

Sermon XXI: Intranses Domum

(“[The Magi], entering into the house, ...”)¹

[January 6, 1439 or 1440; feast-day of the Lord’s epiphany;
preached in Koblenz]

[1] “Entering into the house, [the Magi] found the child with Mary His mother. And falling down, they adored Him” (Matthew 2).²

First of all, [I will speak of] the fact that according to the Biblical account the Magi entered into the house, etc.—[entered] as also elsewhere—with their appurtenances. Now, “house” stands for “Church Militant” (I Timothy: “... [in order that] you may know how you ought to behave in the house of the Lord ...”³ And Proverbs 9: “Wisdom has built for itself a house ...”⁴). Moreover, [“house” stands] for “Church Triumphant” (John 14: “In my Father’s house are many mansions.”⁵ And in the Psalm: “Blessed are they who dwell in Your house, O Lord.”⁶ And elsewhere: “I have loved the beauty of Your house.”⁷). Furthermore, “house” stands for “church made with hands” (“My house shall be called a house of prayer.”⁸ And Isaias 2: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob.”⁹). And so, [because “house” stands for “Church”], something must be said—in *the second place*—about the Church in accordance with this [meaning]. For today is the Church’s feast-day ..., etc.

Moreover, “house” is also [indicative of] a faithful soul. (In the Psalm: “Holiness befits Your house.”¹⁰ And Hebrews 3: “The Son is within His own house; we are this house.”¹¹) Therefore, *in the third place*, something must be said very briefly (1) about this house and (2) about how it is that we ought to enter into our own house in order to find the child with Mary His mother and (3) about the fact that, falling down, we ought to adore [Him].

PART TWO

*The Church as the Union of Rational Spirits with Christ, their Head;
and the Way in Which One Enters into the Church*

(a) *In the Church Militant, whose goal is the Church Triumphant,
one is to make his pilgrimage in a oneness of obedience.*

[2] Those who enter into the Church find the child, etc. The Church is

entered by faith. For the Church is the congregation of believers. It is true that the Church Militant is the congregation-of-believers in which, through faith, there is a union of Christians with their Head.¹² For *there* [i.e., in that Church] truth is apprehended only in a mirror and in a dark manner.¹³ But in the [Church] Triumphant, where Christ is seen face to Face,¹⁴ etc., faith ceases.¹⁵ Therefore, the Church [Triumphant] is the union of rational spirits with their Head, Christ.

[3] And so, we must take note of the fact that every creature is required purely and simply to believe and to obey our God (as being Infallible Wisdom), without any presumptiveness on its part. And through obedience every creature clings harmoniously to its Teacher and obtains its goal. For God created all things for His own sake.¹⁶ And Eternal Wisdom Himself made of rational creatures a house for Himself—[a house] in which He delights to dwell centrally. Therefore, rational creatures can, through clinging to Creative Wisdom, taste of the Refection—of the Bread and the Wine—of that Super-celestial Wisdom.¹⁷ Now, this tasting occurs through the unity of obedience and love, by means of which unity rational spirits are one with Christ; and through Christ they are one with God the Father, even as the Son is one with the Father. And when this union is everlasting and unailing in Heaven, it is called the Church Triumphant. When the union is still on earth and on its pilgrimage, when it is beset by many storms and by the dangers of separation, it is called the Church Militant. If it is present in an intermediate state, it is called the Church Dormant. Hence, Ambrose in his seventeenth Letter, to Irenaeus, shows elegantly how great is the bond that all spirits have with Christ in Heaven.¹⁸

[4] But the Church Triumphant, which has already passed beyond the boundaries of this present pilgrimage, is first united with the Eternal Word in the company of the obedient angels after the presumptuous, apostate, and disobedient [angels], who willed to be like the Most High, have been separated off. There is a wondrous order among the obedient angels—[an order] that resembles the order in the Trinity. Thus, there are three orders [of angels] after the fashion of the Trinity; and in each order there are three choirs; and the highest [choir] *enlightens* after the fashion of the Father, etc. Hence, this Godlike, [highest] congregation [of angels] is very intrinsically united to God in accordance with its gradations. And just as other rational spirits—[viz.,] human spirits—have joined these blessed [angelic] spirits in place of the evil angels who were cast out [of Heaven],¹⁹ so too the Church of the wicked exists in an opposite way [from the

Church Triumphant]. [It exists] without order, with a disorderedness of demons, who have Lucifer as their head. Moreover, presumptuous and unbelieving and rebellious human beings have descended unto these demons [and] will remain [with them] forever.

But in between [the Church Triumphant and the Church of the wicked] there are two others: viz., the Church Militant and the Church Dormant, which have not yet arrived at their goal. The Church Dormant is exalted above the Church Militant because of the certainty of its reward. Nonetheless, the Church Dormant, being a Church [still] on this pilgrim's way, is still united with the Church Militant, with the result that it is aided by the Church Militant's intercessory works. However, the Church Dormant is closer to the Church Triumphant [than is the Church Militant] because of the certainty of its victory over eternal death. Now, the Church Militant is gathered from men some of whom, by means of death, come immediately unto the Church Triumphant, others of whom come to the Church of the wicked (who are lost), and still others of whom come to the Church of the dormant (who are going to be purified).

[5] To this Church Militant, which is called the Immaculate Bride, there is promised passage to the Eternal Kingdom, passage to union with the triumphant—if through obedience [this Church] perfects its pilgrim pathway (as Paul attests to the Ephesians).²⁰ And this Church is our mother, whom, from the beginning, the Word of God and Wisdom of the Father espoused to Himself. In Paradise this [espousal] was symbolized when, through Eve's having been created from Adam's side, marriage was instituted, accompanied by the command to obey.²¹ For (as says Jerome)²² just as Eve [was taken] from the rib of Adam, so the Church (symbolized by Eve) [was derived] from Christ; [and] Christ espoused the Church unto Himself, as [Eve was espoused] to Adam. Etc. But since through presumption man, too, elevated himself contrary to obedience, the Second Adam,²³ viz., Christ, came and by His own blood, etc., washed away the stain contracted by disobedience—[washed it away] in order that man would merit to cross over to Heavenly associations [and] to the Church Triumphant, the Immaculate Bride.²⁴

(b) *That the Church Militant is ordered hierarchically, after the fashion of the Church Triumphant.*

[6] Now, Dionysius in his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* discusses how it is that this Church Militant is wondrously ordered after the fashion of the

angelic [hierarchy].²⁵ For the ordering is found to be hierarchical in such a way [as in the body] ([See] Leo IX's [letter] against the presumptions of Michael, etc.²⁶ [And] consult your book *On Ecclesiastical Concordance*.²⁷) [Note with Dionysius] that just as with respect to the human body, so also with respect to the [Church Militant], [there is the triad] spirit, soul, and body. [And] just as with respect to the Heavenly [Hierarchy there is the triad] God, angels, and men, [so with respect to the Church Militant] there is [the triad] (1) enlightening and purifying *sacraments*, (2) pastoral *priesthood* that is purified and purifying, (3) faithful *people* who are purified. Likewise, [note] that there is a wondrous hierarchy with respect to the sacraments all the way up to the sacrament of sacraments. For just as in Heaven God communicates Himself Face to face, so here below [He communicates Himself] under the forms [of bread and wine]. And at this point [note] that just as the sacraments symbolize the Church Triumphant, so too each of them bears the image of the Trinity, because (1) there is only the sacrament, (2) there is only the reality, and (3) there is the [unity of] the reality and the sacrament.

[7] The ordering of the priesthood—i.e., its ordering to higher divine things—is symbolized by the sacrament. And in this priesthood there is a hierarchy that is structured in an orderly way from the highest episcopate down to the layman. For some [priests] are of a higher order, some of a lower order, some of an intermediate order; and in each order there are three choirs, even as in the case of angels. And the sacraments are as spirit; the priesthood, as soul; the people, as the body. Gregory Nazianzenus, in his *Apologetics*, in the beginning-section, [writes]: in the body of the Church the priesthood has the role that the soul has in the human body.²⁸ And so, it befits priests to enlighten, enliven, govern. [It is befitting that they] enlighten, as befits reason, etc.; for [they are] the light of the world and the salt of the earth.²⁹ (Cyprian [said this latter in his work] *On the Gambler*.)³⁰ Moreover, in the first choir, of pontifs, there is a hierarchical order; for within the one episcopacy diffused throughout the world there is—because of the oneness—a difference that accompanies the concordance of the many in the one (as Cyprian [writes] to Novatianus³¹ [and as] Jerome [writes] against Jovinianus³²). And note that, necessarily, we come to a first and greatest pontif, who has on earth the power of being supreme hierarch—as the supreme minister, viz., the highest angel, [is the supreme hierarch] in Heaven. But the entire priesthood serves as a legation for Christ.³³ For Christ said: “Just as the Living Father has

sent me, so send I you”³⁴—even as angels are messengers of God, etc.

[8] And, hence, the priesthood is considered in a twofold way: either with respect to the ordering that it has to the governance of the Church (insofar as the governance is a necessary governance) or with respect to union (because the soul³⁵ rules over and unifies the body). As concerns the first way, there are hierarchical orderings all the way up to the pontificate; as concerns the second way, [these orderings] are for the purpose of unity, so that there may be oneness. In the Church there is a regulated administrative power, which is the power of jurisdiction. And this priestly power has a single see, just as it has a single episcopacy, etc. And in that see resides a hierarchical ordering as regards those who preside in and from it. (And here let us note the saying of Optatus Milevitanus³⁶ about the angel who is in charge of the see, etc.) Moreover, the see of Peter holds the promise of truth, as say St. Augustine, Alipius, and Fortunatus (writing to Generosus), etc.³⁷

[9] And at this point we must take note of the fact (1) that there is no power of binding and of loosening³⁸ except for one who is attached to the Apostolic See [and] (2) that one must not be reckoned as being in the Church if he does not accept the authority of the Apostolic See. Likewise, [we must note] (1) that all bishops are like the soul of the people because of the people’s common consent; (2) that the parishioners are [representatively] in the priest; and (3) the priests are in the bishop; and (4) the bishops, in the pope; and (5) through the pope, the bishops are in Peter; and (6) through Peter (who is the rock, and the foundation, of the Church),³⁹ they are in Christ, who is the [true] Rock,⁴⁰ etc. Moreover, [let us note] that, subsequently, there is a hierarchy among believers—from the supreme emperor down to the farmers, and from the threefold order of kings [down to] ..., etc., and from the threefold governance (which is monarchical, aristocratic, and political (and also economic) [down to] ..., and from the [three] opposing [forms of government] ..., etc. Likewise, [let us note] the hierarchy within each person—[that of] spirit, soul, and body. Etc. [All of] the foregoing constitutes a diverse disposing within a wondrous unity. [See] Decretal 89 (“Ad hoc ...”)⁴¹

(c) *We must enter the Church by faith.*

[10] And [let us note] that from righteous Abel down to the last [man] there is a single Church and that on this [commemorative] day the Church was cleansed in the Jordan and that on this day the nations entered into the Church. [We must also note] (1) that the

Church is Noah's ship, or ark, outside of which there was no salvation, and (2) that [this ship] undergoes tossings-about but undergoes no sinkings, because the faith of Peter will not perish. And this [Church, or ship] is the house of the Lord that has been built steadfastly, that is well established on a Firm Rock, and entrance into which is required for salvation. [11] But one enters into it by faith. For it is necessary that each one [who enters] be cleansed through the sacrament of baptism or through the reality of the sacrament, when necessity removes [the availability of] the sacrament. And so, let [each one] through faith cling to Christ, who was baptized on this day.⁴²

It is necessary that one be marked with the sign of that Supreme Captain, in order to be in His army. His army is the Church. One must be faithful and triumphant and not a traitor—in order, in triumphing, to have a seat with the Captain, our God and our Lamb. And in this regard one must be obedient, etc. Furthermore, [we must note] that the betrothal is that of the Head [viz., Christ] to the soul of each [of us]. [The situation is] as if the king of the Germans were to betroth the queen of France on the condition that she would subjugate the entire kingdom of France to herself and then would choose to bring him over and to have him united to her. And, in like manner, the soul is obliged [to undertake] that which is difficult but not impossible. And if the soul does so through subjecting its body to itself and by submitting itself to its own spirit, then it finds the child with Mary, etc.⁴³

[12] (Keep in mind to mention,⁴⁴ among other things, (1) that God has imparted governing power to rational spirits and (2) that the actions of the righteous, as also those of the wicked, have from the Holy Spirit their efficacy, as concerns the recipient [of the actions]. [Then too, mention something] about the Church's laws and regulations, etc.)

PART THREE

On Entering into Oneself; and on Faith, Which Is To Be Maintained in Humility

[13] Thirdly, we must examine how it is that someone ought to enter into himself in order to find the child, who is with Mary. Etc. Straightway it must be said that the believing soul is betrothed by the Head of the Church, [viz., Christ], on condition that it remain faithful and subject its body to itself and reduce its body to submission. Otherwise, it cannot enter into the tabernacle of the Lord and cannot worship ..., etc. By the word "faithfulness" [on the part of the soul] we

ought to understand that the soul not be adulterous and not seek out lovers other than its Bridegroom. Now, the soul seeks out other lovers when it directs itself, by choice, to creatures; and the more it clings to creatures, the less it clings to God. But this attachment to creatures can be of two kinds: On the one hand, [the attachment occurs] because [the soul] seeks something divine in the creation, and it embraces as divine *that something* in the creation; and [this embracing] is idolatry. On the other hand, [the soul] seeks in the creation some remedy as coming from the creation. In this latter case either (1) there is an intermediate cause that effects this [result] (as happens with regard to things medicinal and with regard to astrological influences that are certain), and so the soul does not hereby stray away from God, or (2) there is no intermediate cause (as happens with regard to physical amulets), and, in this event, the Christian ought to refrain from these [practices], because there is no intermediate cause and the Devil often insinuates himself into them. Hence, Deuteronomy 13 [speaks] about this matter.⁴⁵

[14] Sometimes someone, out of pure wickedness, does not maintain his faith in God. For example, [such is the case with regard to] a blasphemer, who ascribes to God that which does not besuit God or who denies to besuit God that which does besuit Him or who usurps that which is God's [prerogative]. And sometimes [wickedness] imposes itself on the heart because of the Devil's instigation or, frequently, out of fear of God's displeasure—even as in a dark place fear brings up in the heart frightful things. Sometimes the Devil speaks forth blasphemy through a man, but that blasphemy does not contaminate [the man]. Hence, such thoughts ought to be despised, and such works ought to be case aside. Etc.

Blasphemy of mouth [occurs] when someone who wants to strike back at God utters an abusive word against God and names bodily parts that ought not to be named. And [blasphemy] is a very great sin because of the very evil intent [that is present] when one pierces God with his tongue, etc. Neither Jews nor heretics have such an intent, inasmuch as they believe that they act correctly [in asserting what they do], etc. [Blasphemy] is a very great [sin] because man is little inclined to this sin [and because] it is against Him who is Best, Most Noble, etc. And so, Thomas⁴⁶ maintains ... that it is a sin greater than murder since it is contrary to a precept of the First Tablet [of the Mosaic Law].⁴⁷ Because there is the penalty of death for cursing one's father and mother (Matthew 15),⁴⁸ a blasphemer is worthy of physical and spiritual death.⁴⁹ [In blasphemy] God is despised. [See] Vergentis' *On*

Heretics:⁵⁰ there is the death-penalty for cursing the king⁵¹ Similarly, there is this same punishment for cursing the saints ...,⁵² because of their union with God.

[Blasphemy] is a very great ingratitude. It distinguishes the sons of the Devil from the sons of God. It is the language of Hell. Those who hear it should plug up their ears, etc. And the [blasphemer] is thereby known to be a very evil man, whom all creatures curse. He is punished physically, spiritually, and eternally for his blasphemy (*On the Foul-Mouthed*, Chapter 2).⁵³ [Here are] examples of the punishment: (1) in the case of the child of whom St. Gregory [speaks];⁵⁴ (2) the case of the soldier, etc.;⁵⁵ (3) the one who blasphemed against the eye of Blessed Mary, etc.;⁵⁶ (see elsewhere); (4) the case of the arrow, etc.;⁵⁷ (5) in regard to the district in Milan, etc.; (6) as concerns the man hung at Rome; (7) as concerns the denarius-coin of Count Hugo, etc.⁵⁸ Accordingly, even though such [blasphemers] may seem to be in the Church, nonetheless because they are unbelievers they are not members of Christ but of the Devil. And so, although all individuals who are in mortal sin do not maintain faith in God, nevertheless these [blasphemers] are especially unbelieving in God and offend against Him more [than do others].

[15] Therefore, one who desires to be in the Church must enter into himself and keep to the faith amid humility. Secondly, he must subject his body to his soul, so that the senses may be subordinate to reason. And he does this [subjecting] if he enters into himself by way of self-knowledge. For when transgressors withdraw [from their transgressions], then they return to the heart.⁵⁹ And so, there is no better or healthier art than [the art of] knowing oneself. For when a man sets himself before himself and looks at his own baseness, he recognizes⁶⁰ his miseries and the torments of his sin, and, consequently, he grieves. He observes the emptiness of present things, with the result that he despises them. He recognizes the benefits of God, with the result that he is grateful. He recognizes God's mercy, so that he has hope; he recognizes God's justice, so that he fears; he recognizes the uncertainty of his end, so that he worries and shows himself to be always prepared. And, hence, he who at first was alienated from God and from himself and said, "My heart has forsaken me,"⁶¹ now [says], having returned by way of entering into himself: "Your servant has found his heart."⁶²

[16] Now, we find that we are despoiled of our acquired possessions, are wounded in regard to our natural possessions, are blinded by reason, are bent downwards by our will, are besmirched by our mem-

ory. And when we are more deeply aware of these [conditions], we shall say: “I have sinned above the number of the sands [of the seashore] ...,” etc. And then there will occur that of which Wisdom 8 [speaks]:⁶³ “Entering into my house, I will repose with that Wisdom,” viz., with our Jesus. (For He is Light itself. He dwells in us by means of our faith.) And thereupon we shall hear what he speaks within us, etc. Isaias 30: “In silence and in hope shall be [your] courage.”⁶⁴ For then, [i.e., in silence], there is no multitude of words, etc. One’s becoming humble follows, etc. And after a man has thus entered into himself, he finds the child, together with Mary, in the temple (i.e., in the Church), in the desert (i.e., in the place of penance), in the house of a rightly ordered conscience, in the manger (i.e., in humility).

[17] He who enters within himself truly finds God, as is said [in] *The Spirit and the Soul*, Chapter 14.⁶⁵ He draws near to life when through love he is fastened to Him who has been thus found within himself. Hence, he must pass beyond everything perceptible, everything imaginable, everything intelligible, and must return centrally to himself, in order to arrive—by means of desire alone⁶⁶—at the Supremely Desirable One. And when in this way you find the child, you shall draw near to Him [and] you shall worship Him—[you shall do so] as a servant who approaches his lord, as a needy mendicant, as someone weak. [You shall do so] with humble prostration of mind, with bare affection, with a magnitude of desire, and with groaning of heart, in simplicity and sincerity. And with confidence you expose all your possessions to Him, and you offer them and commit them to Him. And you extend yourself unto Him. (“Thy will be done ...,” etc.)⁶⁷ Thereupon you obtain [Him who is] your Ultimate Desire. However, by means of this foretasting of the future life you understand how pleasant are Mary’s and her Son’s kisses even of you, etc., as you know from other contexts, etc.

FIRST MEMORANDUM

[18] “Entering, ...,” etc. Having expounded Christ’s ancestry in the order of eternity and in the order of time, and having mentioned both the appearance of the shepherds on the day of Christ’s birth and the manifestation of the reason for Christ’s coming (for on the eighth day [He was called] Jesus):⁶⁸ I must now consider the manifestation made to the Gentiles, so that we who have been called from out of the nations unto a union [with Him] may now enter in with gifts for the child, and so that we may worship Him. And because the Church sings of its

being joined on this day to its Heavenly Bridegroom, today is a feast-day of the Church, which today took its origin by way of the three Gentiles [viz., the three Magi] who on this day were united to Christ. And on this day the Church was cleansed and joined in matrimony and was transformed from a watery state into [a state of] acceptable wine, etc.⁶⁹

[19] First, [I will speak of] the fact that Christ's appearance among the Gentiles was very hidden. Nevertheless, these Gentiles spoke, on the basis of rational considerations, of a forthcoming Redeemer. In ignorance and with difficulty of apprehending and with impeded desire, etc., they were expecting a Redeemer. In this regard, Messalha, Albumasar, the Sibyls, the Platonists, etc., foretold of many things. Likewise, [I will speak of] the fact that Adam and Eve after their penance, received consolation. Abel, Seth, Henoch, Mathusala, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, etc.—down to [the Apostle] John—revealed [Him]. Then He came to the shepherds; He manifested Himself more greatly to the world; and, at length, He manifested Himself to all.

[And I will speak] of the ascent unto Christ and of the descent unto the Antichrist and of the words of St. Augustine to Hesychius regarding the Last Judgment, etc.⁷⁰ And [I will speak of] the fact that the Church sings the following [words] on this present feast-day: “You have made all nations whatsoever . . .,” etc. And [I will speak of] the Antichrist's approaching, [as evidenced] from two signs.

Secondly, [I will speak] specifically of Christ's manifestation nowadays.

SECOND MEMORANDUM

[20] On this day the Church celebrates the feast of the appearance of its Head (viz., Christ) and of itself. The appearance of the Head of the Church is, in particular, [the appearance] of our Christ. First, [I will speak of] the fact that the appearance of Christ in the natural light possessed by the Ancients was very obscure; in the light of grace [it was still] quite far [from apprehension]; but [it became] clearer and clearer down to [the time of] John the Baptist. Moreover, [I will preach of] the fact that He was to become manifested to the whole world, so that all nations might worship Him, etc. Furthermore, [I will speak of] the fact that the Church of those believing that He *would be crucified*—and of those believing that He now *has been crucified*—is *one Church*. And [I will mention] the fact that holy men and successively holier

men were present in the Church down to [the day of] Christ; and from [the time of] Christ down to the Antichrist men become progressively worse, according to Augustine.⁷¹ And [I will mention] that (as Augustine says) through the role of the Church and through the prophecies we are taught on this day that the entire world ought to receive the Savior before the Antichrist comes, etc.⁷²

[21] Secondly, [I will say something] about the record of [Christ's] appearance nowadays—an appearance that has been more fully made. Thirdly, something must be said about the Church's having been washed in the Jordan [River] and about the fact that he who is to be in the Church must be cleansed. Here [something must be said] about the mysteries of baptism and about the fact that he who wants to remain in the Church must keep faith with the things promised at the time of his baptism and that blasphemers and diviners do not remain in the Church and do not keep to the faithfulness that they pledged. Fourthly, it must be said that he who is to pass from the Church Militant to the [Church] Triumphant must be a pilgrim and must fulfill the condition of subduing his sensuality, so that he may be made a spiritual whole. And this [transformation] is accomplished through obedience and humility, which are acquired through a man's entering into a knowledge of himself.

NOTES TO *SERMON XXI*

1. Matthew 2:11. See n. 2 of Sermon XVIII.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. I Timothy 3:15.
4. Proverbs 9:1 (not Wisdom 9, as Nicholas writes and as I have corrected, as do also the editors of the Latin text.
5. John 14:2.
6. Psalms 83:5 (84:4).
7. Psalms 25:8 (26:8).
8. Isaias (Isaiah) 56:7. Mark 11:17.
9. Isaias (Isaiah) 2:3.
10. Psalms 92:5 (93:5).
11. Hebrew 3:6.
12. Ephesians 5:23.
13. I Corinthians 13:12.
14. *Loc. cit.*
15. Because the believer now sees “face to Face,” he no longer needs faith in the sense of “the evidence of things that appear not” (Hebrews 11:1). However, the believer will still need faith in the sense of trust (*fiducia*); for he must continue to trust in God’s love, truthfulness, constancy, goodness, etc.
16. Proverbs 16:4.
17. Proverbs 9:5.
18. Ambrose, *Epistola* 76, 11-12 (“Ad Irenaeum”), (*PL* 16:1317). The Church Dormant is the congregation of believers who are undergoing purification in Purgatory. See Sermon X (27).
19. Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, I, 16-18.
20. Ephesians 4:17 - 6:20.
21. Ephesians 5:24.
22. Jerome, *Epistola* 123 (“Ad Geruchiam”), section 12 (*PL* 22:1053).
23. I Corinthians 15:45.
24. In this section, marked by margin number 5, Nicholas refers to both the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant as “the Immaculate Bride.”
25. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, I (*Dionysiaca*, II, 1079-1085 *et passim*).
26. Pope Leo IX, *Epistola ad Michaellem Constantinopolitanum Patriarcham*, 37 (*PL* 143:767B - 768A). Not Gregory IX, as Nicholas writes and as I have corrected, as do also the editors of the Latin text.
27. Here Nicholas makes a note to himself with regard to his *De Concordantia Catholica*, II, 17 (145-148). The title is not *De Concordantia Ecclesiastica*, as he writes.
28. Gregory Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 2: *Apologetica*, section III (*PG* 35:409/410).
29. Matthew 5:13-14.
30. Pseudo-Cyprian, *De Aleatoribus*, section II (*PL* 4:903).
31. Cyprian, *Epistola* 10 (“Ad Antonianum”), section XXIV (*PL* 3:815).
32. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, I, 26 (*PL* 23:258C).

33. I Corinthians 5:20.
34. John 6:58 and 20:21.
35. The priesthood, Nicholas has said, is like the soul.
36. Optatus Milevitanus, *De Schismate Donistarum*, II, 2 (PL 11:946).
37. Augustine *et al.*, *Epistola* 53 (“Ad Generosum”), Chap. 1 (PL 33:195-196).
38. Matthew 16:19.
39. Matthew 16:18.
40. I Corinthians 10:4.
41. Gratian, *Decretales*, 89:7 (“Ad hoc ...”). See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, Vol. I, col. 313 (Leipzig, 1879). The reference is not to Decretal 83, as Nicholas writes and as I have corrected, as do also the editors of the Latin text).
42. See, above, n. 2 of Sermon XVIII.
43. Matthew 2:11.
44. Nicholas makes this note to himself, not to his reader.
45. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (not Exodus 13, as Nicholas writes and as I have corrected, as do also the editors of the Latin text).
46. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 13, 3, *ad* 1.
47. See, above, n. 58 of Sermon XVIII.
48. Exodus 21:17. Matthew 15:4 (not Matthew 5, as Nicholas writes and as I have corrected).
49. Physical death occurs when the soul forsakes the body; spiritual death occurs when God forsakes the soul.
50. Gregory IX, *Decretales*, V, 7 (“De Haereticis”), 10. See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, Vol. II, col. 783 (Leipzig, 1881).
51. Here Nicholas adds: “Codex: Ne quis imperatori maledicat, leg. 1.” See *Codex Iustinianus*, Book IX, 7. See also the reference in n. 50 below.
52. Here Nicholas adds: “In Authentica: ‘Ne luxurietur contra’ ”. See Novella 77 in *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, Vol. III (*Novellae*), pp. 381-383 (Berlin, 1904). See also the work referenced in n. 55 below: in particular, see section 392 (first sentence), p. 343.
53. Gregory IX, *Decretales*, V, 26. See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, Vol. II, cols. 826-827 (Leipzig, 1881).
54. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, IV, 18 (PL 77:349).
55. Stephanus de Barbone, *De Diversis Materiis Praedicabilibus*, Part 4: *De Dono Fortitudinis*, Title 9. (In particular, see sections 387-388, p. 342 (“De peccato blasphemie”) in *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues* de Étienne de Bourbon (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1877).
56. Cf., *ibid.*, section 392, p. 343.
57. *Ibid.*, section 386, p. 341.
58. Nicholas mentions these examples in Sermon XVIII (13).
59. Cf. Isaias (Isaiah) 46:8.
60. Here (at 15:11) I am construing “cognoscat” as if it were “cognoscit”.
61. Psalms 39:13 (40:12).
62. II Kings (II Samuel) 7:27.
63. Wisdom 8:16.
64. Isaias (Isaiah) 30:15.
65. Augustine, *De Spiritu et Anima*, 14 (PL 40:791). Not Chap. 20, as Nicholas

writes and as I have corrected, as do also the editors of the Latin text.

66. "... by desire alone": This phrase speaks to a theme explored by Hugh of Balma (and others) in his *De Theologia Mystica*. See J. Hopkins, *Hugh of Balma on Mystical Theology: A Translation and an Overview of His De Theologia Mystica* (Minneapolis: Banning, 2002).

67. Luke 1:38.

68. Matthew 1:21. The name "Jesus" means *Savior*; and this meaning discloses God's purpose in sending Jesus.

69. John 2:1-11.

70. Augustine, *Epistola* 199 ("De Fine Saeculi"), 8, 22-24 (*PL* 33:1:912-914).

71. *Loc. cit.*

72. Augustine, *Epistola* 53 ("Ad Generosum"), 1, 1 (*PL* 33-2:196).

Sermon XXII: Dies Sanctificatus
(The Sanctified Day)
[December 25, 1440; preached in Augsburg]

[1] The sanctified day has dawned upon us. Come, ye nations: worship the Lord.

The Holy Mother Church, the Bride-without-blemish of the Supreme King, breaks forth—amid the jubilation of the supreme harmony-of-delight of today’s festival—in this song of gladness: “*Dies sanctificatus ...*,” etc.¹

[2] The captive daughter of Sion sat for many years in darkness and in the shadow of the deprivation of an intellectual life. But she foresaw many stellar rays in the Prophets, who envisioned a certain day and who foretold by means of the life and the word of their spirit that it would be a great day. [And] she was very frequently consoled—this daughter of Sion, i.e., [this] soul most desirous of a viewing of the most longed-for intellectual life. And many days passed; but certain traces of them were corruptible; yet, these traces became progressively more visible in brighter light.

[3] But today the substantial day, sanctified in and of itself—which [day] is holiness itself, incomparable to all other [days] both past and future—has dawned. It has dawned, I say, without any darkness but while repelling all darkness far away—[has dawned] not as some one of the stars but as the true Sun itself in its excellent primordial brightness. Indeed, [it has dawned] not *in* brightness but as Infinite Light—invisible to every physical eye—in which there is no darkness. It has dawned upon us, in order that the way unto the goal would be more manifest to us—so that every deceit might be put to flight by Truth, so that death might be all the more dead by means of Life, and so that these [results might be accomplished] very simply without multiple causes, because [He who is] the Light is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.²

[4] Therefore, because this Bridegroom—who has placed His tabernacle in the sun³ and who has long been most eagerly awaited by us with all desire—has today shined upon His bride, the daughter of Sion: we must arise and not sleep but must come to meet Him with an approach of supreme affection and with the inner movement of a bride accompanied by sweet-smelling spices, which are the very devout

prayers of the saints. Come, then, you who in Christ have been prepared for this course, you who have hitherto assembled together for this purpose; [come] and let us worship Him, in order that in this way He may be received in our devotion. And in order that He may descend unto us as a dewdrop of consolation—[descend] by working in me by means of eloquence-of-word about Him and through Him: let us with confidence approach the parturient Mother of this Light, so that by her prayer she may render her Son well-disposed toward us—[let us approach] with a pious mind and say: “Hail, Mary . . .,” etc.

[5] The sanctified day . . ., etc. There are three births of the Son of God. Today we celebrate the feast-day of these [three]: (1) There is the eternal birth, which is hidden in the depth of the understanding [and] which the midnight mass commemorates. This [birth] is touched upon by the words: “the sanctified day.” (2) There is the birth by which the Word was made flesh. The mass at dawn befigures this birth. It is touched upon by the words “has dawned upon us.” (3) There is the third birth, by which in the fullness of His light we are born in Him as sons of God by means of our devout approach unto Him. The high mass shows this birth to be for our salvation. This birth is touched upon by means of the thematic words “Come, let us worship [Him].”

[6] The foregoing are the sections that I have decided to touch upon briefly. The first section will be about the Son’s eternal begottenness [and will be] for those who are more learned, so that the Gospel of John will be explained a bit in this section.⁴ The second section will be for commoners [and will be] about the temporal birth, so that the part of [John’s] Gospel that speaks of this will be noted.⁵ The third section will be for contemplatives, so that this part of [John’s] Gospel will be noted as last: [viz.,] “He gave [them] power . . .,” etc.⁶

PART ONE

The Eternal Birth of the Son of God

(a) *God as Absolute Oneness enfolds even opposites and transcends all our names.*

[7] As concerns the first section, it must be known that God is not apprehended by reason or by imagination or by the senses; for He surpasses all the senses and all power of reason. Rather, He is apprehended by faith. For unless you believe, you will not understand, says Isaias.⁷ Therefore, we believe that God is one and three, although neither His oneness nor His trinity is understandable. [8] All nations

admit that the God of them all is the Best, from whom all things derive; and even the heathen have not denied this. For since it is not the case that anything can bring itself into existence (because it would exist before it existed—something that reason does not admit), we must come [in our inferences] to a single first, eternal [Beginning]. [9] Now, this First Beginning we call God, who cannot be understood not to exist.⁸ For God is Truth, which cannot be understood not to be; for truth is the object of the intellect. For whether God is understood to exist or understood not to exist:⁹ since either alternative is affirmed as *true*, God [who is Truth] is affirmed to exist. Consequently, God—who by means of either of the contradictory alternatives is seen, necessarily, to exist—is beyond all opposition and contradictoriness.

[10] Therefore, when you wish to ascend unto investigating God's quiddity, you see that, of necessity, you will fail. For in order to investigate that Infinity—which as most simple Eternity and maximal Cause surpasses and precedes all opposition—you are not able to assist yourself by means either of names or of concepts [*rationes*]. For God is not anything that has an opposite; instead, He is infinitely above all opposites—as is [expressed by] the teaching of the true theologians. Therefore, when you consider that God is the Supreme Good, then by investigating by way of reason you assert that He is Truth, Justice, Graciousness; and you remove from Him the opposites of these. And when you reflect in this way, there occurs to you a certain multiplicity and otherness, because Justice in its own essence [*ratio*] is not Truth, and Truth is not Graciousness, etc. Hence, you see that these names (“Truth,” “Justice,” “Light” . . . , [etc.]) do not befit God, since they indicate otherness, multiplicity, oppositeness, and [finite essence, or] form—none of which can befit the First, altogether Simple, Infinite [Reality]. Rather, you speak more truly [when you say it] to be the case that these names do not *positively* befit God, who cannot be *this* thing and not *another* thing, since He is all in all.¹⁰ Hence, you discern that the theology of negation is the truer theology—that God, who is all things, is not any one of these things but is the altogether simple Beginning, who enfolds all things by means of His Infinity. For He is Justice in such a way that He is also Truth and Peace and all the things—in Heaven and on earth—[whose names] signify a perfection. For He is Perfection itself, of which all perfect things partake.

[11] Now, all things exist insofar as they are one.¹¹ Therefore, if all things partake of oneness, which is also called being itself¹²—of which (by degrees) intellect partakes in one way, reason in another, and

perceptible things in still another way—and if it is not the case that all things partake of intellect or of reason: then it is evident that [the name of] Oneness (which is Absolute Being, or Absolute Form-of-being, through which all things are that which they are) befits God more than does any other name whatsoever. Therefore, [the name of] Oneness—Infinite Oneness, to which plurality is not opposed—befits God. Infinite Oneness enfolds all things. It is also Goodness, in that it is understood to be the formal imparting of being, without any intermixing. And in this way we explain the Scripture-texts “I am I-Who-Am,”¹³ “God is One,”¹⁴ etc. [12] But when we consider God with respect to contracted being, we see clearly that it is more fitting that He be named in accordance with the contractedness¹⁵ of being that is of more excellence and more enfolding-power rather than of lesser [excellence and enfolding-power]. Hence the names “spirit,” “intellect,” “reason,” “justice,” “truth” (and the names of those things that in their simplicity escape all sensory detection) befit God more than do [the names] “fire,” “water,” “air,” etc. [13] So, consider abstract oneness, which is also being itself.¹⁶ [Consider] that it enfolds all things; for it is not the case that anything can exist outside it. (How could [some thing that were] apart from being be understood to *be*?) Moreover, it is not the case that not-being, or nothing, exists apart from oneness. For in Infinite Oneness not-being is most simple Being itself. For outside of Infinity neither being nor not-being can be understood to be. But in most simple Being itself there is nothing of otherness or of multiplicity, because [most simple Being itself is] Infinite Oneness. Therefore, in Infinity all things that can be spoken of and all things that cannot be spoken of, all things that can be understood and all things that cannot be understood, are Infinity itself, which enfolds and encompasses both those things which are and those things which are not.

[14] You now see—if you elevate yourself by means of a very subtle understanding—(1) how it is that God is not understood, inasmuch as He infinitely surpasses all oppositeness [and] (2) how it is that Being itself (which is the Infinite Form of being) is the Beginning, the Middle, and the End of all existing things.¹⁷ And because it is the Beginning, it is eternal [and] prior to everything else; because it is the Middle, it is that in which all else is present; and because it is the End, it is that at which all else aims. [15] You see how it is that God is neither everywhere nor nowhere, since *everywhere* and *nowhere* are opposed [to each other; and, being opposites,] they do not befit God.

Rather, God is above [them]; for in Him everywhere and nowhere are enfolded and are not opposed. Hence, He is so everywhere that He is nowhere; and He is so nowhere that He is everywhere—even as by means of its likeness the substantial form of a thing is in a material everywhere and nowhere. For the form precedes every accident; and it is simple and, hence, is present as a whole in the whole and in each part [of the material thing]. An example [occurs] with regard to the form of a man, i.e., with respect to his body, etc. And, in this way, see how it is that God is present everywhere by means of His Essence [*essentia*]—[present] precisely because His Essence is Being, is Power, is Truth, etc. But the Essence is not received equally by all things, even as the members of the body do not receive the soul in equal measure; and for this reason the soul does not accomplish the same thing in all the members, etc.

(b) *The way of ascent is shown from creatures unto God, considered as Absolute Oneness, Absolute Equality, and Absolute Union. And by means of these mathematical names a trinity is asserted to be present in God.*

[16] As regards the [doctrine of] the Trinity, it is necessary that you advance [in understanding] by means of the following pathway, because no trinity that is opposed to simplicity and to oneness befits God. But you must understand [the notion of] trinity very abstractly and elevatedly above any rational [conception of] trinity. [You must understand it in such a way] that the trinity is not constituted by one thing and another thing, or by *one* multiplied several times, but [is constituted in such a way] that it is compatible with the oneness—indeed, *is* the oneness.¹⁸ Consequently, it is not a *trinity* but is a *triunity*, just as the oneness is a *unitrinity*. And do not look at the meaning of the name; for in the meaning of the name you will find nothing of Infinite Truth. For names are imposed by the faculty of reason, through comparisons; and they cannot befit [Him who is] Infinite, Disproportional [to all else], very Simple, and altogether One. And for us human beings it is not possible to apprehend the Trinity by means of some sign or image or verbal expression. For the fact that God is One is altogether true; and the fact that God is Trine is altogether true. But these are not two truths, because there is not one truth regarding the Oneness and another truth regarding the Trinity. Rather, [God] is so One that He is Trine; and vice versa.

[17] And because we ascribe all names to God in comparative

relation to creatures, we must assist ourselves from creatures in order to ascend unto the Trinity. [For] it is not the case that we have something that we have not received.¹⁹ We recognize in the case of each thing that it is a thing that is *one, distinct, and unified*; these [properties] are found in the essence of every being. Moreover, oneness indicates *undividedness, distinctness, and union*. Therefore, if we find these [properties] in every being that partakes of being, then we see that the contracted oneness that is partaken of by things does not exist unless it is trine. In a similar way, we say certain things of God transferredly and abstractly. For example,²⁰ Infinite Oneness is trine in such a way that it is Oneness that is, in and of itself, *Indivisibility*; it is also *Infinite Distinctness* that is *Equality-of-being-all-things*; and it is *Infinite Union*. For by virtue of the fact that God is *Infinite Oneness*: each thing that derives from Him is one and is undivided (considered in and of itself). By virtue of the fact that God is *Infinite Equality*, He enfolds the distinctness of all things. For the fact that a thing is composed of such and such features and not of other features is due to Infinite Form [*ratio*] or Infinite Distinctness, which is Infinite Equality, through which a thing obtains its being distinct. Below this [limit the thing] would not exist; and²¹ above this [limit] it does not exist. Therefore, from Infinite Distinctness there is—in accordance with our relational viewpoint—difference in things, and there is no precise equality between any things. Rather, Infinite Equality, which is Infinite Form (*ratio*),²² enfolds within its simplicity all distinct differences. Next, by virtue of the fact that God is *Infinite Union*: all things have a certain connectedness with one another. Hence, from Oneness, which is present in all things, and from Distinguishing-equality there arises and proceeds a proportional union of all things; and this union is the constituting-bond of the universe.

[18] By such means [as the foregoing] we come *from* a knowledge of contracted oneness, which is not present actually without a trinity, *to* Oneness that, in its own way, is Absolute. Nonetheless, by means of the things that are visible or apprehensible we cannot ascend unto a knowledge of Infinity. For in Absolute Infinity—when we consider it not as Beginning and Cause but in and of itself—we would be able to find nothing other than Absolute Infinity. Many things could here be said about how it is that all created things lead us to a knowledge of the Trinity. According to Dionysius [we could be led] through [a consideration of] being, potentiality, and actuality;²³ and according to Augustine [we could be led] through [a consideration of] mode,

species, and order.²⁴ And this assertion of Augustine's will be able to be understood in the aforesaid way. Likewise, *measure*, *number*, and *weight* can be introduced for this purpose; so too can *oneness*, *truth*, and *goodness*. And these are three fingers by means of which God attaches size to the earth, etc.²⁵

[19] Now, we must examine elsewhere how it is that the intellect, when elevated, understands something of this [topic]. But, for now, it suffices for us to know that if we want to behold the Beginning of all things, then we [must] recognize that every rational understanding is encompassed by multitude and magnitude; for reason apprehends nothing apart from multitude and magnitude. But [reason] sees that, necessarily, the First Beginning ought to be altogether simple; otherwise, it would not be the First. And because multitude has oneness as its beginning, necessarily multitude is one thing. Now, magnitude does not exist apart from a trinity. (We observe this fact in the case of magnitude that is contracted to a material size; for there is no physical object apart from length, width, and depth; and the beginning of polygonal figures is a triangle, prior [to which] a [polygonal] figure is not possible, etc.) Hence, reason finds, of necessity, that the First Beginning of all things must be one and trine uncomposedly and altogether simply, so that it is the Beginning, and the Measure (*metrum et mensura*), of all things. We must explore elsewhere the topics of how it is that—with regard to every created thing—(1) in magnitude there is multitude, and vice versa, (2) in compositeness there is simplicity, and vice versa, (3) in trinity there is oneness, and vice versa. These [considerations] show us—in a vestige which we ought to detect above all oppositeness—how it is that Infinite Oneness exists in a Trinity, and vice versa.

[20] But in order to be able to go on now to [the topic of] eternal begottenness,²⁶ we should know that St. Augustine speaks of the eternal Trinity by means of mathematical names. For example, oneness precedes all otherness, which does not exist apart from duality; therefore, oneness is eternal. Likewise, inequality is subsequent to equality, of which it falls short. For every inequality [can be] reduced to an equality, and there can be no inequality without otherness. Therefore, equality precedes otherness and, hence, is eternal. Union is prior to division, because union derives from oneness, [whereas] division derives from otherness. Therefore, ..., etc.

[21] Our [most holy teachers] wanted Oneness to be called Father, Equality to be called Son, [and] Union to be called Holy

Spirit.²⁷ [They desired this] because of a certain resemblance, so that we might better arrive at apprehending [the doctrines of] begottenness and procession. Nonetheless, the names “This,” “Same,” “Identity” are more appropriate, etc.²⁸ [22] Let us now consider the eternal begottenness of the Son. For begetting is the multiplication of one nature, or is the repeating of oneness (e.g., in the case of a father and his son), which occurs with regard to things transitory. [But] in God begetting is one repeating of Oneness, i.e., is Oneness once. If you were to repeat [oneness] twice or three times, something else—viz., the number two or the number three—would be produced. Therefore, oneness repeated once²⁹ begets only an equality of oneness; and by this [statement] nothing can be understood other than that oneness begets oneness—a begetting that is eternal. And so, procession is ‘oneness of oneness and of the repetition of oneness’—or ‘oneness of oneness and of its equality’. For, necessarily, union proceeds from oneness and equality: and it cannot proceed from anything else. Etc.

(c) *Other analogies (brightness, word, art; reason, concept, form) that in like manner elevate us unto a knowledge of eternal generation.*

[23] The doctors [of the Church] have [used] many examples in order to elevate us unto a knowledge of eternal generation. [There is the example] of brightness, which is generated from fire, and [the example] of heat, which is [produced] from both [fire and brightness]. [There is the example] of light; for instance, Hilary says³⁰ that light is kindled from light and that brightness results from both. [There is the example] of mind: [viz.,] that the mind begets a word resembling itself ([begets], namely, a concept [*conceptus*] of itself); and from these [viz., mind and its word] there proceeds will, or love. Hence, many [of these teachers] turned to [the example of] the word, in order that the gospel might be made known to us. For a word is a likeness of the intellect—[a likeness] in which the intellect enfolds that which is understandable. Hence, the Apostle is seen to mean that, in God, the Son is the Father’s mental Word, i.e., is the [Father’s] Divine Wisdom, Divine Art, or Divine Concept (*ratio*).³¹ For as regards the fact that all things were made by God the Father in His Conceptual Word and Wisdom: just as there is no doubt about this, so too there is no doubt that His eternal Concept, Word, or Wisdom is the Infinite Art. Therefore, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.³² Therefore, if the Concept, or intellectual

Word, or Wisdom) was in the beginning, clearly it was present from eternity, because it was in the beginning. “To have been present in the beginning” indicates eternity. Moreover, if there was a Concept, it was the Concept of something. But it can be the Concept only of the Eternal Beginning, in which it was always present. Hence, in the beginning was the Concept, and it was with God, because it was in the eternity of the Beginning, which is God the Father. And it was God, because it was the Eternal Art and Infinite Concept. Now, the Word cannot be less than God, since there is [but] one Eternity and Infinity. Therefore, all things were created by means of this Infinite Concept.

[24] Here contemplate the fact that all things in the Infinite Art are Equality and that the altogether simple Infinite Concept is the Concept of all things. For all differences are enfolded in the oneness of the Infinite Concept. And just as nothing [finite] is found to be so equal to a given thing that it cannot be more and more equal *ad infinitum*, and just as there is only one Infinite Equality of all things, so a reason (*ratio*) cannot be given by anyone for [any of] all created things. As Solomon says:³³ there is no reason [that man can discover] for any of the works of God. There is one Infinite Concept (*ratio*) . . . , etc.

[25] Here consider the fact that the Word is every Art, Form, and Concept. Recur to the likeness with our art, which is within us. [Consider] the fact that in our mind’s word, which is its art, are enfolded the mind’s artifacts. And [consider] (1) that our art in its simplicity enfolds above time and division artifacts and (2) that these artifacts unfold the enfolded art. See how it is (1) that a church-building is present in the art of the architect—present undividedly and incomposite-ly—and (2) that the church-building that is unfolded from the art becomes subject to multiplicity, division, and temporality. And in one way or another the art is contracted by one kind of material or another.

[26] Likewise, consider in this way, as regards the Divine Art, that just as our art introduces into matter (which it presupposes) accidental forms that are likenesses of natural [forms], so the Divine Art, because it is infinite, produces in accordance with a singular and altogether simple Art all existing things. Therefore, the form-of-being of all things flows from the Infinite Form of the Eternal Art as an artifact [flows] from its art. Furthermore, you ought to consider that the higher and more perfect an art is, the more it enfolds within itself the lower arts, even as the art of a goldsmith enfolds the art of a painter, of a sculptor, of a foundry-man, etc.; therefore, [the art of the goldsmith is] nobler, because its simplicity is stronger and more unified. But, neces-

sarily, the Infinite Art is the strongest and most powerful. Consider, too, that an artisan produces various things from a single art; and the more things he produces, the greater and more powerful is his art. By comparison, the Divine Art is undepletable.

[27] Moreover, consider how it is that an artisan produces an artifact—that first of all he forms a conception [*conceptus*] within his art, that next he embraces the conception in such a way that the embracing proceeds from the conceiver and what has been conceived (i.e., the *will* proceeds from the *intellect* and the art, or the *conception*). So too, procession occurs in its own way in God, because God the Father conceives; and the *Embracing* proceeds [from the *Conceiver* and the *Conception*]. And this is the Trinity. We read in Genesis that [God] *created*; then He *saw*; then from these [two] proceeded *Goodness*, for [all the things] were exceedingly good. An artisan acts in a similar fashion. And just as an artifact is to a finite art, so a creature is to the Creator. For in and through an artifact one sees what capabilities the artisan has; similarly, in and through creatures one sees what [attributes] the Creator has. For in the artifact we see a trinity in oneness, even as [we also do] in regard to a creature. For example, a chest has being from an artisan, even as the whole world has being from God. The chest is *one*, is *distinct*, and is *unified*.

[28] And here consider carefully the fact that if the universe is envisioned as present in pure Oneness, then it is God—because it is the archetypal world and is the Word, inasmuch as then it is nothing outside the Word, etc.³⁴ God is the Oneness of all things; and in each thing Oneness is found by way of the unified whole. For example, [this is true of] each part of a chest. If we consider, for instance, its bottom, then the bottom has a oneness, it has a distinctness qua bottom, and it has a union that proceeds from its being and its distinctness; for [the bottom] unites to itself the chest, to which it bears a comparative relation. And something similar is the case as regards each stone of a tower, as regards a man's hand or foot in relation to the man [as a whole]—even as also regards each part of the universe in relation to the universe [as a whole].

[29] Now, consider that an art agrees with every [feature] of the artifact. For example, the diverse hewings of a stone, in relation to the oneness of the tower's unity, depend upon one and the same art. Similarly, all the differences depend on one and the same art. And [consider] the fact that the form of the artifact is a likeness of the art, of the artisan, and of the artisan's conception. This form, because of the

material in which it is received, is to a greater or a lesser degree like the conception [of it]; but it is never exactly equal to the conception [i.e., never actually corresponds precisely to the conception]. By comparison, the forms of things are images of the Divine Art, etc.

[30] And, at this point, the first section, which deals with the begetting of the Word, has been completed. And [I have now explained] how it is that, according to the Gospel, all things were made by Him, and without Him not anything was made.”³⁵ Moreover, [I have discussed] the fact that in Him all things are the [Divine] Art, which is Life, whose image all living natures bear. And [I have spoken of] the fact that the Life is the Light of men,³⁶ because the Life is the Concept (*ratio*)-and-Wisdom from which derive every concept and all wisdom. And [I have spoken of] the fact that He is the Light of men and shines in the darkness of ignorance but the darkness has not comprehended Him.³⁷

PART TWO

On Christ, Born in Time insofar as He Is a Man

[31] II Corinthians 5: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” John 6: “He is the Bread, who ... gives life to the world.”³⁸

I promised, in the second place, to add something about Christ’s incarnation. In order to introduce this section, I propose to take up the theme that “the day has dawned upon us,” for God created man [in His image] ..., etc.³⁹ [32] Here we must take note of the fact that Christ’s incarnation was necessary for our salvation. God created all things for His own sake.⁴⁰ And [He created] them maximally and most perfectly only for Himself. However, they could not be united to Him, since there is no comparative relation of the finite to the infinite.⁴¹ Therefore, through Christ all things are in God, their End. For unless God had assumed a human nature, then (since that human nature, as being something intermediate, enfolds in itself [all] other [human natures]) the entire universe would neither be perfect nor, indeed, would exist.⁴² (Here note that among created natures human nature (*homo*), by reason of its universality, enfolds all [other natures], both immaterial and material.) And hence, too, human nature was created as the goal of all beings, so that all things are present in human nature as in their goal.⁴³ [33] But it was not possible that the whole of created nature could be conveyed unto the Divinity except in and through man, who in glory and honor is a little lower than the angels and who is

established above all other animals and all other works of God's hands.⁴⁴ And for this reason the spirit of man, which enfolds within itself the natures of all other things, is not at rest in any created thing; rather, it strives [for something] above itself and finds, as something with which it can be satisfied, only immortality, which is eternal life and eternal wisdom. And that man—who was to be the Final-Goal, or Rest, or Sabbath, of all things—was able to be the Supreme Creature (which enfolds within itself all [creatures] in its perfection) only if He was personally God, in whom alone there is rest; moreover, He is all that which is sought. Hence, it was necessary that God become a [God]-man, in order for all things to arrive at their Final-Goal.

[34] Consequently, we must know the following: by means of our eyes and of perceptual considerations we can discern differences only by means of temporal distances, so that in this way Christ, with respect to the fact that He is a man, is seen to have been born, in time, after Abraham and others. Nonetheless, with respect to the fact that He is God, who is beyond all time, He is the Beginning and Head of every creature. As He said: "Before Abraham was made, I am."⁴⁵ And Paul writes [of this fact] to the Ephesians and the Colossians. Hence, [Christ is] the Beginning of living things, of dead things, and of the entire Church, both of the Church Triumphant and of the Church Militant. This Christ was seen to dwell among us temporally on earth, even as He was born temporally of the Virgin on today's date.

[35] Here, then, we must take notice of the fact that Christ the Lord—in that He is united (above every creature) to Absolute Maximality, since there cannot be anyone greater than He in whom infinite power is perfect and complete in itself—is God and the Infinite Art, or Infinite Form, of all existing things. But insofar as He is maximal man,⁴⁶ He is an altogether perfect man, than whom there can be no more perfect man. And since the human nature in Him is so very lofty that there cannot be a loftier human nature that could be united as closer to Divine Infinity, then by the very fact that He is most perfect and most lofty as concerns the nature of His humanity, He is most closely united to the Divinity. But the nature of His humanity, since it is a creature, cannot pass over, by way of ascent, into becoming His divinity; nor can the divine [nature], by way of descent, [pass over] into becoming His humanity. And so, there is here a oneness, with the distinction of the natures remaining. Now, if what is caused or created passes over to becoming maximal through a union than which a greater union is not possible, then necessarily it cannot exist personally in itself. Therefore,

the human nature [of Christ] subsists in the divine nature, even as (according to Athanasius)⁴⁷ the body exists (in its own way) in the soul (although this is not a completely accurate illustration).

[Let all of] the foregoing [be said], to begin with.

[36] Secondly, we must now consider the fact that in Christ Jesus the human nature, qua exalted unto the Divinity, is the perfection of the universe⁴⁸ and, especially, is the perfection of our human nature. For in that [Christ's human nature] reaches the highest gradation of human nature, than which there is no higher gradation, it enfolds every other [human] nature.⁴⁹ And it unifies all the things that are subject to the nature, transforming them into Christ.

[37] We recognize how it is that a single art enfolds other arts. What if every art were in one man, and he would be all Perfection and all Wisdom and every Form? Wouldn't the Perfection of that [man] enfold all men? If the man still retained his human nature, wouldn't that humanity, which is one, be present in all [men]? The humanity of Christ is not *other*⁵⁰ than [the humanity] of each man—past, present, or future.⁵¹ Rather, it is humanity but is not *other*. And so, we see how it is that our nature, which is not *other* than Christ, is, in Christ, most perfect. (And here take note of the fact that Christ coincides with the nature of humanity, through which all men are men. And, accordingly, He is the equal [i.e., exact] Measure (*metrum et mensura*) of all men; and in Him all men are present as in the Head of, and Ruler over, all things. In the Oneness of Christ—where there is neither Jew nor Gentile nor male nor female but where Christ is all in all⁵²—they are present without difference. Accordingly, Christ is the nearest [kin] of each [of us]—indeed, much closer [to us] than a fleshly father or brother. For He is the substantial intimacy of each [of us]. And, hence, all our defects are made-up-for in Him, who is our Fullness and our Perfection. In Him we are justified; in Him we are saved; in Him we live and are moved.⁵³

[38] And keep in mind that here you can see (1) the wonderful promise that we obtain in Christ and (2) the super-wonderful salvation of the Cross. For Christ's humanity—as elevated unto the maximal degree, insofar as it is united to the divine nature—is the truest and most perfect humanity of all men. Therefore, a man who clings to Christ clings to his own humanity, so that he is one with Christ, even as Christ [is one] with God.⁵⁴ Accordingly, each one who adheres to Christ and is united to Christ—not in and through something other than in and through his own humanity, which is also Christ's humanity—

has satisfied the debt [of sin], is justified, is enlivened. For his humanity, which is one in him and in Christ,⁵⁵ is united to God the Word. O deepest mystery! Here you see that in Christ human nature has put on immortality through union with the Word. Here you see the inference: ‘If Christ has arisen, then we too [shall arise].’ Here you see the error of all those who look for salvation apart from Christ. Here you see how much they err and contradict themselves—those (such as pagans and Jews) who believe in resurrection but deny Christ. Here you see that Christ is all in all⁵⁶ and that the very profound letter of Paul to the Ephesians is understood as regards the Church Triumphant and is completely true. Here you see [Him who is] your Consoler with regard to all your dire needs. And [you see] endless things of these [kinds].

[39] Now, He is the Light that has shined upon us. But how has [that Light] shined forth? For although God is hidden, He has revealed Himself—as when [someone’s] mental word is hidden to you, then in order for it to be revealed to you it takes on vocalization; and beneath the vocalization, which is its sign, lies the hidden mental state. Similarly, the hidden Eternal Word has put on flesh in order to become visible; He did works that someone other than God could not have done. And, in this way, He came for dwelling with men. Therefore, men saw one thing and believed another thing because God was hidden beneath the flesh—even as a voice is heard and the meaning [beneath it] is understood. Christ preached and enlightened. It is the task of a teacher to enlighten by means of his voice; and he imparts light to his student without any diminution of his own light. Similarly, Christ has shined upon us in order to make us partakers⁵⁷ of His Wisdom. Note how deep are the mysteries [contained] in the words of Christ, which are vocal sounds in which Eternal Wisdom itself is hidden. But in order to hear the vocal sounds, we must draw near—draw close through faith and devotion. And thereupon we are enlightened and will appropriate His fullness, etc.⁵⁸

[40] (Here [I will mention] a few points about the Blessed Virgin.)

[41] And now you see that he who through faith turns with all his heart to Christ and ceases to be who-he-is and becomes born again in Christ, so that only Christ is in him: he is, in and through Christ, a son of God; he is deified;⁵⁹ he obtains the final perfection. And understand the Gospel as teaching that he who wishes to be a son of God must be reborn in Christ, who is God. For before the foundation of the world⁶⁰ we were called unto an eternal inheritance in Christ. It follows

that we must believe the following: that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.⁶¹ If, in God, the Son assumed a humanity, then it is evident that you, who are a man, can be made to be a son of God by means of Christ's dwelling in you.⁶²

PART THREE

Spiritual Birth in Christ

[42] If, then, (as concerns this third section) you wish to be reborn in Christ as a son of God, you—who are a Gentile—must come and draw near to this Sun by means of the subtleness of human reasonings. You must come most devoutly by a choice by means of which you choose only Christ—[choose Him] with simplicity, and purity, of your mind. You must dismiss all spiritual presumptiveness. You must put on kindness toward all others and must become tender-hearted. And you must draw near with fervent love; and with concord and peace and very devout prayer you must make your request—together with Peter, to whom God first of all revealed His mystery. Etc.

[43] And here consider the fact that just as God is the Head of Christ, so Christ is the Head of the Church.⁶³ As God is to Christ (for the deity is as the soul; the humanity, as the body), so Christ is to the Church (Christ is as the soul; the Church, as the body). Therefore, it is necessary that you exist in a oneness of body [i.e., of Church], so that through the body [i.e., the Church] you may exist in the oneness of the spirit of Jesus. *Nota bene!*

[44] Remember that your soul is not present in any member of your body unless it is united to the body. And the soul is present in the member in such a way that the member is present in it. If you desire that Christ dwell in you nobly, then grow into a noble member [of His mystical body], and see to it that you enter into Christ boldly. And this [admonition] is to be noted the more especially.

A FURTHER NOTE

[45] Take note of the following secret: [viz.,] that the sanctified day is that day of which Genesis 2 [states]: “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.”⁶⁴ For we read that God made the other days and, in making them, worked. But we do not read that God worked on the seventh day or that He made the seventh day. Rather, He blessed that day and sanctified it, because on that day He ceased from all work and rested. Therefore, consider carefully and subtly that [the sanctified] day is [to

be understood here as] Eternal Light, or Eternal Wisdom. And things exist gradationally through six stages that partake of that Light, so that by partaking of it they are called days. Moreover, a day was not anything other than it was created to be. But the sanctified day is the day that does not partake of the Light of wisdom with the hopeful expectation of [reaching] a higher stage; instead, it is that highest gradation-of-wisdom, in which God's every work ceases. Take note very particularly of this fact, because today is the sanctified day.⁶⁵

NOTES TO *SERMON XXII*

1. See Genesis 2:3. See also Nicholas's Further Note at the end of this present sermon. Also see Sermon XXIII (12:1-4). The phrase "dies sanctificatus," says Nicholas, signifies the Sabbath, the day sanctified by God for the purpose of affording both rest from labor and time for worshipping God. It also signifies the Son of God's being united to a human nature—signifies, that is, the day of Jesus's conception.

2. John 14:6.

3. Psalms 18:6 (19:4).

4. John 1:1-4.

5. John 1:14.

6. John 1:12: "But to as many as received Him He gave power to be made sons of God"

7. Isaias (Isaiah) 7:9 (Old Latin Version).

8. Nicholas here uses the phrase "*qui non potest intelligi non esse*." Anselm rejected this expression when arguing against Gaunilo. He insisted on the necessity of *not* replacing the verb "*cogitari*" by the verb "*intelligi*".

9. Regarding the expression "understood not to exist": see n. 8 above.

10. I Corinthians 15:28. Cf. Colossians 3:11.

11. See Cusa's *De Venatione Sapientiae* 21 (59).

12. Nicholas, in the spirit of the Platonic tradition, identifies being and oneness. See his *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 8. This present sermon repeats a number of the themes contained in *De Docta Ignorantia*, completed on February 12, 1440.

13. Exodus 3:14.

14. Deuteronomy 6:4.

15. Here (at 12:3) I am reading "contractionem" in place of "contractiorem", as do also the editors of the Latin text.

16. See n. 12 above.

17. Cusa, *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 1 (185).

18. Nicholas makes clear, elsewhere, that in God the trinity is not a *numerical* trinity. See *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 19 (57). See also my article "Verständnis und Bedeutung des dreieinen Gottes bei Nikolaus von Kues," *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, 28 (2003), 135-164.

19. I Corinthians 4:7.

20. In the examples that follow, Nicholas does not believe that there is any infinite oneness, infinite equality, etc., that is not God, who is Infinite Oneness, etc. But in his writings he sometimes speaks as if there were such an infinite oneness, etc. Similarly, in *De Docta Ignorantia* he speaks of an infinite triangle, an infinite circle, etc., even though he believes there not actually to exist any such figures.

21. Here (at 17:24) I am reading "et" in place of "nec"—as do also the editors of the Latin text.

22. The Latin word "*ratio*" has an especially large range of meanings. In Sermon XXX (12:10) Nicholas uses it interchangeably with "*forma*", as I construe it here. But in section 23 (margin number) below, I take it as interchangeable with "*conceptus*".

23. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, 11 (*Dionysiaca*, II, 930).

24. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, V, 11 (PL 41:153).
25. Isaias (Isaiah) 40:12 (Douay-Rheims Version).
26. Cf. this entire section with what Nicholas writes in *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 709. See the third sentence of n. 12 above.
27. See *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 9 (26:1).
28. In *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 9 (25) Nicholas uses the triad “hoc, id, idem”, as well as the triad “unitas, iditas, identitas”. In the present sermon he writes “id, idem, identitas”.
29. That is, $1 \times 1 = 1$, whereas 1×2 or 1×3 would equal 2 or 3, respectively.
30. Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, VII, 29 (PL 10:224-225).
31. See n. 22 above.
32. John 1:1.
33. Ecclesiastes 8:17.
34. In God all things are God. In God-the-Word the archetypal world is the Word. See Nicholas’s *Sermo XXX* (12:29-32) and *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 5 (119).
35. John 1:3.
36. John 1:4.
37. John 1:5.
38. II Corinthians 5:19 and John 6:33 respectively.
39. Genesis 1:27.
40. Proverbs 16:4.
41. See, above, n. 14 of Sermon XX.
42. *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 3 (197).
43. See *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 3 (198).
44. Psalms 8:6-7. Hebrews 2:7.
45. John 8:58.
46. In Sermon XVII (11:1-2) Nicholas refers to Christ as *homo minimus*: minimal man. Christ is *homo maximus* because He is *homo perfectissimus*. He is *homo minimus* because from the moment of His conception He was fully a human being (something that is not the case with other human beings, thinks Nicholas) and because He was in the womb longer than are any other human beings. See Sermon XXIII (8:10-12).
47. See the Athanasian Creed (also called the *Quicumque*): “sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo, ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.”
48. *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 3 (198-199).
49. Although Nicholas holds that Christ’s human nature, qua microcosm, enfolds every other nature (see divisions 32-33 above), his point here relates to the enfolding of all other *human* natures. Cf. *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 3 (198-199).
50. See Nicholas’s late work *De Li Non Aliud* for an expansion of this theme.
51. That is, Christ’s humanity is not different *in kind* from the essence of any human being’s humanity. It is, however, *numerically distinct*. It is important for us to read the present and the subsequent passages in the light of Sermon XXXV (5), Sermon XXXVI (2:30-31), *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 12 (255). For example, Sermon XXXV (5:1-9) has: “And take note: If you conceive of the fact that Christ has the humanity of all men and that He is man not in the breadth of the human species nor outside [the human species] but as the most perfect final goal of the species, then you see clearly that human nature—present in Him much more intimately than in a broth-

er, a son, or a father, but present in the most precious identity that is positable *with a numerical difference being preserved*—obtains all fullness.”

52. Colossians 3:11.

53. Acts 17:28.

54. *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 11 (252-253).

55. See n. 51 above.

56. See n. 52 above.

57. Here (at 39:17) I am reading “participes” in place of “participem”—as do also the editors of the Latin text.

58. John 1:16.

59. See Nicholas’s *De Filiatione Dei*, where the theme of deification is explored further. See also, above, n. 66 of Sermon XXI.

60. Ephesians 1:4.

61. John 1:14.

62. Cf. I John 3:1-2.

63. I Corinthians 11:3. Ephesians 5:23.

64. Genesis 2:3.

65. December 25, 1440 was a Sunday.

Sermon XXIII: Domine, in Lumine Vultus Tui
("O Lord, in the light of Your countenance")¹
[January 1, 1441; the feast-day of Christ's circumcision;
preached in Augsburg]

[1] "O Lord, in the light of Your countenance they shall walk, and in Your name they shall rejoice ...,² and in Your justice they shall be exalted."³⁴

The Holy Mother Church finds that the Holy Spirit, through the Royal Prophet,⁵ has foretold of Christ's coming as a result of God's very great mercy. And [the Church] receives this psalm, to be read at this time in order that we may see (1) that Christ was announced to our fathers and (2) what our fathers believed and hoped for regarding Him—so that we may walk in light and rejoice in His name and be exalted in His justice. Therefore, let us pray ..., etc.

[2] In the theme-text three points are touched upon: (1) walking in [His] light, (2) rejoicing in [His] name, (3) exaltation in [His] justice. And in accordance with this [text] I will address these three points.⁶

I will expound the first point (related to walking) in three sub-points: (a) how it is that we walk toward the light-of-surmise by means of its transiently-sensed light; (b) secondly, how it is that we advance toward rational light by means of light sensed durably; thirdly, how it is that we enter into very lofty intellectual light by means of the perceptually-received light of the teaching of Christ, who is Truth.⁷ Accordingly, the first [form of] walking is from the sensible to the imaginable; the second [form] is from the sensible to the rational; the third [form] is the most perfect for us, viz., from the sensible to the intellectual. And each of these [forms of] walking is from the extrinsic to the intrinsic, from the extrinsic appearance or knowledge to intrinsic [knowledge] ..., etc.

[3] With respect to the second point, where the text says "and in Your name they shall rejoice," I will take up the subject (a) of God's name, which is ineffable, (b) of other names (viz., the name of four letters, and still others), and, thirdly, (c) of the name "Jesus".

[4] [With respect to] the third point, [the text reads]: "... and in Your justice they shall be exalted." In Christ, God reconciled the world to Himself,⁸ as says Paul in II Corinthians 5. And because without Christ we are nothing and because in Him we live,⁹ He who is Justice

was made justice for us¹⁰ through the shedding-of-blood, which was begun today through Christ.¹¹ Therefore, there is no justice apart from Christ. And we can be exalted only through Him, who was made justice for us and who, when exalted on the altar of the Cross, drew all things unto Himself.¹² Therefore, we are exalted

- if we are washed in His blood;¹³
- if through withdrawal from the world we are united to Him, because He is on high;
- if, with plurality and inequality and division set aside, we seek those things that are above:¹⁴ [viz.,] oneness, equality, and peace (or union);
- if we follow Christ and His footsteps;
- if we walk as He walked and if in the light of His life and teaching we seek out the Light itself;
- if through devout prayer that is full of love we ascend [unto Him];
- if we bless His name;
- if by means of good works we become conformed to Him.

For when by means of such a loving likeness we are united to Him who is above—so that in us is no one other than He—we shall be exalted in His justice. Etc.

PART ONE

Walking in Christ's Light

(1) *We walk toward the light-of-surmise in the light-of-Christ, sensed transiently.*

(a) *All things are to be seen by us in Christ's light.*

[5] “In His light we shall see light.”¹⁵ For just as without light no thing can be seen perceptually even by good eyes, so too without wisdom no thing can be seen immaterially. Now, a given light is visible in and through itself, without the aid of another light; the case is similar with eternal light. There are many [metaphorical] similarities between perceptual light and immaterial light, although [the two] differ incomparably. Now, we measure all things through Christ. If [we see] long-suffering, wisdom, justice, holiness, etc., we see them all—in whomever they are present—only in the Light that Christ is. Apart from this Light there is neither virtue nor holiness. The holiness of Peter is visible only in Christ's holiness; for unless [his holiness] were

present in Christ's holiness, it could neither exist nor be seen. Christ's holiness enfolds all other holiness, even as light enfolds all colors; and although light does not have a contracted color, nevertheless it manifests all colors within itself. But Christ's holiness is intelligible in and of itself, because Christ is Holiness itself, even as He is Light itself; for we know nothing apart from that Light. By means of that Light we know that which we *will*—[know it] the more profoundly and more differinglly that we will have received its rays. All things are present in that Light. If we *will* for wisdom to be present in us, and if to this end we walk in [that] Light, then we will find wisdom. Etc.

And this [concludes what was to be said] first.

(b) *The stages of development of human nature and the enfoldingness of these stages in Christ.*

[6] The Apostle Paul—writing to the Galatians and instructing them in the truth of the Gospel as to the fact that in Christ we are free and have been delivered from servitude—says in the text for this present Sunday: “As long as the heir is a child he does not at all differ from a servant . . .,” etc.¹⁶ “So we also, when we were children, were serving under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time arrived, God sent His Son . . .,” etc.¹⁷ It is necessary that one-who-understands turn his attention in all respects to [the phenomena of] both enfolding and unfolding, in order not to err. [7] Lo, the world is one world, and its oneness exists in a plurality. Moreover, human nature is one human nature present in many men; furthermore, there is [but] one man in his many members. And conversely: just as one man, from the beginning of his life until death, passes through many stages of development, so too human nature, which is one, has its stages of development. The situation is similar with respect to the [one] world.

If, then, you consider the human nature of all men from the beginning of men until their end—[consider it] after the fashion of a single man—then you will discover many hidden things that Paul attempts to indicate to us very briefly in his aforementioned letter. For example, at the beginning human nature was like an infant, when God made garments for Adam and Eve, who, shortly beforehand, did not know that they were naked. Subsequently, human nature was childlike and began to use reason with respect to God. [This occurred] at the time of Abraham, in whom the seed of reasoning began—[this seed being] befigured by circumcision of the physical foreskin. Next, human nature progressed to a stronger stage of development, so that it

became teachable; and this was at the time of Moses, when human nature was placed under a teacher and under the regulations of the Law—as being under a pedagogue.¹⁸ Thereafter, human nature arrived at the fullness of time and of perfection, i.e., at the unconstrained understanding of wisdom. And, thereupon, wisdom was united to the human nature in Christ our Lord; and human nature, having arrived at an altogether completed stage of development, was no longer able to develop.

[8] We find these [features] in each man. For intellect, which is incorruptible and immortal and is the substance of our soul, is not detected at the time of a child's birth; rather, it lies hidden in the power of the perceptual nature. Thereafter, [the soul] progresses to the stage of reason and then to the stage of learning and then to the stage of intellectual understanding. And because [the soul] is united to God by means of the intellect, it thereupon obtains rest in Him. These [considerations] are to be noted.

Now, although Christ, who fills all things, was altogether perfect and wise at the beginning of His conception, as if in Him, as in its Head, human nature were enfolded:¹⁹ He was an infant; then He was circumcised; then He was a Hearer of the Law and an obedient Observer [of it]; next He was a Teacher, as one having power.²⁰ [9] Moreover, in accordance with the aforesaid things, there is found no stage of man's development which is not similar thereto. For example, the stage of development of [a man's] perceptual nature did not previously lack reason, learning, and intellect; but by comparison with the subsequent development, [that stage] was perceptual. Similarly, Christ's state [of human being] is [always] an intellectual state in which, however, He shows the other states to be also in Him, as is set forth [in the Gospels]. Therefore, let the whole intellectual state-of-being that is Christ's—[Christ] who is the Truth of, and the Wisdom of, the Father—be unfolded in its stages. And we see that at the beginning Christ began [to appear] among men in simplicity and in an infant-like state (in comparison with His intellectual perfection). [This was a time] when simple fishermen and ordinary people received Him apart from His lofty knowledge and His lofty words. However, after eight days transpired, this infant-like state arrived at the shedding of blood, as concerns the foreskin.

Next came the age of the foreskin and of sacrifice—[an age] in which there were martyrs for Christ. And thereafter came the time that men were under the pedagogue of the Christian law²¹ and observed

that law. The time approaches in which Christ, as one having power, will elevate [us] most clearly unto spiritual understanding, as if He were about to cross over from this world unto the Father through mortification of the flesh by way of most bitter sensory suffering, because the senses are at odds with the spirit.²²

(c) *A surmise is made regarding the end of the world.*

[10] So let us see from the life of Christ what we ought to believe about our era. And, thereupon, we will find that Christ was born, was circumcised, was led into Egypt, was found in the Temple, etc. Next, from His twelfth year unto about His thirtieth year He is found only to have slept, as it were; for nothing is learned about Him except that He was in the world. Subsequently, He made His appearance; and after a short while He was crucified, and He ascended into Heaven. Let us now consider (a) when the shedding of blood ceased in the foreskin, (b) when Christ ceased to be a child in the temples, (c) when He began to be held in disdain, as it were. And let us compare the times [of historical events] to the era of Christ;²³ and we shall know that the times of Christ's preaching and suffering are near. On the eighth day the circumcision began, when Stephen was martyred; and the circumcision lasted many years. Next, Christ was found, in His twelfth year, to be in the Temple and to be engaged in those things that were of His Father.²⁴

[11] Moreover, I think that *year one* of [Christ's] adult age symbolizes a duration of fifty years.²⁵ (And so, [Christ] was found in the Temple, [so to speak], from the six hundredth year A. D. down to the time of St. Gregory.) Thereafter, He was not seen to do anything for seventeen years. (And so too, [there was inactivity in the Church] for eight hundred fifty years. But on the basis of this [inference] He will now very soon begin to appear as One who has power; and His appearance will last one hundred fifty years. Then there will follow the final persecution of crucifixion; then [will come] resurrection and the ascension of the mystical body unto the Church Triumphant. Etc. Moreover, [this inference] agrees precisely with Daniel,²⁶ who held that there would be—from the going forth of the word [to build up Jerusalem again]—2,300 days²⁷ (where “days” stands for “years”). And that [going forth] was five hundred fifty-nine years before Christ. Consider carefully, with regard to this issue, that—as Philo says²⁸—Moses had a final revelation, after which²⁹ he died suddenly: [according to the vision,] time is divided into four parts; and two [of them] had already elapsed, but two remained. This [statement] agrees with that [of mine].

Likewise, that which Lactantius³⁰ says about the seven thousand years also agrees [with what I have said]. Consider, furthermore, Ezechieh's vision about four wheels that went but that did not turn;³¹ and these [four wheels] are [four] *times*. And consider that there are four animals, etc.³² All of these [texts] agree [with one another and with my surmise].

[12] I say, then, that just as the sanctified day is the Sabbath day, which is the day of rest and of our deliverance from bondage, so too it is the day when the Word was united to a human nature.³³ Sanctified years are multiplied from out of that day; for as is said in Leviticus, Chapter 25: the year of Jubilee, i.e., the fiftieth year, is based on the sanctified number seven, which is also a year set aside for rest and liberation.³⁴ Now, Christ is our Rest and our every Sabbath. Therefore, the years of [the life of] Christ are years of rest, or jubilee, as seems to be evidenced by Luke 4, where [we read]: "... the year of the Lord and the day of reward."³⁵ [13] Therefore, I declare unto you that we have now been in Christ for twenty-eight years, and the last fifth of the twenty-ninth year is beginning. And [we are] near to the time in which Christ manifested Himself and was bathed [i.e., baptized] in the Jordan and when the Spirit of the Lord descended upon Him and remained upon Him and when He appeared to the world as Messiah, pointed to by the finger of John [the Baptist]. And this is the new year, which I desire to have come to you in Christ on this day. But John [the Baptist] will precede this coming of Christ unto the Church. The time of John's preaching will come forthwith, in order that we may do penance. (Here consider that there are, perhaps, still forty years for Christ to be manifest to all nations successively; and He will experience suffering. After He has thus appeared for one hundred fifty years and a few more,³⁶ the final tribulation will come—[a tribulation] than which there was never a greater one, viz., that of the crucifixion. But there will follow immediately the resurrection and, after some years, the ascension. And [this] will be the end of the world.

These are the likely [sequences]; but they are not certain to us. Etc.

(2) *From the light perceived durably we advance toward rational light.*

[14] But since there was announced as at hand the time (1) of His appearance, (2) of the washing of the Church in the Jordan, and (3) of the descending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, and (4) of the Church's being enlightened in every respect with eternal wisdom: we

must have, prior [to these events], the means of ascending unto wisdom. And wisdom is not given prior to [our having] a knowledge of His name. If, then, we ought first to ascend unto a knowledge of His name, and if we wish to turn our attention to gradations, then it does not seem necessary to look at books, since there are countless books. Therefore, if we become involved with a countless multiplicity, we will fall into inescapable vanity. For the first wise men, viz., Pythagoras, Socrates, and even Christ, wrote nothing, as Augustine says in his *Harmony of the Gospels*.³⁷ For they did not dream of bestowing on wisdom the writing about it; for this [action] would serve rather to diminish and to bedarken wisdom's majesty. Moreover, there is only one Book of life³⁸ in which is contained all wisdom, which is our goal. The many other books do not have a goal. But the Book of life is spiritual and intellectual. All other books—assimilated by learning, reasoning, or sensing—bear the image of this Book. [15] Therefore, we ought not to concern ourselves with a host of books that have been produced by men. Rather, if we need to ascend from the perceptual to the intelligible, from the outer to the inner, from the visible to the immaterial, then let us turn to the one Book written by the Finger of God.³⁹

Therefore, let each individual imagine himself to be Adam and to imagine that he alone has entered the world by birth and that he beholds this world. Seeing all things—the heavens, the stars, the earth, the waters—he conceives first of all of a *multiplicity* of beings. Secondly, when he sees the different sizes of those beings, he conceives of *inequality*. Thirdly, when he sees the stars above and the earth below, and sees East and West and South and North, and sees whatsoever two things in different places: he conceives of discreteness [*divisio*]. And so, he has [the concept of] multiplicity, from which comes [the concept of] inequality. For from one thing and another thing there originates inequality; one thing and another thing constitute a multiplicity. Therefore, inequality presupposes multiplicity, from which inequality is begotten. But from multiplicity and inequality there arises discreteness. For several unequal things are, necessarily, discrete. And no one is so simple-minded that he does not see these matters clearly. Now, multiplicity does not exist from itself but exists from oneness; for multiplicity falls short of oneness. (For it is multiplicity by virtue of the fact that it is not oneness once, or in one respect only, but is oneness made plural.) Hence, you see well enough that multiplicity falls short of *one* and that it does not have existence outside of

oneness. For if oneness is removed, there no longer remains anything as regards multiplicity. Therefore, all that which multiplicity *is* it is from oneness, which is present as a whole in all multiplicity and in each part of multiplicity; and multiplicity is present [enfoldedly] in oneness.

[16] Next, [the foregoing individual] considers the fact that inequality falls short of equality. For he who says “unequal,” first says “equal,” of which the unequal falls short. And so, all inequality has, antecedently, an equality unto which it is reduced. Therefore, inequality has no being except from equality, of which it falls short [and] to which it is related as multiplicity [is related] to oneness.

[17] Next, discreteness presupposes union,⁴⁰ just as multiplicity presupposes oneness and as inequality presupposes equality. Therefore, you see that the world is something originated. And just as that which is originated is multiple, unequal, and discrete, so its beginning is one, equal, and united. And so, you see that the First Beginning is Oneness, Equality, and Union—without which there could be no beginning of that which is originated as multiple, unequal, and discrete. And since multiplicity falls short of oneness, Oneness is as the Father of many nations. And Equality can rightly be called the Son of Oneness, for Equality arises only from Oneness. And Union is called the Holy Spirit.

(3) *By means of Christ's light, received perceptually, we enter into very lofty intellectual light. [This fact] is illustrated by the depth-of-Christ's-teaching in the case of [the prayer] "Pater Noster."*

[18] And now, your understanding has been opened, so that you see how great a profundity is present in Christ's word, which bears the image of Eternal Wisdom. The expression of this Wisdom by Christ was [accomplished] in the Holy Spirit. Now, in order for you to see this [point], I do not want to lead you beyond that which you know. Just as I have used only the visible world as the unfolded word of God, so I want to take some word of Christ's—[some word] humanly set forth by Him and known to you. Let [that set of words] be: “Our Father ...,” etc.⁴¹ I claim, then, that all of God's wisdom shines forth in that series of words.

[19] First of all it is said: “Our Father, who art in Heaven.” You see clearly that that which I stated about the oneness of multiplicity and about the Father of all things is here very clearly expressed. For

Christ says “Father,” not “fathers”. He adds “our” in order that you may see that oneness is the cause of plurality by way of creation or by whatever mode of originating. He adds: “You who art . . .” Therefore, if the Father is *one* (because [the text] says “*tu*”⁴²) and He *who is*, then it is evident that the entire plurality of the things that exist is from the one and only Father. And in order that you may continue to see very clearly the very fecund, incomprehensible nature of that one and only Father, *who is*, [the Prayer] adds that He is in Heaven (*in caelis*).⁴³ Therefore, just as Oneness exists absolutely in and of itself but is, as present in plurality, all that which plurality is,⁴⁴ so [the Prayer] here says that the one Father is present in many heavens (*in multis caelis*). It says, notably, “heavens” rather than “elements”. [It says this] in order that we may know [the following]: that the supreme and very perfect nature that is referred to by the name “heaven,” [and] that is present in the many heavens, has being only from the one Being—viz., the Father—which is present in it. And all that is perceptible by us, as regards the Father, is contained in [the meaning of] that word.⁴⁵

[20] Next, there follows [the clause] “Hallowed by Thy name.” In this very short sentence is contained all that we can understand about the Son, or Word. For a name, if it is a very true name, is, necessarily, equal to what is named. And because, [in the Prayer], “Thy name” is said: it is evident of what kind the name “Father” is; for it is the image, the splendor, the infinite equality of the Father. Therefore, Christ, through a knowledge of the Father, teaches us to know the Father’s name, so that through the name we might have knowledge of the Father. Christ has given instruction that this name, which is “Eternal Truth” and “Eternal Wisdom,” be hallowed. But this [hallowing] occurs when [the knowledge of the Name] is infused intellectually into us by the Father. For when we receive the infusion by means of turning our intellect toward Wisdom itself, [and] when we begin to behold Wisdom intellectually, then [its name] is hallowed. For the intellect can magnify, praise, and hallow nothing more than it does Infinite Wisdom. For the pure intellect can prefer nothing else to the Wisdom and Word of God—just as the eye can prefer nothing to beauty, etc.

[21] There follows: “Thy Kingdom come.” The Father’s Kingdom is only Eternal Union. For elsewhere⁴⁶ Christ says that every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation. Therefore, division (*divisio*) is opposed to the Kingdom. Accordingly, union, or love, is of the essence of the Kingdom, because in union there is rest. Therefore, there is expressed to us [by the foregoing passage]

nothing other than (a) all the knowledge, about the Holy Spirit, that is possible for us and (b) what we are supposed to seek. Hence, we ought to strive for this Kingdom of eternal union, eternal love, and eternal rest—in which Kingdom our every desire is satisfied—to come to us. And just as our intellect is not satisfiable except through the Father’s eternal Word and Wisdom, so too our will cannot be brought to rest except in the Holy Spirit, in and through whom it obtains the Kingdom of Peace—[a peace] of which there is no end.⁴⁷

[22] Hereafter, once the trinity of the Oneness of our Beginning has been explained (as concerns those things that instruct us as to what is to be believed and sought and hoped for), there follows what we ought to think about the whole creation in its orderedness to the Beginning; and [Christ’s Prayer] adds [the words]: “Thy will be done in Heaven (*in caelo*) and on earth.” (Without the hope-of-obtaining we would seek in vain; and, hence, [Christ’s Prayer] instructs us, in regard to our petition, as to what we are confidently to hope for.) This [verse] means to affirm that all things whatsoever be done according to His will. In this [verse] the entire outflowing of creatures is expressed; i.e., [there is expressed] the fact that all things in heaven and on earth are from God the Father, are in the Word ([who is indicated], viz., [by the verb] “be done”), and are in the Holy Spirit ([who is indicated], viz., [by the word] “will”). Moreover, the conciseness of the Prayer is to be appreciated—[a conciseness] that no books (whether written already or to be written)—can express as regards the outflowing of creatures [from God].

[23] Once an enlightening about creation has been made [with-in the Prayer], [Christ] adds something about the Incarnation: “... our bread ...,” etc. Christ says [elsewhere]: “I am the Living Bread, which came down from Heaven ...,” etc.⁴⁸ He did not intend for us to be obliged to seek anything other than that super-substantial bread (which is necessary for us daily) be given to us today, i.e., on this day of the present corruptible time. Hence, this bread which is asked for here [in the Prayer] is bread that is necessary for life. Hence, since some bread refects temporally and some eternally (as even the Gospel-writers speak of both kinds), so, necessarily, each kind of bread is sought, viz., super-substantial bread, which is from Heaven, and bread which is from earth. And because immediately beforehand [i.e., before the mentioning of bread, the Prayer] mentioned [the words] “heaven” and “earth” (i.e., the temporally incorruptible heaven and the corruptible earth): here [the Prayer] instructs us about the bread of Heaven

(viz., incorruptible bread) and the bread of earth (viz., corruptible bread). [It instructs us about these] so that from the aforesaid we may believe that such [incorruptible] bread can be given to us by God and so that we may hope that it will be given to us when we ask for it. Every [prayerful] request, however, presupposes love as its form.

And look unto the Greatest Artisan by virtue of the fact that at the outset [of the Prayer]—viz., “Our Father, who art in Heaven”—there is an evincing of all things. And in all that follows [within the Prayer] there is instruction in faith, in hope, and in love. For example, the words “hallowed be Thy name” instruct us (a) as to what we are to believe about the Name, or Son, (b) as to what we are to hope for, and (c) as to what we are to love. For love *seeks*, [inasmuch as] that-which-we-love we desire and seek. [The Prayer instructs us] in a similar way in all [its other passages]. Moreover, as for the petition “Give us our daily (or our super-substantial)⁴⁹ bread”: in that it says “us,” it instructs us that there is one bread for many people; and this multitude is a multitude united for receiving the one bread. And in this way there is expressed (a) the super-wondrous nature of this bread and (b) its relationship to the Church and (c) the fact that the effectiveness of this bread is within the Church.

[24] Next, there comes: “And forgive us our debts.” In this [verse] there is shown the fruitful result of the bread, by means of which bread we can ask that our debts be forgiven. [The verse] includes all [aspects] of the fruit of Christ’s suffering and of His making satisfaction on behalf of the Church. And it includes the fact that His forgiveness can be asked for only within the oneness of the Church—[as is seen] from the fact that [the verse] says “us”. And [there are] an infinite number of things that are contained here [in this verse].

[25] Next, [Christ’s Prayer] adds [something about] the law of the Church (which is the Body of Christ) when it says “... as we forgive [our debtors] ...,” etc. For to love one another unqualifiedly, with no exception being allowed, is the whole law of oneness, i.e., of the Church. Therefore, no one, if he wants to be loved by God, ought to hate his brother-in-Christ. And there is no law that is not here present in its own fullness. For what is the whole law other than so to do unto others as one would want done unto himself? And this [is what it means] to forgive one another, as Christ says to us [and] as Paul, John, and the other Apostles preach it to us.

[26] Next, [Christ’s Prayer] adds: “And lead us not [into temptation].” [This passage] shows that not all of those to whom forgiveness

is extended are confirmed in grace but that they can still be tempted and can fall and that they continually need God's grace. Now, it says: "And lead us not . . .," etc., as if to say: 'Since we cannot be in this world without being tempted, and since no one can keep us from falling except You, O God: do not permit us to be led into temptation.' Furthermore, [the text] says "do not lead into"—as if the leading into temptation (whether by the Devil or by the world or by the flesh)⁵⁰ could not occur (up to the point of [temptation's] victory and our inducement) except by God's permission. Because God permits [the tempting], He is said to do [the tempting] in His own manner. Thus, a man does not believe that he can be overcome by the strength and power of the Tempter if God does not withdraw His hand of protection. Thus, we attribute all things to God, and we summon Him alone as our Protector. [We do] not [call upon] any creature, since there is no creature that can, of itself, exercise any power over man.

[27] Lastly, [the Prayer] adds: "but deliver us from evil." By this [passage] faith is instructed that only God can free us from evil. And through its being said "but deliver . . .," it is shown that this delivering from evil most appropriately befits God. And [there is shown] not [to befit God] that which is stated beforehand, viz., the leading into temptation. For [the leading is done only] permissively, since God is not a Tempter but is a Rewarder. Therefore, Christ instructs us that God can free us from all evil and that we can assuredly hope for this and that we ought to ask for [it] with fervent love. And in this way it is evident that ultimate happiness and the final goal of our desires is God, who can deliver us from all evil only by granting us the highest good. For only the highest good is free from all corruption and from every aspect of evil. Nor is there an intermediate between good and evil. Therefore, in seeking the removal of evil from ourselves, we seek nothing other than the highest good, in which alone we find rest.

By means of such teachings and deeper ones we are enlightened as we walk in the light of Christ's teaching. And the foregoing suffices as regards the first part [of the sermon].

PART TWO

Exulting in the Name of God and of Jesus

(1) *The ineffable name of God.*

[28] So now that the Beginning has been arrived at by means of the foregoing simple method, let us speak of the Beginning's name. And

since a name ought to be the perfect basis for getting to know that which is named—[ought to be the basis] that leads to a knowledge of the thing named—it is immediately evident that no name that befits a multiplicity can befit the origin of multiplicity. Now, every name that is nameable in Heaven and on earth presupposes multiplicity, since it is imposed, by the movement of reason, with respect to distinctness. Distinctness presupposes one thing and another thing. Hence, God's name is above every name that is nameable either in Heaven or on earth, either in this present age or in the future age.

[29] And for the following reason Trismegistus says that God is ineffable: either He would have to be named by the names of all things, or all things would have to be named by His name, since He is Oneness amid the multiplicity; [and] the multiplicity is present in the Oneness. And this is what Solomon says in Proverbs 30: [viz.,] that when the man with whom God is present considers—by way of ascent to the heavens and of descent—all the things in the world, he is led unto an admiration of the name of God and the Name of His Son.⁵¹ And there Solomon remains in admiration (as did also David in the Psalm “O Lord, our Lord,”⁵² unto the end). For no one knows God's name except God Himself (Apocalypse 19).⁵³ [30] Nevertheless, from the immediately aforesaid things we know that the *Name* of the Father is none other than His *Son*. For there can be found no other Name that can lead us to a knowledge of the Father—[no other Name] than that Word, or that Infinite Name, which is the Infinite Equality of the Father. But just as this Name of the Father (viz., the Son in God) is the Infinite Form of all forms, so too it is the Name of all the names that are imposed by reason. And so, this Name enfolds all names, even as infinite equality enfolds all unequal things.

[31] And just as this Name is nothing other than Infinite Form, so every name coincides with form. Therefore, each thing's name comes by way of the arrival of form—as in the case of wax seals we say that they are the king's seals because [they bear] the figure of the king. And on the basis of human nature's in-forming a material we speak of an individual human being. And so on. Therefore, since every form in matter is an image of the Infinite and Absolute Form: then, also, every name is a name insofar as it is an image of the Infinite [and] Absolute Name. Therefore, we now see it to follow that no name of anything whatsoever—no name that is imposed on that thing from a rational inference that takes its basis from something perceptual—is a precise name for the thing. But in the multitude of the names that

unfold the powers of that which is named, there shines forth, in a particular [but imprecise] way the precise name for the thing, just as oneness [shines forth] in multiplicity. For example, the name “*homo*” (i.e., “man”) derives from “*humus*” (i.e., “soil”); in Greek, man is called “*anthropos*” because of his upwardly-turned, i.e., erect, state.⁵⁴ And so on, as regards [words of] other languages. Hence, those names do not express man’s precise quiddity, which is unnameable, just as it is unknowable.⁵⁵ Rather, they express some aspect of man. Similarly, as concerns the soul: it is called *reason* from the fact of its reasoning; [and] it is called *mind, intellect, spirit*, etc.

[32] Therefore, you see plainly that not only is the Name of God unnameable but that there is not even a precise name for anything. Moreover, in all names the Name of God shines forth as in an image. And just as “Word (*Verbum*) of God” is an Infinite Name, so too it is an Infinite Expression (*Sermo*). And all languages and expressions are unfoldings of it. Hence, the plurality of languages derives from that [Divine] Expression, just as plurality [derives from] Oneness.

[34] And so, consider, next, that the naming of God’s [true] Name is not possible for a creature. For just as what is infinite can have as equal to itself only an infinite name, so too it cannot be named except infinitely. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit is the Infinite Union of the Infinite Name and of the Infinite Named. Therefore, in every utterance or locution there shines forth the Infinite Name or Infinite Locution, even as union is present in division and as oneness is present in plurality. Therefore, there is not found for any thing a locution that is so precise that there could not be one that is still more precise. And in every locution there shines forth only the Infinite Locution (i.e., the Holy Spirit) insofar as the particular locution tends toward truth. And, hence, [the Holy Spirit] is properly said to speak in and through wise men and prophets and all those who declare the truth. For Christ says in regard to speakers of the truth: “It is not you who speak, but rather it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in and through you.”⁵⁶ And Paul says: “No one can profess [that] Jesus [is Lord] except by the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁷ And in this way the Scriptures are opened.

(2) *The names of God that are found in Sacred Scripture.*

[35] Next, something must be said about the names of God that are found in the Scriptures. First of all, we must note that among all the names for God there is one supreme and sacred name, viz., the name of four letters.⁵⁸ For that name is said to be the name for God’s

Substance and Omnipotence and to be a wonderful name. (Genesis 32: “Why do you ask my name, [which is] wonderful?”⁵⁹ And it is not translated but is called, in Greek, *Tetragrammaton*, i.e., “of four letters,” viz., Joth, He, Vau, He. Other names signify God, in a restricted way (*contracte*), either with respect to justice or strength or pre-eminence, etc., as these divine names are expounded by Rabbi Solomon⁶⁰ and St. Jerome. Now, an infinite number of secrets are hidden in these names, as the wise maintain. (I cannot here explain all of these [hidden matters].)

(3) *Exultation in Jesus’s name.*

[36] Thirdly, I must add something about this most sacred name “Jesus,” imposed on this day, when the child was circumcised.⁶¹ Now, “Jesus” is a Hebrew name and has the same meaning as “Savior,” (as the angel states)⁶² because He saves His people. For the Word of God is called by this Name-for-Christ-the-Lord [i.e., the Name “Jesus”] on this day when He began to have a garment red with blood, as John says⁶³ in Apocalypse 19. For [God] sent His Word and healed them.⁶⁴ Therefore, healing is the work of the Word of God. And, hence, the Apostle Peter, being full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4), says that under the sun there is no name in which there is salvation other than in the name “Jesus.”⁶⁵ And, for this reason, the Apostle says that at the name of Jesus every knee is bent—[the knees] of those in Heaven, those on earth, and those beneath the earth.⁶⁶ For the Name of the Son of God is exalted above every name that is in Heaven or on earth (Philippians 2). For all these things [named] are subject to Him.⁶⁷

[37] O how great are the very deep mysteries of the very sweet name “Jesus,” of whom St. Bernard sings very pleasingly!⁶⁸ Therefore, when whoever is a Christian hears this name, he ought to exult in his innermost heart and ought to incline toward reverencing Christ, whose name this [name “Jesus”] is. See how it is that when those who entreat the Pope and the princes [of the Church] name their lord, they do so only with fitting reverence. Therefore, by himself each person knows well what reverence ought to be shown to the name that is above all principality⁶⁹—[shown to it] when it is heard in the mass or elsewhere. Who does not gladly revere the memory of his friend’s, his brother’s, or his benefactor’s name? How much more [ought he to revere the Name] of his Redeemer, His Regenerator! Note that if reverence and observance are had for the name of him from whom we expect certain suitable things, then how much more reverence and

observance we are obligated to give to this Name!

If we believe that Christ is God and a man and Savior and that this Name of His, [viz., “Jesus”], was first given by an angel, then it is evident that the Apostles worked all their cures and healings in this Name, as we read [in the Scriptures]. We ought, then, also to believe most assuredly that through this Name we can obtain salvation and the anodyne for all hardships, if we call upon Christ with complete faith, steadfast hope, and fervent love. For if, as previously mentioned, we meaningfully utter His blessed Name with our heart turned toward Him, sincerely calling upon Him for our salvation, then there is no doubt that we will be heard. For He is near to all who call upon Him.⁷⁰ For the Lord has so magnified His own Holy One that He will hear me when I call out to Him,⁷¹ because He says “Ask and you shall receive.”⁷² Romans 10: “Whosoever shall call upon His Name shall be saved.”⁷³ And Joel 2 [makes] the same point.⁷⁴ And Christ says the following: that the signs that believers will obtain in Christ are that in His name they [will] cast out demons . . . , etc. (Mark, last chapter).⁷⁵

[38] Therefore, do not seek salvation in another name, and do not follow magicians or diviners; but whatever you desire seek in this incarnate [*abbreviatum*] Word which God made on earth,⁷⁶ and seek it in this Living Fount, and you shall find it (1) by using this Name “Jesus” as a most sacred remembrance of, and sign of, and Name of, Christ, our Savior, and (2) by calling upon Christ by means of the Name. But if He will not always hearken [to your prayer], it will be because He wants from you greater faith, hope, and love and because He wills that these be increased in you as a result of your repeated asking.⁷⁷ Hence, He says: “Knock, and it shall be opened.”⁷⁸ He wills, for the sake of your salvation, that there be knocking. If, perhaps, after you have knocked, He does not grant your request, it is because you do not know what you are asking for. For you suppose that you are seeking from the Savior your well-being, but you are [really] asking for something harmful or lethal, which our Savior and our Life cannot grant. So if you are a true Christian, and if you believe the Gospel, then you are required to believe the foregoing [statements]. And you can be consoled only by our Consoler, whether or not He grants the things that you have asked for. Accordingly, He, who is Best, cannot but do what is beneficial for you. The Lord’s Name is forever to be blessed. O blasphemers, O diviners, recognize your error!

[39] Therefore, contemplate now this very pleasing name “Jesus” as being a treasure-house of all desires, and embrace Him as

your only Consoling Refuge. If you are sad because of hardships, flee to Jesus for refuge, and contemplate His hardships, which He suffered for you, and you will find rest in Him. And amid your hardships you will be content to have patience, in imitation of Christ, if He does not remove [the hardships]. And because you will be able to suffer nothing that Christ has not suffered, you have in regard to all matters refuge in Him; and, amid refuge, you have consolation, etc.

[40] Therefore, teach your children to depart from every evil and foul name; and make them accustomed to the very pleasant name “Jesus”. With attentiveness of heart, pray continually to Christ that by the power of His Name and memory He protect and defend you; and you will obtain [His help], etc.

[41] Consider that the reward for honoring the Lord’s Name is one hundredfold. Matthew 19: “Everyone who leaves behind his house or his brothers or sisters or father or mother or sons or fields for my Name’s sake shall receive one hundredfold and shall possess eternal life.”⁷⁹ Take note of this reward and of this indulgence.

[42] Conclude⁸⁰ with the fact that if we praise the Name of the Lord continually, we shall rejoice in Him here below as well as in Heaven amid those who are praising [Him repeatedly] ..., etc. For, as says Augustine at the end of his *City of God*: in Heaven we shall see, we shall love, and we shall praise.⁸¹ Etc.

NOTES TO SERMON XXIII

1. Psalms 88:16 (89:15).
2. Here Nicholas omits the words “tota die,” as found in the Vulgate.
3. Psalms 88:16-17 (89:15-16).
4. Here Nicholas adds the words: “In Psalmo: ‘Misericordias Domini’.”
5. Viz., King David, author of the Psalms.
6. The sermon does not arrive at developing the third point.
7. As is often the case in Medieval Latin, Nicholas (in this present passage) forms an indirect question with the use of the indicative mood rather than the subjunctive mood. (Cf. the sentence at 1:9-11.)
8. II Corinthians 5:19.
9. Acts 17:28.
10. I Corinthians 1:30. The Latin word “*iustitia*,” translated throughout as *justice* (following the Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate), has the sense of *righteousness*.
11. See, above, Sermon XX (15 and 16).
12. John 12:32.
13. Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:5. I John 1:7.
14. Colossians 3:1.
15. Psalms 35:10 (36:9).
16. Galatians 4:1.
17. Galatians 4:3-4.
18. Cf. Galatians 3:25.
19. As human nature was enfolded in Adam, the first man, so (according to Nicholas) there is a sense in which the perfection of human nature is enfolded in Jesus, the second Adam.
20. Mark 1:22.
21. See, below, the section marked by margin number 25. See also Matthew 22:37-38 and 7:12.
22. Galatians 5:17.
23. Nicholas correlates the periods of Christ’s life with the periods of history generally. Thus, he can compare the time of Christ’s being circumcised with the time of Stephen’s being martyred (Acts 7:54-60). Etc.
24. Luke 2:49.
25. Christ was 12 (the age of adulthood’s onset) at the time He entered the temple. These 12 years of His early life correlate, says Nicholas, with 600 years in the historical calendar; the 17 years correspond to 850 years; and the 3 years correspond to 150 years. Each year of Christ’s life symbolizes 50 years of history.
26. Daniel 9:25-26.
27. Daniel 8:14.
28. Pseudo-Philo Judaeus, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, XIX, 14-16. [See *Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, edited by Guido Kisch (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1949), pp. 165-166.]
29. Here (at 11:19) I am reading “post quam” in place of the printed Latin text’s “postquam”.

30. Lactantius, *Liber Divinarum Institutionum*, VII, 14 (PL 6:783A).
31. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 1:15-17.
32. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 1:5.
33. This uniting occurred at the moment of Christ's conception, according to Nicholas.
34. That is, the seventh year is also a year of Jubilee.
35. Luke 4:19.
36. Nicholas is still correlating each year of Christ's life with 50 years of history. Reasoning in the reverse direction, we see that 150 years correspond to one and one-half years of Christ's life. Traditionally, Christ is said to have died at age 33.
37. Augustine, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, VII, 11-12 (PL 34:1047-1048).
38. E.g., Apocalypse (Revelation) 3:5.
39. Cf. Deuteronomy 9:10. In the passage above, Nicholas is alluding to the Book that is the Bible.
40. Here (at 17:1-2) I use the one word "union" to translate the Latin phrase "unionem ac conexionem".
41. Matthew 6:9-13.
42. The Latin word "tu" ("You") is singular. In the English translation of the Lord's Prayer the word "You" is implicit and *understood*.
43. The Lord's Prayer, as translated into English, renders "in caelis" by the singular word "heaven," referring to God's abode. Nicholas considers the meaning of "in caelis" to indicate that God, who is omnipresent, is present in the heavens of this world.
44. "... [is] is all that which plurality is": i.e., is the ground-of-being of plurality.
45. Psalms 18:2 (19:1).
46. Luke 11:17.
47. Isaias (Isaiah) 9:7.
48. John 6:51.
49. In Matthew 6:11 the word "supersubstantialem" is used, whereas Luke 11:3 has the word "quotidianum".
50. Cf. I John 2:16.
51. Proverbs 30:4.
52. Psalms 8.
53. Apocalypse (Revelation) 19:12.
54. This English sentence is a paraphrase of the Latin text at 32:8-9.
55. This is a tenet of Nicholas's doctrine of learned ignorance.
56. Matthew 10:20.
57. I Corinthians 12:3.
58. See, above, n. 8 of Sermon XX.
59. Genesis 32:29. Judges 13:18.
60. Nicholas here means Moses Maimonides, whom he misnames.
61. Luke 2:21.
62. Matthew 1:21.
63. Apocalypse (Revelation) 19:13. Nicholas is alluding to the day of Christ's circumcision.
64. Psalms 106:20 (107:20).

65. Acts 4:12.
66. Philippians 2:9-10.
67. I Corinthians 15:27.
68. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Hymnus Jesu Dulcis Memoria*. See F. J. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry: From the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966 (2nd edition), p. 330
69. Ephesians 1:21.
70. Psalms 144:18 (145:18).
71. Psalms 4:4 (4:3).
72. John 16:24.
73. Romans 10:13.
74. Joel 2:32.
75. Mark 16:17.
76. Romans 9:28.
77. Here (at 38:11) I delete the editorial addition “salus” and regard the singular verb “augeatur” as encompassing “fidem ..., spem, et caritatem” collectively.
78. Luke 11:9.
79. Matthew 19:29.
80. Nicholas writes this paragraph as a not to himself.
81. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII, 30, 5 (*PL* 41:804).

**Sermon XXIV: Jesus in seiner
allerdemütigsten Menschheit**

("In His very lowly human state Jesus")¹
[January, 1441 (?); preached in Augsburg]

[1] In His very lowly human state Jesus was true God; and His words and His teaching were very lowly; and, hence, the Lord's Prayer, in the simplicity of its words, contains the highest instruction and wisdom. For just as the divinity lay hidden in Christ's humanity, so all graspable wisdom is hidden in the simple words of Christ's teaching, which no one on this earth can completely phantom. [It is hidden there] in order that each person in this visible world may, like the Christian, have an imperishable meal, consisting of the hidden wisdom-of-God that lies beneath the words and the perceivable signs. The Christian has an eye out for an eternal meal having to do with the highest dimension of his mind—a meal that presents itself apart from all detection on the part of the weak powers of the senses. Hence, it happens that, in accordance with the grace of God, one individual can have a superior and more acute understanding of the words of the Lord's Prayer than can another—even as one man has keener eyes for seeing the sun than does another. And although each man in his simplicity can find something especially comforting in this Prayer, God has given one man an [intellectual] advantage over another—[an advantage] that is profitable to each. Thus, one man teaches another; and each desires to learn from the other.

[2] What follows is my understanding of the Lord's Prayer at this time. I trust that from day to day such an understanding will increase in me and will become clearer, even as I desire from God to know that a prayer [for understanding] follows after your longing [for understanding] and that a longing will follow after your hoping. But hope follows believing and understanding. No one hopes for something that he does not believe or know. And, hence, the highest prayer must be accompanied by the highest longing, hoping, and believing. And this [accompaniment] is what you should aim to seek in the Lord's Prayer.²

[3] Now, our understanding is disposed to know the truth; and, hence, that which you should believe, you find in the truth: [viz.,] in God and in creatures. And after you have found belief in truth—through which belief you are enlightened as to what perfection a

human being can come—then you also *hope* to come to it. And when you find that such perfection is good, then you desire it and ask for it, even as you understand it and hope that you may arrive at it. And, thus, it happens that our faculty of understanding, which is disposed toward truth, finds in the Lord's Prayer³ enlightenment for knowing, with steadfast faith, what the truth is.

First, [I will speak] of the Beginning and Origin of all things. Then [I will speak] of the emanation⁴ of all things from God, of the means of the return of all things [to God], and [then] of the ultimate goal.

[4] The Origin (i.e., the Divine Nature) is referred to by the words "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come." The emanation [is referred to] by the words "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." The mighty means [are referred to] by the words "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. [And] lead us not into temptation." The ultimate goal [is alluded to] by the words "But deliver us from evil. Amen."

[5] The Origin is disclosed to us, in faith, by the words "Our Father"; it is disclosed to us, in the hope of understanding, by the words "hallowed be Thy name"; it is disclosed to us, in the desire for the good, by the words "Thy Kingdom come." The emanation of creatures is revealed to us in its orderedness by the words "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." The means for our pilgrimage must consist of (a) a nourishing meal, (b) the removal of impediments, (c) a guide, and (d) a shelter. Without these four requirements no one can journey well. The first requirement is expressed in the words "Give us this day our daily bread." The second requirement is expressed in the words "Forgive us our trespasses; the third, in the words "as we forgive those who trespass against us"; the fourth, in the words "Lead us not into temptation." The goal of the entire journey toward the Good is contained in the words "but deliver us from evil. Amen."

[6] Nature, grace, and glory, and all that a human being desires to know (insofar as in this earthly domain this knowledge, in the order that the teachers of theology can grasp it, is possible for us)—all this can be found in this very holy Prayer, in which there is nothing superfluous, nothing deficient, nothing too weighty, nothing too light, nothing too long, nothing too short, nothing without reason and without right ordering—in which ordering the first is, necessarily, the first and the last, the last. For the clause "Our Father who art in Heaven" can

tolerate no other sentence ahead of it; and the clause “Hallowed be Thy Name” issues forth from the first clause; and the third clause issues forth from the preceding two. The clause “Thy will be done” issues forth from those that precede it. And all the way to the end [of the Prayer] each clause [or phrase is found] in its right order.

This very holy Prayer I will now very briefly expound.

[7] “*Our Father ...*”

One Father is a naturally first and highest Beginning and is by Himself a Beginning of us all. The word “our” attests to this fact. For “one” is not like “our”; rather, “our” indicates *many*. However, a multitude has a beginning, as number shows us. The number ten or the number twenty is more than *one* and is multiple. But the fact that the number ten is the number ten or that the number twenty is the number twenty it owes to *one*.⁵ Ten is none other than *one* ten times; and, thus, were there no *one*, there could be no ten. And so, ten derives from *one* and is nothing in and of itself; rather, [all]-that-it-is comes from *one*; and in ten there is only *one*. Therefore, we are all from One, no matter how many we are. And in and of ourselves we are nothing. And that which we are we are in the Father, without whom we could not exist. And, accordingly, from the words “Our Father” we see how it is that all creatures are from one Father and are present in one Father.

Next comes:

[8] “[*You*] *who art ...*”⁶

From these words we are made aware that because the Father exists, He is the [Ultimate] Being of all things, since all things are from Him and in Him. And so, God is all that there is in each thing that there is.

Next comes:

[9] “*... in Heaven ...*”⁷

By the word “Heaven” I understand the highest creatures; and, thus, these simple words teach me how it is that God the Father is present in all things, for He is in the heavens. The highest creatures are the intellectual natures. They have in their power the lowest natures, even as the moving, living nature of trees contains within itself the lowest elements, and as the perceptual life of animals contains within itself the motional life [of plants]. (And, thus, an animal grows and increases, as does a tree.) The rational nature encompasses the perceptual nature, i.e., [does so] in the case of human beings. And the intellectual, celestial nature encompasses the rational nature, as in the case of angels. And, accordingly, one God the Father, in whom all things are, is pres-

ent in the heavens. Likewise, He is present in all things and is one God the Father, who is present in the many heavens. And there are many celestial natures, in which a single God the Father is present as undivided and unintermingled.

[10] From the aforesaid you recognize how it is that this sensory-bound earth is far from having a knowledge of God, inasmuch as God is in the heaven of the highest intellect. And there He is found by the eyes of intellectual natures—[eyes] which we too have, in our souls.⁸ [He is found there] because He is the Supreme, Immaterial Nature, which our sensory and physical eyes cannot see. Take note, then, of the fact that God the Father is the Being of all things. And He is present in each and every thing but in no thing more than in another. He is apprehensible and knowable in the heaven of the intellectual natures.

[11] “*Hallowed be Thy Name.*”

A name is an identifying sign. By means of names we have [knowledge of] different characteristics. And the more precise and more true a name is, the better it signifies that which is named. And, hence, a true name is an accurate likeness of what it names; it is analogous to an understandable word that flows from the power of the intellect and is a likeness of the intellect. Therefore, the name of God the Father is a supreme word that is equal to the intellectual nature of the Father. And since this Name is most truly equal to the Father and is the Supreme Name, which cannot be truer, more precise, or more resembling, it cannot be less than the Father. Otherwise, i.e., were it less, it could be more [precise] than it would be. And, thus, it would not be the supreme, most true Name. But since it *is* equal to the Father, it is God, as is the Father. Now, God the Father is the sole Origin of all things (as is written above). Therefore, the Name that is equal to the Father must be one and the same God as is the Father, although the Name is not the Father but is the Father’s Name. Because the Name is the Supreme Image of the Father, we may call it “Son.” [We may do so] in analogy with the physical birth by which a son is from his father. But no son in this earthly domain is so like his father that he could not be still more like him. Similarly, no [earthly] thing can ever be so like another thing that it could not be still more like it. For only the supreme and truest Image is the Father’s Son, or Name. Accordingly, all equality in our earthly domain is intermingled with inequality. And in this earthly domain God the Father’s Name is not to be found in any equality that

is free of great inequality.

[12] Now, since God cannot be known except in and through His Name, we hope that we can arrive at knowing Him beyond our intellectual power, in that God the Father illumines us in and through His Name in order that we may hallow His name. For when we hallow His Name, this hallowing results from the light given us by the Father—light wherein we see His Name above all other names.⁹ If we see His Name there, then we hallow it above all else that *there* is holy, true, and right. For we know how it is that that Name is the true Name and the right Name and the most precise Image and the Mirror of Wisdom, alone wherein God the Father can be seen and known. [And we know] that everything which is named in Heaven and on earth has no true name that is without defect and inequality—unless [it is known in] this Name. And [we know] that, therefore, no thing can be known in truth, unless [it is known] in this Name.

[13] Christ, then, teaches us to pray that this Name be hallowed by us. In this Name is included the phantomless teaching about coming to a knowledge of God. Of ourselves we cannot come to this knowledge; but [we can come] by God's grace, which sanctifies us so that we may be able to sanctify the Name of [Him who is] the Knowledge-of-God, which transcends all other knowledge. When our intellect hallows only God's Name and finds or seeks its pleasure or rest in no other thing, then an individual has that which he entreats of God with the words "Hallowed be Thy Name."

[14] "*Thy Kingdom come.*"

A kingdom is a union; a royal kingdom is union with a king; a divine kingdom is union with God. The Kingdom of God is the divine and supreme union, which cannot be a closer union. The union of the Father and the Son (the Son being altogether equal to the Father) is the supreme union. From *one* and its *equal* there arises *union*, just as from the unequal there arises discreteness. And so, from the One and His altogether Equal there arises the Supreme Union. This Supreme Union, which cannot be a closer Union, must be God. For whatever is what it can be is God; and whatever is not God can, through God's working, be other than it is. But God alone is all that which can be.¹⁰ Accordingly, the Supreme Union is God whom we call the Holy Spirit, who comes from the One and His Equal—i.e., from the Father and the Son. Therefore, you see that the Father's Kingdom is the Supreme Union—is the Holy Spirit.

[15] And consequently: If a man is elevated unto the knowledge of God in and through God's Name, and if, therefore, he has seen that God alone is the highest and all-desirable Good, then he finds the following: [viz.,] (1) that God is the Kingdom of all delight, is the Love of all lovingness, and only in this Kingdom is there holy and eternal peace and union and (2) that outside of this Kingdom all love is transient, is intermingled with suffering, and all peace is impermanent, intermingled with lack of peace, and all friendship and union are afflicted with defects. Therefore, we ought to pray with great longing that there come to us this Kingdom in which nothing can be lacking to us but in which, rather, we will be eternally happy.

[16] We pray that Thy Kingdom may come. Thereby we understand that we are to believe [the following]: although we are creatures and live in this earthly domain with many infirmities, and although we must remain creatures,¹¹ nevertheless there can come to us the peaceful, imperishable Kingdom. And so, we are taught by Christ that we are capable of becoming God's children and that God's Kingdom can come to us as an eternal inheritance and that we have within us an immortality to which God's Kingdom can come. We are also taught that it should be our highest hope to possess this Kingdom of eternal joys. And while we pray for the [coming of the] Kingdom, we are taught that out of grace God can give us the Kingdom but that we have no right to demand it. For of ourselves we are children of wrath¹² and of discord and of sin (i.e., children of dividedness). For sin results from separating, i.e., from dividing.¹³ Therefore, not of our own doing but only from grace are we born into this Kingdom of peace and of union. But from the fact that Christ teaches us to pray to God for the Kingdom, we understand that God wills to be entreated to this end and that then His grace will refuse us nothing of the Kingdom. From the fact that you are instructed to pray "Thy Kingdom come," you see that God's Kingdom will first come after the conclusion of this ephemeral [dimension of] time and that the kingdom of this world—the kingdom that now is and in which we now are—is not ready to receive the Kingdom of God and that in this world you ought to have patience and to await with great desire God's Kingdom after the conclusion of this world. And in the domain in which you now find yourself, make an effort to become so dear to God, and so to unite yourself to God, that God's Kingdom may come to you.

[17] From the fact that we pray that His Kingdom come to us, you see that you come to God's Kingdom only by God's Kingdom's

coming to you—just as our body comes unto life only by the soul’s life coming to it.

Herewith you have, very briefly, the first part of the holy Lord’s Prayer; and from that which I have said, you understand well that Christ’s teaching is phantomless.

[18] Note now, in addition, from the three portions [of the Prayer] that I have here expounded for you, how it is that you should turn away from this world and turn toward God. First, you find in this earthly domain many things: stars, animals, trees, etc. Secondly, you see that they are very different: a star is different from an animal, and an animal is different from a tree. And you see that no thing is exactly like another. Thirdly, you see that all things are separate and distinct: the stars are above, the earth is here below, the fish are in the water, the birds are in the air. And the one thing is always separate from the others. Each man readily takes note of these three features of this earthly domain: [that things are] *many*, *different*, and *separate*. From the *many* comes the *different*; and from these two comes *separate*. If you wish now to come [inferentially] to God, note the beginning of *many*: [viz.,] the *one*. Now, since *many* is united to *one* as to its beginning, turn [your attention] from *many* to the One. In this way, you can say “Our Father, who art in Heaven.”

Next, note the place where the unequal, or different, is equal, or the same: viz., in God’s Son. Hence, turn away from the unequal and the unjust to the equal and the just. In this way you turn to God’s Son, and you can rightly pray “Hallowed be Thy Name.” Next, note the place where all division and separateness are united: viz., in [the place of] true peace, i.e., in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, turn away from all the separating-power of sin (sin causes separation between you and God¹⁴ and your neighbor, whether with regard to anger or hostility), and turn to the union of love and of peace. Accordingly, you can rightly pray: “Thy Kingdom come.” And these pathways are necessary for you; and they are also sufficient, if you follow [Christ’s] teaching.

[19] “*Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*”

By these words we are taught that all things emanate from God in accordance with the will of God and that all things have no other cause of their existence than God’s will. [Furthermore, we are taught] that the heavens are the heavens and that the earth is the earth and that a human being is a human being. This fact is due to no other reason than that God wills it to be such. Therefore, by the words “be done,” together

with [the word] “will,” all things [are signified to] issue forth from the Father into their own being. This fact is nothing other than the fact that from the triune God all things are that which they are—[i.e., what they are they are] from the Father, in and through His Word (i.e., the Son), together with His Will (i.e., the Holy Spirit). Note, then, that by means of the three words “Thy will be-done”¹⁵ all things, in their emanation, are designated. By the word “Thy” [they are designated as] from God the Father; by the word “be-done” [they are designated as] from God the Son; by the word “will” [they are designated as] from the Holy Spirit. And just as these three words denote the Trinity and as by means of these words the Holy Trinity is referred to, so too each existing thing has within it an image of God and of the Holy Trinity. By virtue of this image the thing exists; for a thing is something only insofar as it is an image of God. Take note, O Man, of the brief words “Thy will be-done.” They make it possible for you to understand, by means of the Holy Trinity, the emanation of all things [from God]. For if you want to know how it is that human beings became human beings, then here you are taught to know that there is no other cause than that the will of God the Father has been done. This point holds [not only for human beings but also] for all things.

Next comes: **[20]** “... on earth as it is in Heaven.” Herefrom you note the orderedness of all things. For all the things that God has created are here named in the Prayer’s arrangement. In the Prayer, *Heaven* is named, *earth* is named, and in between is the word “and”.¹⁶ Thereby take note of a highest, celestial nature, which is immaterial; a lowest, earthly nature, which is corporeal; and a middle nature, which is united from these two and is both celestial and earthly. This [middle nature] is human nature, which has above it the celestial, angelic nature and which has beneath it the earthly nature, i.e., all the natures of the elements. Herefrom you recognize (1) how it is that all the natures beneath human beings have no common bond with the celestial, immaterial nature and (2) that, therefore, God, who is in Heaven, is not known clearly by means of them. For they are from the earth, which is their common mother. And out of the earth the other elements are raised up. And from these elements are raised up stones and mobile, [i.e., vegetative], and perceptual, [i.e., animal], natures.¹⁷ And because their nature from their mother is earthly, it is subordinate to the celestial nature.

[21] But the celestial nature is immaterial and is more like God and, hence, is more noble. For in the intellectual nature we find imma-

terial being, intellect, and will. The being tends toward eternity and immortality; the intellect tends toward truth; the will tends toward the good. In this way you find that the celestial, immaterial nature is a reflection of God and of the Holy Trinity. [It is] a reflection of God the Father, who is eternal in His immortality. [It is] a reflection of God the Son in terms of its intellect, i.e., in terms of the truth that shines forth in the intellect. (Through truth the intellect possesses the radiance of wisdom, which relates to truth.) [The celestial nature is] a reflection of the Holy Spirit in terms of its will, which desires from the light of the Holy Spirit nothing other than that which is good. Thus, the will desires nothing except the good. For the good flows forth from the Holy Spirit, and [the will] has its striving after the good because of the will's emanation from the Holy Spirit—just as the intellect, because of its emanation from God the Son, has an inclination only for truth.

[22] Now, it happens that human nature, which is a union of the celestial and the earthly natures, finds in the spirit that belongs to its soul¹⁸ the celestial inclination toward immortality, toward truth, and toward the good, and, beyond itself, toward God. And in the earthly, perceptual nature there is a downward inclination toward the perishable, the false, the apparent-good, with the result that the [two] dispositions are dissimilar and opposed to each other.¹⁹

[23] Therefore, Christ teaches us to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven—[to pray this] in order that our sensory, fleshly nature may turn to our intellectual nature and may remain united to it in obedience. For then a man peacefully journeys—in the heaven of his intellect, where God dwells—completely beyond himself. And because of our praying such a prayer we recognize that of ourselves we are of weak nature and that without God's grace we cannot resist the flesh and sensuality. And our earthly nature cannot receive the celestial laws (through which it partakes of the divine eternity) without divine grace, which God indeed wills gladly to give us if we earnestly pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." This [teaching] and many other important teachings are revealed to us in the words of Christ Jesus.

[24] "*Give us this day our daily bread.*"

We have just prayed that our earthly [i.e., bodily] nature may be obedient to our immaterial, heavenly nature. But because of the infirmities of our [earthly] nature such [obedience] cannot occur unless we have nourishment which nourishes us daily and continually. Therefore,

Christ instructs us to pray to God for life-giving nourishment through which we are nourished in order to have the strength to face death and infirmity. Because, then, two natures—one celestial and one earthly—are united in us, we pray for bread that is necessary for both natures. That is, [we pray] for Heavenly bread, wherein is present Heavenly, immortal life—present beyond all substantiality of all creatures, as Matthew writes.²⁰ And [we pray] for bread for all the needs that may ever come upon us today in this perceptual life.

[25] Now, hitherto we have seen that the intellectual, spiritual nature is nourished, in an immortal way, with the Word of God (i.e., with the Eternal Son of God, who is Wisdom). Hence, we pray that the Word may become Nourishment for our human nature. Now, food must be united with the one that is fed; otherwise, it is not food. This is the reason we pray that Truth, or God's Word, may be given to us as united to our nature. For this is the Bread by means of which we can have eternal life;²¹ and it is our Bread, is Bread for our nature. Therefore, we pray that God give us our Bread (viz., Jesus Christ) in the core of our life as the Nourishment of our life. And this our Bread is given to us—for our life's nourishment—when with complete faith we receive Jesus into our heart as Nourishment of our life. For thereupon our life, in our own human nature, is united to Christ, in whom our nature is immortally united with the divine life. And in this way we are then fed with our Bread, which God has given us for this purpose.

[26] Consider now the fact that these words—"our daily bread"—reveal to you, first of all, that our Bread is such [as has been said] and, secondly, that this Bread is necessary for our life and that we are to entertain the hope of being nourished with it and that this [being nourished] cannot happen apart from God's grace and that God wills to be asked for this Bread with devout love and that then He wills to bestow it. All of these things the words of the Prayer show us. Therefore take note of what goes hand in hand with a being able to have this life. For it is necessary that [such a] man have Christ, who is the Heavenly Bread. However, Christ is appropriated by someone only through the belief that He is the Bread of life and only through hope and love and only by means of a gracious gift of God. Note also that since Christ is Nourishment of our life, He heals in us all infirmities, even as [material] food stills hunger. And, hence, Christ is the Food of all foods—a Food that can completely remove all infirmities. Therefore, whatever we lack—whether with respect to being, justice, wisdom, or truth, whether with respect to peace, love, or goods—we

find it all in this Bread.

Let us next direct our desire toward this Bread; and our faith and our hope and love will be increased. This [increase] is the way in which God gives us, each day, this Bread. And this sacrament is the loftiest, most holy sacrament that we—with great love and devotion—desire, and shall receive, (as the loftiest and highest gift-of-God) by means of this Prayer.

[27] You now well understand that man can come to the eternal, immortal possession, or apprehension, of the highest good only in and through Christ Jesus, through whom all our infirmities are removed. In Him we are all made perfect; and in Him we arise from the dead and are united with life. For He is the Living Bread,²² which is elevated above all the substance, or substantial existence, of all creatures. And in Him all creatures are present in their highest perfection; and He is the First and the Head of all of God's creations;²³ and all the works of God reside in Him. And He is the Beginning of the flowing forth of all creatures and is the Means of their return-flow and is the End-Goal of all their perfection. Since human nature unites all other natures—celestial and earthly—within itself, and since human nature is united to Christ, the Son of God, Christ is the End-Goal of all perfection.²⁴ For He alone is the Highest—above all celestial natures and all earthly natures.

[28] From the foregoing you recognize that Christ is not food that is transformed into our nature as is a material meal, for He alone is Highest; rather, He is life-giving Nourishment that unites us to Himself and that renders us alive in His Life, as your soul is nourishment for your body and all your members—[nourishment] that gives natural life. It is not the case that the soul is transformed into the body and that the soul assumes the corporeal nature; rather, it is the case that the soul unites to itself your body and all your members. In this union the body lives in this way in the life of the soul. Herefrom note that all creatures who here come to eternal life are like members of the one Body of Christ—[members] in which Christ's life is such that in them only Christ lives. And this fact is nothing other than the fact that [these] rational creatures are unified in a Body that is unified in Christ's Life.

[29] Now consider [the following] carefully: If you want Christ to live in you, then you must be united to Him—just as if your finger wanted your soul to live in it, it would have to be united to your body and to be united, through your body, to your soul. For if you separate your finger from your soul by cutting it off from your body, then you are separating it from life. And so, you see that you must be united to

Christ if you are to live. But the union with Christ cannot occur unless you are united to Christ's Body, which is the holy community of the Christian Church.²⁵ And, hence, you pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." In saying "our," you recognize that you are united to this community. In saying "bread," you take note of the living Nourishment of the many who are unified in Christ. In saying "Give us today," you recognize that Nourishment will be given not to one who is separated but to one who is unified with many. Therefore, understand, from Christ's teaching, that faith and the sacraments and all virtue cannot help you to come to eternal life unless you are a member in union with the body of believers-in-Christ.

[30] You should also take note of your being taught to pray every day without ceasing.²⁶ For just as the influence of your soul is always necessary for the members of your body if the members are to live, so this Heavenly Bread is always necessary for your soul. And you rightly recognize this fact from the word "daily" and the word "today". For if this Bread is needful daily and if we pray that the Bread of which we have daily need be given to us today, then we also are aware (because the Bread is necessary for us every day) that we are every day to pray for it. Because during the period of this perceptible life we as path-breaking wanderers toward the Heavenly life need the Food without which we, as such wanderers, cannot live during this period, Christ teaches us that we ought to pray for that Bread.

[31] Take account now of the fact that Christ is our Bread insofar as we are journeying unto Him. And to the extent that during this time of journeying it is possible for us to receive Him, He is given to us in His Being, His Wisdom, and His Goodness. For at present these physical eyes of ours in this perceptible world cannot see Christ, who is immortal and who, after the Resurrection, is invisible for mortal eyes because of His [resplendent,] penetrating, and ungraspable spiritual glorification. Yet, because of these features Christ is a spiritual Meal for our soul. Thus, it happens that on this pilgrimage [of ours] Christ is given to us under the form of bread since we cannot see Him with our sensory eyes but [only] with the eyes of faith. And so, under the form of bread, Christ is truly present in the sacrament. And none of the things which by means of that form the senses see, taste, smell, or touch are the true Body of Christ; rather, they are characteristic-signs, or sacraments, of that Body, which is present there and which is seen only by means of the intellect's faith. This [seeing by faith] is God's greatest gift, given to us pilgrims for our [spiritual] nourishment—

[given] until such time as we come from this perceptible world unto the intellectual Heaven, where we shall see Christ not as hidden beneath the sacraments and not by means of [the eyes of] faith but in truth [and] as He is.²⁷

[32] We pray for this Bread, and we are supposed to receive it with complete *faith*, with greatest *hope*, and with earnest *love*. We should truly receive Christ beneath the sacraments—[receive Him] in the *belief* that in all [instances of the eucharistic] sacrament He is truly and fully present beneath the entire form of the bread. By comparison, our soul is invisible but is truly and fully present in our each and every member, and a single face is present in the many eyes that see it, and a single word is present in the many ears that hear it, and a single skill is present in the many masters who exercise it, and a single truth is present in the many rational beings who know it. And just as our soul does not grow when we are small and then become large, but only our body does, so too Christ is not greater [or lesser] beneath the form of a large or a small piece of bread or beneath many or few [instances of the eucharistic] sacrament. We should also *hope* that we will come from faith to truth; and we should likewise receive Christ with great *love*, in order that through love we may be united to Him as our Good and our Salvation. Together with His wisdom Christ is given to us in His teaching. For in the teaching of the master artisan lies the art-of-mastery; therefore, we find Christ present in His teaching. And this fact is shown to us by the teaching of the holy Lord's Prayer, in which teaching Christ is present. For Christ's teaching is full of all wisdom, full of all virtue and—as in the case of the Master Himself—is as perfect as can be.

[33] Note now [the following] with respect to the words "Give us this day our daily bread": Since we are pilgrims, Jesus teaches us that we are to be without anxiety, inasmuch as God wills to give us that which is necessary for this life—[wills to give it] from day to day until we depart from this life. Accordingly, we should not expend great effort in greedily accumulating many possessions, as if we were not pilgrims but were permanent inhabitants of this earthly domain—or as if God did not know of what we have need and could not grant it in due time. Moreover, we are taught that we ought not to ask God for anything except the daily bread that is necessary. For otherwise He will not hearken to us. And if more comes to us than we have need of, [we are taught] that this [abundance] comes to us from God not as something for our sake but because of the need for it to be given by you to the

poor and the infirm, in order to meet their needs. [This abundance occurs] so that you may know (when you ask God for “our daily bread”) that such bread as God gives is not only yours but is also ours—i.e., is for those who have need of it besides you. And if you do not share with the needy the extra bread that remains after your needs are satisfied, then this fact is a sign that you have gathered such bread wrongly and greedily and that you wrongfully possess it and that you are unworthy of God, who has purposed to give to you, and to everyone, that which is necessary. By so acting you are withholding from poor children of God their [rightful] portion—[withholding it] contrary to God’s will and as an unfaithful servant.²⁸

[34] In this teaching, and in other teachings, of Christ in this holy Lord’s Prayer and in the holy Gospels, God gives us Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.²⁹ Moreover, God gives us for our pilgrimage a partaking of the Life of Christ, by means of which partaking we are nourished on our pilgrim’s way. For we find in this Nourishment that which we need for this pilgrimage. If because of haughtiness our journey is without resources, then in the humble journey of Christ we find nourishment. If we want to ask for this nourishment and to appropriate it, then our need is met, and our lack of resources (because of haughtiness) is no longer the case. If we mirror our life in the life of Christ, then we see what we are lacking and what we ought to do. If we want to journey to Christ unto eternal life, then we should take pains to walk in this earthly domain as Christ walked.³⁰ And, for the sake of our salvation, we ought not to scorn the way which Christ (who is God and man) walked (for our salvation) in accordance with His humanity, in which He is like us.

[35] And if you cannot completely keep to the pathway, then you must follow the pathway with such care that you are able to arrive at the goal, where Christ is. But if you leave the pathway and turn your back on it, then you have gone away from the pathway of life unto the pathway of death, and you will not come to Christ. Herefrom note how it is that on your pilgrimage you are nourished from the works of Christ’s [earthly] journeying. And if you neither ask for nor receive this Nourishment, then you are lacking Living Bread.

The foregoing is what you can gather from the above-written words.

[36] “*And forgive us our trespasses . . .*”
Christ teaches us that we ought to ask God for the forgiveness of our

trespasses. Herefrom we recognize that all of us by nature are burdened by trespasses. Now, since according to the teaching of Christ everyone should pray in this manner, everyone admits that he has trespassed. And the trespasses are *ours*, for they are ascribable to our nature. Hence, they are each man's own, and God is not a reason for, or a cause of, our trespasses. For they are ours; and, therefore, we ask for forgiveness. Herefrom take note of the fact that God alone forgives the trespasses that we have committed against Him—[forgives them] if we earnestly ask Him to. Here learn that you ought to believe that God can justify the sinner and can forgive his trespasses; and no trespass, whether great or small, is excepted [from this forgiveness]. Herefrom recognize that God's might is His mercy and that through His very gracious mercy He makes of one who is unjust one who is just—even as through His omnipotence He makes, in accordance with His will, something out of nothing, makes one who is alive out of one who is dead, makes one nature out of another nature, makes wine out of water. For His will is His might. And that which He wills, He can do; and [what he wills] must come to pass. Know, too, that no man should despair of God's mercy but should have, with undiminished steadfastness, the hope that God will forgive him. For Christ teaches you to ask for the forgiveness of your trespasses. Were it the case that you could not be forgiven, then Christ would not have instructed you that you should hope for forgiveness and should ask for it.

[37] You should also notice that this request begins with the word "And"; for we read, "And forgive us" This word "And" joins this request to the previous one: "Give us this day our daily bread. *And* forgive us our trespasses" For forgiveness of our trespasses cannot be ours apart from that Bread. Rather, we can ask for forgiveness of our trespasses [only] if we are united to the Heavenly Bread by faith. For of ourselves we have a trespass-prone and sin-prone nature, which is purified only in Christ. And so, the grace of purification from sins can reach our nature in no other way than through Christ, who also removes all our infirmities and makes payment for all our trespasses if we are united with Him in His Body, so that the confirmation of our redemption can then become ours. If Christ with His merit is united with us—by means of which merit we have all done in our nature what amounts to a sufficiency—then we are rightfully listened to by God. But otherwise we are not heard, because of the unreceptiveness of our nature.

[38] Note, too, that you are praying "forgive us *our* trespasses."

For he who is separated from the others and who aims to pray only for himself and not for the others cannot say “forgive *us* ...”; and, therefore, he accomplishes nothing. For at this point [in the Prayer] we learn that there is forgiveness of sins only in the harmony of the holy community of the Christian Church. Outside the Church the belief in Christ can help no one to be able to be redeemed from his transgressions.

[39] “... *as we forgive those who trespass against us.*”

In the holy Lord’s Prayer, in which everything that is necessary for us is brought together in one set of teachings, we find that which we are to do—[find it] only in this clause, viz., “... *as we forgive those who trespass against us.*” Hence, all of Christ’s commandments, which we are supposed to keep, are here gathered into one word, viz., the word “forgive”. Christ teaches us that God forgives us in no other way than as we forgive [others]. Herefrom note that it is Christ’s law that you do unto others as you want them to do unto you.³¹ This fact is shown by the words “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Now, if you ask God to forgive you but you do not forgive, then you deprive yourself of being forgiven. He who has trespassed against you is God’s creature, even as are you. God wills that that transgressor have his transgressions forgiven by you, even as you deem it good for you that God do for you such a thing as you choose not to do for the transgressor against you. How, then, are you worthy to receive from God the good of forgiveness if you yourself are not good enough to grant forgiveness?

[40] See what a reasonable and clear precept that is—[a precept] which everyone understands and cannot fail to approve of. He who prays that God forgive him and who himself does not forgive and who believes that his prayer is heard: he believes that God is not God and that wrong is right and that evil is good. By contrast, he who believes (as Christ taught us to believe) that God forgives [us] insofar as we forgive [others]: he has the rightful belief in God—[to wit], that He is the just and best God. And from a man’s own works of forgiveness he can gage his degree of hoping that he will be forgiven by God; and in love he can pray for forgiveness. Herefrom recognize, O Man, that in this way there is opened to you the only way whereby you can know whether you are heard by God and whether you are a child of God. This way is that, from and by your works, you recognize whether you do unto others as you would wish to have done unto you: viz., whether you sincerely forgive those who trespass against you and whether you

have toward them only love. Thereupon, without doubt, it is the case that you are entitled to have complete confidence (1) that you have obtained from God forgiveness of all your sins and (2) that you are a child of eternal life. For then you do not fail to fulfill any precept. For in the love-of-your-neighbor, which is demonstrated in the forgiveness of trespasses—[as evidenced] by your works—there lies the complete fulfillment of all precepts.³²

[41] *“Lead us not into temptation.”*

Here we are taught [the following]: Even if we have once fulfilled the law and have obtained the forgiveness of our sins, we are nevertheless not sure that we will remain standing and will not fall into transgression through being led into temptation. This means that temptation begins when we are free of sins. Now, we should believe that we can be shielded by God in order to remain standing and not to fall. And we should hope that we arrive at not falling, and we should ask it of God earnestly, i.e., with the words “Lead us not into temptation,” as if we meant to say: “O Lord, no deceit (under some aspect or other of the good) has by its temptation the power to seduce me unless You do it—i.e., unless You permit it (since all things happen by Your permission or Your will). And so, I entreat You: Do not withdraw Your protective hand in cases of temptation to evil; in this way I cannot fall. Otherwise, through the withdrawing of Your shield, You are leading me into temptation—even as the sun, through setting, produces for us night, in which we do not see.

[42] Know also how it is that we fall back into sins if we are temptingly seduced through an apparent-good (1) that is deceptively presented to our senses from this visible world or (2) that is presented to our reason by an evil spirit who tries to distract our understanding away from truth. And if we do not implore God to protect and shield us, then we become seduced, to the point that we come into temptation and deem the [object of] temptation as good. In this way we will have fallen away from God, who is the Highest Good—[fallen] unto the deceptive apparent-good. From that situation, we have no way back except, amid all our temptation, to ask God, in accordance with Christ’s teaching, that we not be led into temptation—[to ask] in accordance with the [following] words of that holy [Lord’s] Prayer:

[43] *“... but deliver us from evil.”*

Here, in these last words, we infer, from Christ’s teaching, that in this world we cannot be without temptation to evil. For we are situated here

below, where there is evil. Here we pray for deliverance. Thereby, [i.e., by thus praying], we profess (1) that there is another Kingdom, where there is no evil but where there is only the supreme, truthful, and pure Good and (2) that our deliverance from evil is deliverance from this sensory, malicious, deceptive world. And we long for the glory of the Eternal Good; only therein can we be delivered from all evil. For outside of the Highest Glory there is no abode of pure, imperishable, permanent good. We pray for this deliverance. Although we are presently situated amid the life of this sensory world and can come out of this world only through death, we believe and profess, together with [praying for deliverance], that after this bodily death we can have existence in a permanent, eternal Good; and we hope to come to it. And with great love we pray, and long, to come there, though this arrival cannot occur apart from our bodily death. And for this reason in [our praying] this Prayer, our sensory nature is caught up into the immateriality of our understanding, and the will of God is done on this earth of our senses as it is in the heaven of our understanding. For the whole man has wholly turned beyond himself to God and asks to be separated and delivered from this temporal, vain life in order to be in eternity with God, who is the Good (and who, hence, has the name “God” from the word “good”).

[44] Here note [the following]: He who would not gladly will to die this bodily death in order to come to God, and who does not pray for deliverance from evil, obtains nothing; for he prays contrary to his heart. And he who prefers this vain world to God remains separated from God and the Good and is eternally present amid evil, from which he can never again be freed. And hence, this [part of the Lord’s Prayer] is a prayer on the part of a man who harbors a rightful, unstained, and pure love for God. For this man prefers God to his temporal life and to all that is created and that is not God. He prays for deliverance from this insubstantial, transient life, in order to be present with his most beloved Good, without which Good he desires not to live. For he understands that he lives only in and through union with God. To this union his love conducts him, and in this union he exists only through love, although he is still trapped in this sensory world [and] in his fleshly temple. He prays with devotion for deliverance. This life is so sorrowful to him (because of the love that he harbors for God) that he seems to himself to be trapped in a shabby, dismal, unclean prison. And [it seems to him] that if he were out of this prison, he would come to a permanent, good, and supreme joy—would come to his most Beloved,

for whom only he longs.

[45] He, then, is in God's love and has come to this love in accordance with the teachings of this holy Lord's Prayer. And in order to belong especially to God, he finds beyond all artifices deliverance from evil, i.e., the gift of eternal life. For eternal life is nothing other than the highest thing that we can desire (and we can desire nothing other than the good). This Highest thing is God Himself. This man speaks: "O Lord, since through the Heavenly Bread [viz., Christ] You have forgiven me my trespasses, lead me not into temptation. Do not let me stay long in this deceptive world, where I cannot be untempted and cannot remain unseduced without Your protection. Rather, deliver me, O Lord, from all evil. For this is Your bequest, far from all evil. To this bequest You have called me through Your Son, Jesus."

[46] At this juncture be aware of [the following]: If you want to know what the eternal joy is that no man can comprehend because of its magnitude, then you will find out that eternal joy cannot be understood by us better or more concisely or more clearly than as Christ teaches us here [i.e., in the Prayer]. For joy is deliverance from evil. Do you want to know what Hell is? Christ teaches you that Hell is eternal imprisonment in evil. Deliverance from evil is the highest joy; not being freed from evil or being enmeshed in evil is the deepest sorrow and torment. The highest [and] Heavenly joy is to be in the Good, which is God, [and] to be eternally separated from evil. The most hellish, or most infernal, torment is to be separated from the Good, which is God. The Kingdom in which there is nothing but Good, or God, is called the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the Highest Kingdom. The kingdom in which there is nothing but wickedness and evil is called Hell. For "Hell" means *under* or *beneath*. And since Hell exists in separation, discord, strife, ignorance, and darkness, the princes of Hell are called Princes of darkness³³ or are called devils. But the Kingdom of Heaven is harmony, peace, love, wisdom, clarity, and everything that is good. Thus, its Prince is called the Deliverer from all evil; Him we beseech to deliver us from Hell and from all evil. Amen.

NOTES TO *SERMON XXIV*

1. In this prayer I follow the high German translation (from the Moselfränkisch dialect) made by Wolfgang Jungandreas and revised by Kurt Gärtner and Andrea Rapp: *Die Vaterunser-Erklärung in der Volkssprache* (Trier: Paulinus, 1999). Jungandreas's Moselfränkisch text is published in *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia*, Vol. XVI (*Sermones I (1430-1441)*), edited by Rudolf Haubst and Martin Bodewig (Hamburg: Meiner, 1984). This Moselfränkisch edition uses the title "Jhesus in eyner allerdemütlichster Menscheit," spelled accordingly.

2. The ordering, then, is (1) believing and understanding, (2) hoping, (3) longing, and (4) asking.

3. Matthew 6:9-13. Luke 11:2-4.

4. Nicholas and other Medieval Christians often use the language of emanation, without contrasting emanation (in a Plotinian sense) with creation *ex nihilo*. Cf. *De Docta Ignorantia* II, 4 (116:3); III, 3 (199:16-17). In the passage above, the German word used is "Ausfluß".

5. For Medieval thinkers, as also for Classical Greek thinkers, *one* is not regarded as a number but as the source of all numbers. A number of things is always more than one. The unit "1" is, however, used in numerical calculations.

6. Here Nicholas's German reads "Du bist".

7. Here both the King James version and the Douay-Rheims version of the Lord's Prayer read "in heaven"—in the singular. And by "heaven" they understand *God's abode*. The German translation uses the plural "in den Himmeln"; and the Vulgate has the plural "in caelis". Since God is omnipresent, He is present in the heavens. Nicholas here understands "heavens" to refer symbolically to the angelic natures.

8. The finite intellectual natures are the angels. The highest aspect of human nature is the intellectual power, which Nicholas distinguishes from the rational power, which is lower.

9. Philippians 2:9.

10. This idea becomes central years later in Nicholas's dialogue *De Possesse*.

11. That which is *contracted* remains ever so, without ever becoming *absolute*. God alone is absolute, and the divine nature never becomes contracted—not even in the Incarnation.

12. Ephesians 2:3.

13. Isaias (Isaiah) 59:2.

14. Isaias (Isaiah) 59:2.

15. In the Latin Vulgate there are but three words ("Fiat voluntas tua"), as is also true in German ("Dein Wille geschehe").

16. In Latin ("sicut in caelo et in terra") and in German ("wie im Himmel und auf Erden") the word "and" ("et"/"und") occurs—something not true of the King James English translation.

17. See, above, the section marked by margin number 9.

18. Here Nicholas distinguishes the human spirit from the human soul. Note Hebrews 4:12 and I Thessalonians 5:23.

19. Cf. Romans 7:22-23.

20. Matthew 6:11.

21. John 6:33 and 48-52.
22. John 6:41 and 51.
23. Colossians 1:15.
24. I. e., Christ is the Ultimate Perfection of all things.
25. Nicholas is here speaking of the Church as the invisible communion of saints. He is not endorsing the view that there is no salvation outside of the visible Church.
26. I Thessalonians 5:17.
27. I John 3:2.
28. Cf. Matthew 25:14-30.
29. John 14:6.
30. I John 2:6.
31. Matthew 7:12.
32. Matthew 22:39-40.
33. Ephesians 6:12.

Sermon XXV: Quo Modo Deus Creavit Hominem

(“ God created man ...”)¹

[1441-1444; unknown where preached²]

[1] [Let us consider] the fact that God created man on the sixth day and that in that work He placed the goal of creation. He situated man in Paradise, which was planted from the beginning, wherein were all delights. Now, God had commanded man not to eat of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but He did not forbid him [from eating of] the Tree of life. However, man—wanting to seek life in and through his own knowledge in order, through knowing, to become like the Most High—sinned and incurred the death of ignorance. And while being unable to live in and through his own knowledge, he was cast out by God from the Paradise planted from the beginning; and he returned unto the earth of his own sensuality in order to till the earth.³

[2] And a Cherubim guarded the Paradise with a flaming sword. For when man did not want to have life in God’s Garden but sought, in and through his own knowledge, life and a likeness to the Most High: then, having entered into his own earth, he found thistles and thorns. For our earth does not yield anything else unless in it other things are planted by God. Hence, man, who by his own knowledge raised himself unto the likeness of God, was prevented from extending his power to the point of life and of immortality. For human knowledge does not attain unto the infinite, the eternal, the immense, and the immortal, because the Cherubim with the flaming sword prevents this [attainment]. For the Cherubim is [symbolic of] the seat of God—who sits above the Cherubims.⁴ For the intellect, which is supposed to attain unto God and immortality, must come to the simplicity of the Cherubim—unto which simplicity it is not possible that our work on this earth-of-our-human-knowledge arrive. For the very subtle intellect of the Cherubim is higher than our human knowledge to the extent that a firey, flaming sword and the acuteness of fire are superior to the dust of the earth.

[3] Therefore, man, being outside the Paradise of God’s Garden attempted to make gardens on his own earth in order to see whether he could obtain nourishment; and he fell into [fashioning] a grove and [worshipping] a multiplicity of gods. But God had mercy upon man and revealed to him that immortal life is to be sought not in a grove and a multiplicity of different philosophical views but in that Simple Oneness from which our entire being derives as from a Father. And

God led this people of His from the wisdom of the Egyptians to the desert so that in the desert they might seek salvation in Oneness. And He promised to them, in the desert, a land flowing with milk and honey. And by means of many prophecies and sacrifices He revealed to them that in the renouncing of knowledge they would discover, even in the desert of simple faith, that human nature was to be elevated unto immortality.

[4] Therefore, God gave to His people, in the desert, the Law of servitude,⁵ through which they would be kept from fornication, as concerns both idolatry and their own knowledge, and through which they would stand in faith, as concerns one God the Father. God promised that He would lead them from this indeed solitary desert and from the captivity stemming from the laws unto the land of promise and of freedom, where they would be able to taste more fully of the pleasantness and truth of the immortality to be obtained. Therefore, when the fullness of time came, etc.,⁶ God gave us through Christ precious and very great promises in order that through them we might be made partakers of the divine nature⁷

[5] The Eternal Word is Life, and in the Word all things are life, as says the Gospel.⁸ And note this point well: that in order that in Paradise we may live amid all pleasure, there is a prohibition against coming to the Tree of knowledge. Therefore, the Tree of life was planted from the beginning. In it all things are life, because from it sprouts the fruit of life. To us there was made the promise that we can return to this Tree.

[6] Take note of the Gospel of John: "He gave them the power to become sons of God ...," etc.⁹ At the end of the same [Gospel we read]: "... so that believing, you may have life in His name."¹⁰ Likewise, He says: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."¹¹ [7] Note the text in Chapter 1 [of the Letter] to the Ephesians: "I make mention of you in my prayers, [praying] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation with regard to the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your heart being enlightened, so that you may know what the hope is of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us, who have believed in accordance with the operation of that power of His which He wrought in Christ, raising Him up from the dead and setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality ...," etc.¹² He "is filled all in all."¹³ Etc.

NOTES TO *SERMON XXV*

1. Genesis 1:27.
2. Sermons XXV and XXVI are obviously sermon-sketches.
3. Genesis 3:23.
4. Psalms 79:2 (80:1). In the sermon-passage above I am reading “sedet” in place of “sedes”.
5. Romans 7. Galatians 3:10-11.
6. Galatians 4:4.
7. II Peter 1:4.
8. John 1:3-4.
9. John 1:12.
10. John 20:31.
11. John 14:6.
12. Ephesians 1:16-21.
13. Ephesians 1:23.

Sermon XXVI: Carissimi, Omnes Unanimes

(“Dearly Beloved, all of one mind”)¹

[1441-1444; unknown where preached]

[1] “Dearly Beloved, be ye all of one mind in prayer”²

Augustine teaches that prayer is necessary. For no one is saved unless he asks for God’s grace, without which grace no one is saved. For prayer reconciles, provided that [praying] is done in spirit with highest faith and trust. For [our] most gracious and most powerful God is a Spirit and, thus, is to be worshipped in spirit.³ Prayer strengthens the spirit, just as Christ was strengthened, as an example to us, when He prayed more earnestly.⁴ Prayer overcomes our Adversary:⁵ “Watch and pray, so that you not enter into temptation.”⁶

[2] Prayer requires that one be humble. Faith accomplishes this [humbling]; hope makes prayer long-suffering; love brings about prayer’s oneness-of-mind. Ecclesiasticus 35: “The prayer of one who humbles himself penetrates the clouds.”⁷ “The Lord is high and looks upon things lowly.”⁸ “He has shown regard for the prayer of the humble,”⁹ as in the case of the Pharisee [and the Publican], etc.¹⁰ Moreover, [consider] Luke 18: “It is necessary to pray always”; and Jesus spent the night in prayer.¹¹ Furthermore, [it is necessary that those who pray] be of one mind: Acts 1: With one mind they persevered in prayer.¹² And this [is meant] in the sense that we be of one mind in fellowship, that we live with similar values, and that we make progress¹³ [3] Likewise, [consider] that prayer is of such great efficacy that it is efficacious for all things. In the case of Daniel and of Moses and of the saints we have countless examples [of prayer’s efficacy]. Indeed, prayer moved Christ to come down [from Heaven], as the doctors [of the Church] state.

[4] However, prayer ought to be—according to Exodus 30—like fragrant incense of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense,¹⁴ so that one’s sacrifice may be acceptable. *Stacte* is [symbolic of] a kind of myrrh that keeps the flesh from putrefying, since the lust of the flesh militates against prayer. Isaias 1: When you multiply your prayers ..., etc.¹⁵ Job 16: Prayers are to be pure.¹⁶ By “*onycha*” is understood (1) spice that is like a perfume, (2) humility of mind, and (3) an abundance of spiritual anticipatory relishing. Judith 9: From the beginning the proud have not pleased You; but the entreaties of the

humble and the meek have always pleased You.¹⁷ By “*galbanum*,” which rids of carbuncles, is signified the kindness of benevolence—or the increase of heart-felt affection—that is extended to all others. Furthermore, [such kindness] moves one’s enemies to kindness. Moreover, it is said that Stephen by means of prayer brought about the conversion of Paul. *Frankincense* that is burning indicates [fervent] prayer ..., etc.

NOTES TO *SERMON XXVI*

1. Adapted from I Peter 3:8.
2. I Peter 3:8.
3. John 4:24.
4. Luke 22:43 (22:43-44).
5. I Peter 5:8.
6. Mark 14:38.
7. Ecclesiasticus 35:21.
8. Psalms 137:6 (138:6).
9. Psalms 101:18 (102:17)
10. Luke 18:9-14.
11. Luke 18:1 and 6:12.
12. Acts 1:14.
13. Cf. Philippians 2:2.
14. Exodus 30:34-35.
15. Isaias (Isaiah) 1:15: “When you multiply prayer, I will not hear you.”
16. Job 16:18.
17. Judith 9:16.