Every rich man is either wicked or the son of a wicked man.”¹⁵⁹ “If riches abound, do not set your heart [upon them].”¹⁶⁰ It is as difficult for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom

of Heaven as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, etc.¹⁶¹ Riches are dangerous, for many men have perished because of them, etc. The poor are to be comforted. Seneca: “Welcome-poverty is honorable,” etc.¹⁶² A poor man is *not* poor, for he no longer desires [to have] ..., etc.¹⁶³ [Consider] patience amid tribulation, etc.

(d) *Three ascending steps, viz., fear of God, elevating-hope, love that unites to God through Christ.*

[36] After you have thus pondered all things, take the first step, viz., fear, and sprinkle with bitterness the pleasures of sin—as women do when they wish to wean children. For example, you are full of worldly desires; with all your heart you aspire to a high status; it is difficult for you to be without pleasure-giving foods. In fear of the Lord sprinkle forth bitterness by considering your end and the punishments of Hell, etc. Consider your past transgressions—[consider] how quickly they were over and that the punishment [for them] is eternal, etc. Make lye for washing [them away]. Your soul is approaching God’s judgments, which are inscrutable. [Consider] the fact that man does not know whether he is worthy of love or of hatred.¹⁶⁴ He does not know whether contriteness comes upon him because of his love or because of his fear. He is mindful of life’s brevity and of the ordeal of severe judgment [that awaits him]. Thereupon—[i.e., upon having these thoughts]—the world passes from your heart, etc. Keep these [thoughts] ever before your eyes, because as one who is about to set out immediately for an unknown region, you are drawing ever-closer to death. Form in yourself the portrayal of a dying man, as if you were going to die right now. Etc. How greatly you will grieve over the fact that you have sinned and have not done penance! Reflect [on the following: viz.,] how bitter it will be for you to pass from worldly delights into Hell. Imagine that your soul is now departing from you. Look at where it is headed, etc. “O Death, how bitter is the memory of you!”¹⁶⁵

Suppose the hour of death to be most certain and to be going to be present to you very soon [but] at an uncertain time. Recall the ordering, how it is that you are coming toward death amid infirmities and a dread of nature. In the meantime place before your eyes the image of one who is dying; consider the manner [of dying], the form [of dying], and the [right] order [of dying]. Etc. Reflect on how it is that demons will come, on how the soul will be brought to judgment, etc. Focus your thoughts on this judgment—on the Judge, on the plain-

tiff, and on the witness, etc. Reflect on the punishment of Hell—on how Hell is a very deep, very dark pit full of fire, etc., a fire that burns without light, etc. Reflect on the kind of gnashing of teeth, the kind of trembling, the kind of wailing that is present there. Alas! To what end we have been born! Reflect on the wretched association with demons, etc. Reflect on the fact that the worm will never die.¹⁶⁶

Accordingly, the first effect of faith is fear: fear tears the heart away from, draws it away from, unclean affections.

[37] The second step is hope. Because of fear hope elevates the mind that is rent away from sins but that is still weighed down by them. It elevates the mind to higher things, and because of the expectation of Heavenly rewards it despises all the vanities of the world. Hope begins to direct its sighs upwards and to yearn mentally for that sublime joy which it has represented [to itself] inwardly. Accordingly, after you have, out of fear, emptied your heart of evil, fill it with the spiritual affection of hope. For hope makes Heavenly things appealing to you, once the slime of sin has been cast aside out of fear. Just as a man who is attached to lower things is made impure, so a man who is attached to higher things is made pure. Hence, imagine there to be above you a place that is very secure, very pure, very restful; and imagine there to be below you a place very unclean, very dark; and imagine that you are in between. The more you proceed downwards through inordinate desires, the more restless and impure [you become]. The more you proceed upwards—toward Heavenly objects of desire, through continual meditation, through longing, and through hope—the more stable and pure, etc., [you become].

As regards remorse on account of love: [consider] how it is that in gazing from afar and through hope, [you see] the holy, beautiful, etc., city of Jerusalem.... The case is similar as regards the glory, the enjoyment, the delights, of Paradise and as regards the gifts to the soul (viz., fullness of knowledge with respect to the rational power; fullness of justice with respect to the appetitive power; superabundance of gladness with respect to the irascible power). Reflect on the benefits given to you by God—[reflect thereon] so that you may have, as it were, an incentive to love God in return. Reflect on how greatly He loves you; for you have very often departed from Him; but He, being merciful, always takes you back again. He created you from nothing. He gave you above all else intellect, etc. He gave you heaven and earth, the sun and the moon. (“You have subjected all things under man’s feet,” etc.)¹⁶⁷ Reflect on the fact that [God] has exalted you

[and] on how greatly Christ emptied Himself.¹⁶⁸ God called you through prophets, through signs, through His Son, etc. Reflect on what kind of [person] is He who bestowed on you all those [goods]; and [consider] that He is most good, most kind, most merciful. Hope will be elevated in and through love; and in this way the heart is made pure.

[38] Thirdly, ascend through love unto entering into, and being united with, God. By means of many vigils, labors, and periods of study you will, at length, complete these [three] steps—[steps] of those who are beginning and of those who are finishing. It takes no small effort to renounce one's past life and to lament over one's sins. It takes quite great effort to triumph over a prior, long-standing habit, to leave aside inordinate affections, to extinguish particular sins, and, through hope of forgiveness, to raise up the entire mind unto Heavenly things. After many of the aforesaid ascendings, one ascends still higher, unto love, by transforming one's nature into states of virtue. In a certain manner, then, a man puts on virtue by means of his affections. And he makes a habit of virtue, [doing so] not out of fear of punishment or out of hope of reward but solely out of affection for goodness, since he has taken delight in God. And, accordingly, [when he does all of this], he greatly dreads wickedness and uncleanness. Dreading greatly all things contrary to virtue, he does what is good, being delighted by his affection for the good. And in regard to no thing does he receive impurity, etc. And just as the affective power is habituated regarding the virtues, so it is united to God through fervent love. And once aroused, by means of its study in regard to speculating on God, it is always aglow with zeal. A truly just man dreads sin, etc. Here is the fat mountain;¹⁶⁹ he who ascends unto it will find pastures as he goes in and out.¹⁷⁰ He who goes in by means of the appetitive power will find joy, etc.; he who goes in by means of the irascible power will find courage, steadiness, etc. This love is not given to all; certainly, it is not given to those who are asleep, to those who are disdainful [of it], to those who do not co-operate [with it]. Love is a kind of warfare. Go away, O Slothful ones! Yet, man crawls along incrementally and draws near by means of protracted exercises.

[39] In regard to this attachment [to God], it is necessary to ascend through the Way that is Christ ("I am the Way, the Truth ...")¹⁷¹ and to ascend by first of all walking along by means of pleasing meditation on Christ's humanity—[meditating on] the manner of His birth, on how, and how much, [He grew] in wisdom and in gracefulness, etc.,

and on how the apostles-who-heard-Him forsook all things. Secondly, it is necessary to ascend by means of suffering and to find God in and through the man Christ. Thirdly, [it is necessary] to rise up, by way of Christ's humanity, unto spiritual affection and to behold with mental eyes now God Himself "through a glass darkly"¹⁷² and hereby to ascend from the humanity unto a knowledge and love of [Christ's] deity. And at that point a man begins to be, in a certain manner, one spirit with God.¹⁷³ Augustine, in Book VII of the *Confessions*, [says]: "Having now been admonished to return to myself, I entered into my innermost parts, as best I could, with You guiding me. And with some kind of eye of my soul I saw—above that same eye of my soul, above my mind—the unchangeable Light of the Lord, not our ordinary light," etc., "but something else, exceedingly other than these [lights]," etc. "He who knows the truth knows *that* [Light], and he who knows the truth knows eternity. And whoever knows love knows that [Light]. O Eternal Truth and true Love and loving Eternity!"¹⁷⁴ Etc. Let a beast beware that it not touch this Mount.¹⁷⁵ And [let] the exercise of one who loves [God be] such as [to meditate] on the Sacred Scriptures, on the Prophets, on Christ's life, incarnation, suffering, etc.

[40] Since the vices have pitched their tent within man, and since there is only free will, [let a man] arm his will with zeal, seriousness, and kindness. Zeal is strength-of-mind that expels all carelessness and disposes the soul toward doing good deeds attentively, boldly, and gracefully. Seriousness restrains inordinate desire, rendering it bitter, poor, of no account. Kindness excludes wickedness and produces benevolence, long-suffering, and inner gladness.¹⁷⁶

NOTES TO SERMON V

1. Luke 1:13.
2. Luke 1:80.
3. Matthew 11:9-11. Luke 7:26-28. Matthew 14:10. Mark 6:25-28.
4. Luke 3:1-18.
5. Luke 1:14.
6. Matthew 11:11.
7. John 1:6.
8. Luke 1:63.
9. Luke 1:5-19.
10. Mark 1:6.
11. Re Matthew 4:2. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Interlineari, Ordinaria, et Nicolai Lyrani Postilla, eiusdemque Moralitatibus, Burgensis Additionibus, et Thoringi Replicis*, Vol. 5 (Venice, 1588), ff. 15^{ab}D - 15^{va}E.
12. Re Matthew 4:19. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa, op. cit.*, f. 16^{ra}B.
13. Matthew 8:31. Cf. Matthew 12:43.
14. Re Matthew 8:31. *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa, op. cit.*, f. 32^{ra}B.
15. Matthew 14:15 (not Matthew 13).
16. Jude 12 (not James).
17. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de Diversis*. Sermo 33.6 (PL 183:629B).
18. Proverbs 20:1 (not Proverbs 15).
19. Philippians 3:19.
20. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmo*. Psalm 77, re verses 34-35 (PL 36:996).
21. II Corinthians 6:16.
22. Osee 13:6 (Hosea 13:6).
23. Psalms 31:9 (32:9).
24. Genesis 25:34.
25. Lamentations 1:11.
26. Genesis 2:17.
27. Genesis 19:30-35.
28. II Kings 13:27-29 (II Samuel 13:27-29).
29. Genesis 40:20-22.
30. Psalms 77:30-31 (78:30-31).
31. Job 1:19.
32. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Libri* (= *Expositio in Librum B. Job*), II, Chap. 16, division number 27 (PL 75:569A).
33. William Peraldus, *De Vitio Gulae*, Part I (See Codex Cusanus 60; folium 34^{rb}.) I have taken this reference from the critical apparatus of the printed edition of the Latin text of Cusa's sermons. I have not looked at Codex Cusanus 60.
34. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moralium Libri, op. cit.*, Book XXX, Chap. 18, division number 59 (PL 76:556B).
35. St. Jerome, *Epistola* 69.9 ("Ad Oceanum") (PL 22:663).
36. Gregory the Great, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*, Book II, Homilia 40.5 (PL 76:1307A).

37. Exodus 32:6.
38. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 5:7.
39. Ephesians 5:18 (not Philipians 9).
40. Proverbs 20:1.
41. Luke 16:19-21.
42. Proverbs 20:1.
43. Job 28:12-13.
44. St. Jerome, *Epistola* 52.11 (*PL* 22.537).
45. Osee 7:5 (Hosea 7:5).
46. Proverbs 23:31-32 (not Proverbs 22).
47. Isaias (Isaiah) 19:14.
48. I John 2:16.
49. Joel 3:3.
50. The word “soul” (“*anima*”) is feminine in Latin; the word “boy” (“*puer*”) is masculine.
51. Cf. Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Book II, Prosa 4 (*PL* 63:684).
52. Seneca, *Epistolae Morales*, Book VI, Epistola 7, end of margin number 14.
53. Proverbs 14:13 (not Proverbs 13).
54. Eugene of Toledo, Carmen 6 (“*Contra Ebrietatem*”) [pp. 236-237 of Fridericus Vollmer, editor, *Fl. Merobaudis Reliquiae Blossi Aemilii Dracontii Carmina. Eugenii Toletani Episcopi Carmina et Epistulae* = Vol. 14 of *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*].
55. Here (at 11:1 of the Latin text) I am reading “*crebras*” in place of “*crebres*”.
56. Ecclesiasticus 37:33-34.
57. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo de Conversione ad Clericos*, Chap. 8, number 13 (*PL* 182:842A).
58. Ecclesiastes 6:7 (not Ecclesiastes 5).
59. Proverbs 13:25 (not Proverbs 12).
60. Aggeus 1:6 (Haggai 1:6).
61. Cantic of Canticles 5:1 (Song of Solomon 5:1).
62. Psalms 59:5 (60:3).
63. Genesis 49:11.
64. Ephesians 4:22.
65. Note Acts 2:15 and 4:34-35.
66. Matthew 19:27.
67. Luke 7:37-50 (not Luke 8).
68. Augustine, *Sermo* 142.6.6 (*PL* 38:781).
69. Isaias (Isaiah) 55:1.
70. Romans 18: “... are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”
71. Esther 1:8.
72. Psalms 53:8 (54:6).
73. Cf. Psalms 55:12 (56:12).
74. Cantic of Canticles 5:1 (Song of Solomon 5:1).
75. Psalms 35:9 (36:8).
76. Acts 2:15.

77. Acts 6:8.
78. Wisdom 11:25.
79. Here (at 15:18) I am reading “agendum” in place of “augendum”.
80. I Corinthians 12:4 and 8.
81. Apocalypse 3:20 (Revelation 3:20).
82. Romans 8:18. See n. 70 above.
83. Psalms 58:11 (59:10).
84. Psalms 22:6 (23:6).
85. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia - Ilae, 111, 3, corpus.
86. Ephesians 2:3.
87. Luke 1:41.
88. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 1:5.
89. Luke 1:15.
90. Luke 1:80.
91. Here (at 20:3) I am reading “purgati” in place of “purgativi”.
92. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 1 (1145^a18-27).
93. See my exposition of this theme in my article “Die Tugenden in der Sicht des Nikolaus von Kues. Ihre Vielfalt, ihr Verhältnis untereinander und ihr Sein. Erbe und Neuanfang,” *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, 26 (2000), 9-39 [Trier: Paulinus Verlag].
94. The three theological virtues are faith, hope and love. The four cardinal virtues are wisdom, courage, temperance, justice.
95. Luke 1:66.
96. That is, the prerogative of begetting sinlessly someone sinless.
97. Luke 1:76.
98. Luke 7:28: “Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.”
99. Luke 7:26.
100. John 1:29.
101. Malachias 3:1 (Malachi 3:1).
102. Hymn “Ut queant laxis.” See *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, Vol. 50 (edited by Clemens Blume and Guido M. Dreves (Leipzig, 1907), p. 121.
103. Cf. Exodus 25:10-11.
104. Luke 1:80.
105. Exodus 3:1-2.
106. Ecclesiasticus 24:20.
107. Ecclesiasticus 24:27.
108. Canticle of Canticles 1:2 (Song of Solomon 1:2).
109. Apocalypse 14:2 (Revelation 14:2).
110. I John 3:2.
111. John 17:3.
112. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 19 (*PL* 41:647-648).
113. Psalms 83:6-7 (84:5-6).
114. Matthew 11:12.
115. Matthew 3:2.
116. Matthew 3:10.
117. Matthew 3:12.

118. Psalms 45:11 (46:10).
119. Matthew 6:19-20.
120. Galatians 6:8.
121. II Corinthians 4:18.
122. I John 2:15-16.
123. Matthew 16:26.
124. Psalms 61:11 (62:10).
125. Psalms 75:6 (76:5).
126. Abdias 4 (Obadiah 4).
127. I Timothy 6:9-10).
128. Ecclesiastes 11:7-8.
129. Proverbs 6:6-8.
130. I Corinthians 8:1.
131. Psalms 83:6-7 (cf. 84:5-6).
132. Exodus 25:40.
133. Romans 6:13.
134. Isaias (Isaiah) 46:8.
135. Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, II, 18, 43.
136. I Corinthians 13:11.
137. I Corinthians 13:11.
138. Job 38:3 (not Job 36).
139. I Corinthians 11:3. Ephesians 5:22-24.
140. I Corinthians 14:34.
141. I Timothy 5:13.
142. I Peter 3:3.
143. Augustine, *Confessiones*, IX, 9, 19 (*PL* 32:772).
144. See Ecclesiasticus 26:21 in the context of the entire Chapter 26.
145. John Chrysostom, *In Mattheum Homiliae*. Homilia 30.6 (*PG* 57:370).
146. William of Auvergne (William of Paris), *De Universo*, Part 3 of Part 2, Chapter 25 [Vol. I of *Guilielmi Alverni Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1674. Reprinted by Minerva Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1963), p. 1072^bG].
147. Seneca, *Epistolae Morales*, Book III, Epistola 5, margin number 3.
148. Ecclesiasticus 17:31.
149. Romans 2:11.
150. Seneca, *Epistolae Morales*, Book V, Epistola 3, margin number 3.
151. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*. Book V, Chapter 23 (not Chapter 9).
152. I Peter 2:16.
153. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 4:22.
154. Luke 16:8.
155. Proverbs 11:22.
156. Ambrose, *Exhortatio Virginitatis*, I.12.83 (*PL* 16:376C).
157. “... the mammon of iniquity”: Luke 16:9.
158. I Timothy 6:9.
159. Jerome, *Commentaria in Abdiam Prophetam*, Book II, re Abdias 3:7 (Obadiah 3:7) [*PL* 25:1316C].
160. Psalms 61:11 (62:10).
161. Matthew 19:24.

162. Seneca, *Epistolae Morales*, Book II, Epistola 2, margin number 5.
163. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae XL in Ezechielem*. Homilia 6.16 (*PL* 76:1007C).
164. Ecclesiastes 9:1.
165. Ecclesiasticus 41:1.
166. Isaias (Isaiah) 66:24. Mark 9:43.
167. Hebrews 2:8. Psalms 8:8 (8:6).
168. Philippians 2:7.
169. Psalms 67:16 (cf. 68:15).
170. John 10:9.
171. John 14:6.
172. I Corinthians 13:12.
173. Nicholas picks up, from the tradition of mystical theology, the theme of a believer's "transformation into God." See pp. 7-9 of my *Hugh of Balma on Mystical Theology: A Translation and an Overview of His De Theologia Mystica* (Minneapolis: Banning, 2002).
174. Augustine, *Confessiones*, VII, 10, 16 (*PL* 32:742).
175. Exodus 19:12.
176. I here omit the repetitive materials entitled "Memoriale" ("Reminder") and "Adnotationes" ("Notes"). These are not part of the sermon but are jottings meant to serve as a guide in the preparation or the delivery of the sermon.