

Loquere et Exhortare

(“Speak and Exhort...”)*¹

[January 1, 1457; preached in Brixen]²

[1] “Speak and exhort and rebuke, with all authority.” Titus 2 and in [today’s] office of the mass.

Paul teaches me by means of Bishop Titus what the nature of my [ecclesiastical] office is: viz., to speak in church, to exhort, to rebuke. And the first [of these] is supposed to take place for the purpose of instructing; the second, for imitating; the third, for correcting; and they [are to be done] with all authority. Now, Paul teaches at the end of the epistle [to Titus] that he who is not corrected by means of three warnings is to be shunned as being a heathen and as being one who is excommunicated and is a heretic. Note [the word] “authority”: if I am to speak, then there must be present those to whom I speak. Likewise, if I am to exhort or to rebuke, [there must be present those whom I exhort or rebuke].

[2] What, then, [is to be done] about those who despise [the admonition and the admonisher]? After the words of our theme-text Paul says: “Let no one despise you”³ Indeed, even as he commands me to speak, to exhort, and to rebuke, with all authority, so he commands all those who are entrusted to me not to despise me when I rebuke. Hence, one who does not want to hear the word of God is seen to despise [God’s word]. Contempt is a mortal sin. Therefore, if one who hears but does not obey is to be shunningly regarded as one who is excommunicated, then all the more [is] one who is unwilling to listen to admonitions and exhortations [to be shunned]. How do [such ones] presume to approach the sacrament of the Eucharist?—[I mean] those who despise acceding to the words (1) by means of which the grace of salvation is ministered and distributed to those present and (2) by means of which the nourishment of life is ministered and distributed through the living word of God. The Eucharist is a sacrament of the word. For the feeding of the spirit by faith is arrived at under the forms of bodily feeding. This [faith is faith] that the word of God is the nourishment of the life of a rational spirit. He who does not deign to receive into his rational soul the word by way of its articulation—how does he rightly believe that the Eucharist is the sacrament-of-grace of the nourishing word? [The situation] is seen to be like the following: [it is] as

if someone wanted to be a Platonist on the basis of inspecting a book of Plato's but did not deign to listen to Plato when he was speaking *vive voce*.

[3] I ask: how does the Eucharist become for you the living Bread⁴ if you will not have been taught by the word itself? Indeed, the living word in the sermon makes the Eucharist tasty to you. The Eucharist will not become food for the rational soul except through the illumination of the word: otherwise, that delicious savor remains hidden from you and you will not know how it is that it contains all succulence.⁵ One who is unknowing partakes of the succulence as a carnal man rather than as a spiritual man; for his spirit discerns nothing of it, nor will he ever be able, of himself, to discern it unless he be instructed. [The situation is] as if to someone born blind there were said when wheaten bread was presented to him: "Eat this bread and you will become exceedingly lovely and perfectly complected in countenance." The blind man would scarcely esteem these words, because he would not understand [talk about] the beauty of color. Rather, in order for him to appreciate⁶ this gift, you would need to open his eyes. And he, in seeing beautiful colors and in believing that he would obtain such [a lovely complexion], would eagerly eat that bread which would furnish the coloring. Yet, of himself he would never come to this [awareness]. And unless he were enlightened [through sight], he would partake [of the wheaten bread] without the delight of the promise of color. Analogously, it is the case that the enlightenment which comes through the word is necessary for all who are to consume the sacrament of the Eucharist with delight and with inner desire and devoutness; otherwise, [i.e., apart from the enlightenment, the Eucharist] is approached without fervor—as often happens.

In the foregoing way I have set forth the foregoing points on this first day of January in order that those who seldom or never listen to the word of God may know that they, as being despisers of the word, are to be excluded from the Eucharist—as elsewhere I have quite often admonished.

[4] However, the Apostle says: "the grace of God our Savior has appeared . . .," etc.⁷ He intends that Titus instruct the people as follows: viz., that there has appeared the grace of God our Savior—[the grace] that in the subsequent chapter he calls the kindness, and the humanness, that Christ is.⁸ Herefrom you know (in conformity with today's Gospel-reading) why His name is "Jesus"—[viz.,] because He is the

Kindness of God our Savior. God is Savior, and Jesus is His Salvation. God is truthful, and Jesus is His Truth. God is gracious, and Jesus is His Graciousness. God is kind, and Jesus is His Kindness. God is wise, and Jesus is His Wisdom. God is omnipotent, and Jesus is His Omnipotence, or His Power. God is Creator, and Jesus is His Creation. God is Teacher, and Jesus is His Instruction. By way of illustration: Suppose someone were to point to a book of Plato's that contained in it Plato's complete teachings and were to say: "Plato is the teacher, and this is his teaching." Or [suppose] he were to say in pointing to a sculpture of a lyre, painstakingly produced: "The lyre, in the artistic skill of the sculptor, is the instructor, and this [product] is its instruction."

[5] And, in sum, Jesus is He in whom human nature has obtained all that which it desires and all that which we attribute to God. Human nature desires Happiness, which God is. The human nature in Jesus obtained Happiness because it apprehended God. And Jesus the Son of man obtained happiness in such a way that He not only has it but also can impart it. Adam obtained a soul that was alive with a rational life, which is the happiness characteristic of this world and is the image of eternal happiness. But he did not obtain happiness in such a way that he could impart it; for he received this gift-of-reason only for himself. However, he received human animality for the purpose of imparting it, because he received a [procreatable] animal nature. [But] he did not in this way receive the image of God, or the image of Wisdom. However, Christ, the Second Adam,⁹ received the nature of Wisdom, or the essence of Wisdom. [He did] not [receive] an *unimpartible* image [of Wisdom]. And so, He was made into a Spirit that enlivens all those who receive Him.¹⁰

[6] Moreover, consider that Paul says "kindness appeared."¹¹ For Jesus is the Manifestation of God, inasmuch as He is the one in whom are enfolded all the things that are God's or that can be attributed to God. [He is], as it were, the Manifestation of the vessel of God's treasure—[a vessel] that contains in itself all the things that are God's, even as the Apostle says that all the treasures of God's knowledge and wisdom are hidden in Him.¹² Therefore, Jesus is the Appearance, or Revelation, or Manifestation, of the Hidden God.¹³ And note that I said that He is God's Creation; for God is the Creator, but Jesus is the Creation. For only in Jesus does the power of the Creator appear; for in Jesus the omnipotence of the Creator is revealed.

[7] God creates all things by means of Creation. But Creation is Jesus, by whom God also made the world”¹⁴ as a painter paints by means of the art-of-painting, which is called depiction. Therefore, let it be the case that a painter, by means of painting, passes on to one of his paintings the skill-of-painting by which he paints all things¹⁵—as a father, by procreating a child, passes down to him by nature the power of procreating. In an analogous way God the Father, by creating, united to this same Son of His the art-of-creating through which He created Jesus, the Son of man. So Jesus is God’s true Creation, in whom the Creative Power, or Creative Art, or Creation, is “creature-fied” [i.e., is made to be a creature]—as I said recently¹⁶ about ice that it is coldness turned into water. Jesus went forth from God [both] by way of nature and by way of art. [It was] by way of nature because from the *substance* of the Father He is the Son, is God from God; [it was] by way of art because He was *created*. And, in this way, the [Eternally] Begotten [Son of God] is *created* [as a human being], and the Natural [Son of God] is *produced* [as a human being]. Furthermore, in the Sonship of Jesus there coincides all sonship—[sonship] of nature and [sonship] of grace. Whatever is produced through an art is produced by grace, because it is produced only by means of the free will of the artisan.¹⁷ Thus, creating is from grace. And so, the Creation in the case of Jesus, [i.e., in the case of a created human nature that is hypostatically united to the divine nature], enfolds [both] nature and art, in that [the Creation] is the Father’s Art, while being also the [natural] Sonship of the Father and the [natural] sonship of the mother, [Mary].¹⁸

[8] Now, in order that you may understand the Apostle—to the effect (1) that through Jesus there is rebirth unto immortality and (2) that He is the Seed through which all nations of the earth will be blessed and (3) that by nature and by grace He is the Resurrection: although quite often I have touched upon these topics, nevertheless I think it still useful to recall them [now]. Therefore, note that father Adam, in begetting a natural son, [Cain], imparted to him at the same time the power of begetting. For since Adam was mortal and could not by his own power exist always, he sought (when naturally aroused) to be renewed in and through offspring. And because they, too, were mortal as was he, their father: he passed on to these same offspring, at the time [of begetting them], the same power of begetting, so that in this way he would, because of the reoccurrences, never perish. So Adam lived in all his offspring, and he is renewed in and through every procreation. Hence, humanity—which is the same as *of Adam-ness*¹⁹ (for

“*adama*,”²⁰ like “*humus*,” is a word for earth)—is one [species] in all human beings. In all [human beings humanity] is from one [and the same human being]. Accordingly, in all of Adam’s descendants, the [specific] humanity is not aged but is always renewed.

[9] Now, humanity encompasses all human beings. For example, as Adam is alive in Peter, his successor, so too are all who are enfolded in Adam. But all human beings are enfolded in Adam as in the father of all. Thus, in each human being there is present the humanity of all the human beings—the humanity that is enfolded in Adam. In every man descended from Adam, Paul saw “that old man,” who is Adam. [It is] as if we were to say that in all vines the first vine is alive with a vegetative life. For vine-sprouts are cut off from the first vine and are planted. From them come [new] vines, and from these latter [come] still other vine-sprouts, and so on, so that there are no vines unless the first vine lives in them. Nevertheless, because of the variation in the soil and in the location and the likes, [the vines] do not [all] produce the same fruit or produce fruit that is of the same quality. We must think in an analogous way concerning human beings. Hence, the culling of seed from Adam and his descendants is the culling of a portion [of the seed] in whose power is the flesh, i.e., the carnal, or animal, life. [In its power] is not the rational life, which alone is said (in man) to be the life through which man is distinguished from other [animals].

[10] And so, Moses says that life was given to man through the breathing-in of a rational soul, or rational spirit.²¹ And such [a soul] is not in the power of the seed and is not divisible into more than one but is an image of Eternal Wisdom. And so, the things that in a father are from [the father’s] reason are not imparted to the son in procreation. Likewise, [those features] that belong to an art are [also not imparted]. For example, a grammarian does not beget a grammarian. And so, Paul calls a human being [insofar as he is descended] from Adam *animal*, because by virtue of the fact that a human being is from Adam he does not perceive the things that are of God.²² For only the rational spirit, which is only from God, can perceive these things. But in Jesus this seed from Adam—[seed] that enfolds all men—has obtained blessing and immortality. For [in Jesus] the humanity is united to the Son of God, and the mortal son from Adam is united to the Only-Begotten Son of God.

[11] Moreover, consider that there is one only-begotten Son of God. For if because mortal Adam could continue to exist only through

such [procreational] renewal he beget descendants who had the power of procreating on and on, then since God is immortal, He begets only a single, immortal Son, in and through whom He embraces His own immortality²³ most delightfully, just as a father in and through his son [embraces] his own life. For a man who lives in and through his children has joy (Ecclesiasticus 25).²⁴ So too, our Heavenly Father—who grants to Adam reproductive power so that Adam may be glad [at the prospect of] living in and through his son—cannot be sterile, as points out Isaias.²⁵ Thus, He is not deprived of that eternal joy; rather, He is always begetting a Son,²⁶ in and through whom He embraces Himself with very delightful love. Without this delight that He takes in His knowledge of Himself, apprehension of Himself, and embrace of Himself, God would lack a fatherly state of mind and could not be utmostly happy. This Only-Begotten Son of God assumed from the Virgin Mary the humanity of Adam according to the flesh. In her are enfolded Adam and all those who are in his power. And so, the Only-Begotten Son is as the true Vine,²⁷ which was a sprout taken from Adam and which grew in the earth of the Blessed Virgin—[grew] into the true Vine, bearing true fruit.

[12] Now, truth is incorruptible. And so, the humanity, or *of Adam-ness*,²⁸ in Jesus is united to Immortality, or Son of God. Therefore, rightly, all nations of the earth (i.e., of Adam) will be blessed in Christ,²⁹ in whom [Christ's] humanity obtained the blessing of continuance—[continuance] not only unto the fourth and the fifth generation but forever. And from this blessing comes the resurrection of mortal man unto immortality. This [resurrection] will occur after the begetting and propagation of Adamic life ceases. For when begetting and when the renewal of humanity by way of succession and propagation cease, Jesus will come in an immortal humanity—[come] raising the dead. As a result, just as mortal humanity existed in temporal succession, [so too] thenceforth—when heavenly motion and temporal succession thus cease—[it will be] resurrected unto an immortal, steadfast life apart from procreation.

[13] And next we must consider that there is another blessing—[one] that pertains to man's rational spirit. This blessing comes by grace; through grace man's spirit, which is the image of Wisdom, is joined to its Exemplar, viz., to Eternal Wisdom. Through Eternal Wisdom [man's] spirit is made happy, and through his *spirit's* happiness, the *whole man* [is made happy]. And [this blessing] is called the

blessing of believers, the father of whom is named Abraham.³⁰ Similarly, the intellect in Christ is united to Eternal Wisdom, so that His humanity obtained, through this [uniting], the grace of Sonship with God. Through Sonship [Christ's humanity] was transformed into something better, and it obtained fullness of grace and of blessing—[a fullness] that suffices for all [believers]. And, thus, Christ is the one in whom are enfolded all the blessings of the sensual life that derives from Adam and of the rational life that derives from Abraham. Not through anyone else except through this Son-of-man-and-of-God can a man obtain salvation and live with [both] the life-of-man and the life-of-God according to the spirit (which is from God).

[14] Therefore, in and through Christ believers are transformed into sons of God. Since on the basis of Christ's merit this transformation is accomplished by the gift and grace of God, with man's merit concurring: not all [men] who shall arise will be transformed³¹ so as to become, in the resurrection, Christlike. Rather, each [*believer* shall be transformed] in his own order, as he has merited³²—first Christ, then those who are Christ's. And this transformation by means of which a believer passes into becoming a son of God through Christ is called Abraham's blessing, i.e., the blessing on the part of the father of believers.³³ For just as Adam is the father of men, so Abraham is the father of men who believe in God. Accordingly, Luke in his genealogy of our Savior calls Jesus the son of Adam, whereas Matthew [calls Him] the son of Abraham.³⁴ Furthermore, Abraham's blessing, which is the blessing of believers, pertains to the seed of Abraham that is present in Christ, in whom all believers obtain the blessing of resurrection together with transformation. Hence, the Apostle says: "All shall arise"—namely, Adam and all his offspring, whether before or after Abraham—"but not all shall be changed."³⁵ For only believers, who have hoped in the Lord, [will be changed]. They are called by Abraham's name, seeing that he was found to be so faithful as regards the sacrifice of his son [Isaac] that his seed as present in Christ rightly obtained the final and maximal blessing. Christ was prefigured in Isaac, since Christ was found to be truly faithful to, and obedient to, the Father even unto death on the Cross. By participation in Christ all believers in God—whether they be before or after Abraham—shall not only arise but also be changed. For they shall be Christlike sons of God.

[15] And if I rightly understand Paul, who says "all shall arise," then man will not live in the general resurrection unless Jesus [lives],

who is the Resurrection and the Life.³⁶ Although there are saints who do not experience corruption, nevertheless they will not any the less therefore need Christ, the First-begotten from the dead, who by His own power by which He arose causes them to pass from death unto life. And this resurrection is not due to our merit or to the merit of anyone. Rather, the Father gave all men to His Son, who is also the Son of man. And [the Son] does not allow them—because they are of the same [human] nature [as is He]—to be reduced to nothing. Instead, [He causes] them to come before His tribunal and to be judged, so that His majesty is manifested. Therefore, those who shall arise unto the judgment of condemnation will go unto punishment, according as they have merited it. But those who will arise unto eternal life will be transformed into Christlikeness; they shall be like Him, so that in them all Christ will be all things.³⁷ Hence, this transformation is called regeneration in Christ.³⁸ [It is the time] when the old man³⁹ crosses over into [being] a new creation that is conformed to Christ.⁴⁰

[16] Furthermore, the Apostle Paul takes up—at this point and in the following chapter of the Letter [to Titus]—how it is that the foregoing [transformation] occurs. For on the basis of Christ’s merit it occurs through the laver of renewal by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is given abundantly to those who receive Christ.⁴¹ Now, those who receive Christ are described in the Letter [to Titus]. In particular, they are those who receive Christ’s instruction and leave behind worldly desires and live soberly, justly, and piously in this world. [Christ], by His own blood, has redeemed these men, who are practicers of good works.⁴²

Let the foregoing points have been stated in the way they have been, so that somehow you may apprehend (in accordance with today’s Gospel-reading) that Christ is the True Savior and the True Jesus⁴³ and the True Word that encompasses all men. He encompasses *some* as those who are to be damned by a sentence of condemnation; He encompasses *others* as those who are to be mercifully rewarded by a sentence of absolution.

[17] Moreover, because the Father has given all things to the Son, He allows nothing to be outside [the Son] or to fall away toward nothing. All things exist in the Son; but in Him believers not only *exist* but also *live* with a rational life and *understand* truth, by which truth they are made eternally happy. Now, take note of the fact that we [believers] shall live in Christ. And this [living in Christ] is nothing

except that Christ shall live in us, [as] He says in John 14: “Because I shall live, you too shall live.”⁴⁴ [It is] as if the hand were to say, “because I shall live, you, my fingers, shall live”—or as if a true vine were to say, “because I live, you, my sprouts, shall live.”

[18] **At one time** Paul is seen to say that just as the life of the Father is hidden in the life of the Son, so our life [is hidden] in Jesus,⁴⁵ seeing that Jesus is Son of man, or Son of Adam. For each descendant of Adam can be named Adam, or man—these being the same thing. And Jesus is called the Son of man (as is every descendant of Adam) and is called the Last Adam.⁴⁶ For the life of Adam is hidden in Him, where it is thenceforth immortal and not able to procreate. And so, [Jesus] is called the Last Adam. And, hence, we sang today in the introit of the mass: “Unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given.”⁴⁷ Accordingly, [Jesus] is given to us as a Son, because our [Adamic] life is hidden in Him.

[19] **At another time**, Paul is seen to say that Jesus is hidden in us. [For Paul] says: “I do not live, but Christ lives in me.”⁴⁸ And Christ is begotten in us by God’s word, which enters through the ear and is conceived in the intellectual spirit by faith; and it grows until Christ is begotten in us. In this way Christ is hidden in Christians, whose life is hidden in Christ. [20] The word of God begets wisdom in the soul. That is, [the word] begets itself, because the word of God is the wisdom of God. The rational soul harbors this [word] as its secret [possession]—even as the Prophet hid the words of God in his heart in order that he might live.⁴⁹ And so, if you rightly consider the fact that Christ is hidden in us, it is the fact that He is conceived in the rational soul as a seed of life—[a seed conceived] by means of the word [of God], [a seed conceived] in order that [the word] may grow there [within the soul] and in order that Jesus, who is the Wisdom of God, may be begotten [in the soul]. And in Jesus, as in the offspring of our spirit,⁵⁰ there is present the hidden life of our spirit. And the soul in which there is present only God’s will is referred to by Jesus as His mother (Matthew 12).⁵¹

[21] Moreover: “Where your treasure is, there is also your heart.”⁵² However, the treasure of the rational soul is only the word of God, or the wisdom of God. Our heart, i.e., our affectional life, is hidden in this treasure. And, thus, the soul is hidden in its Treasure, which, [in turn], is hidden in the soul. But in this world we cannot experience this fact. And so, the Word-made-flesh (John 14) says: “The world

does not see me, but you see me; because I live you also shall live. On that day you shall know that I am in my Father and that you are in me and that I am in you.”⁵³ [22] [Jesus] had said earlier that the Son is in the Father and that the Father is in the Son.⁵⁴ And, accordingly, I understand that he in whom Jesus is invisibly hidden in this world—in him [Jesus] will be manifested on the day when hidden things shall be revealed. And we shall know Him who was hidden in us—[shall know] how it is that He is in us and that we are in Him. For as life is in the body, so [Christ] is in us; and as the body is alive by means of life, so we [are alive] in and through Him. And the Father is present in Christ as the intellect [is present] in its word and its reason. And Christ is in the Father as reason is in the intellect.⁵⁵ Indeed, he who has Jesus within himself has [also] God the Father, in Jesus, and has all the saints, who are present in Jesus. And in that [believer] God and Jesus and all the saints are present. Whoever has Jesus has the Treasure-of-the-good, in which are all [goods]. And so, he is happy with utmost happiness.

[23] Perhaps someone will say:

From the things that have been said, it seems that in the whole of human nature there is nothing but one Adam and one Christ. For what are human beings who derive from Adam except Adam—thus-unfolded-and-multiplied? As Paul states in Acts 17: from one [man] all [men] are multiplied.⁵⁶ Similarly, number derives from the power of oneness; nevertheless, in number there is only oneness that is unfolded. Hence, in all the descendants of Adam there is Adam himself as renewed; and the descendants have from Adam all that they are; and they are in him and he, in them. And this [mutual presence occurs] with respect to Adam’s nature, which is of the earth and of this perceptible world; and in Hebrews 12 [Adam] is called the father of the flesh.⁵⁷

Likewise, with respect to the immaterial, intellectual nature that is present in a man ([and] without which a man is not a man), it seems that there is nothing but one Christ. For Christ is the Wisdom of God, from which Wisdom there emanates the spirit of understanding⁵⁸ that is infused into the sensory nature that is propagated from Adam. Hence, in Christ Jesus there is one wisdom, which is united to Adam’s nature [and] which is unfolded in every man—just as there is one wisdom that makes all [wise men] wise by unfolding its power and imparting itself. (For example, Plato’s wisdom unfolds itself and imparts itself and in this way multiplies itself in his disciples, in whom there is but one Platonic wisdom that is unfolded and multiplied.)

[24] To the foregoing [assertions] I respond [as follows]:⁵⁹ To one who seriously considers [the matter] there comes to mind that God

(who is called the Creator of all) created all men in creating Adam. In Adam He created all men, because He created Adam as the father of them all. In Adam's fertility all future men are enfolded in a potential way, just as the future is enfolded in the present. However, the fertility of the species is unfolded through individuals, seeing that the species is the nature and that, considered in and of itself, is uncontracted⁶⁰ to *mode*. But in the unfolding of the fertility, [the species] becomes of a determinate mode. [It is] as if the unfolding were not possible apart from a contraction-made-determinate. This [determinate contraction] is called a mode of the nature (i.e., of the species)—just as the unfolding of oneness does not occur apart from a determinate number. Analogously, the one species, or one specific nature, that was in Adam is unfolded in his many descendants, who are of the same species. But the specific nature that was created in Adam—[created] with fertility—was sent to the earth, as Moses reports [in Genesis]. In order that on earth [the nature] might be *Adam*, it was determined to a certain mode, so that it would be “thus and so.” But the “thus and so” is not impartible [to another individual] even though the *nature* that is present in that individual, and in that way, *is* imparted [to another]. By way of illustration: this particular candle is not impartible; for this one thing cannot at the same time be both one thing and more than one thing, although the fire with which the candle burns is impartible to another [candle]. Now, even as the fire that is imparted is not some other fire (even though it is received only in another candle), so too a son (to whom a father has imparted his own nature and not a different nature) is not the father but [is someone] other [than the father].

[25] Similarly, there is but one Adam, if we are referring to the species created in him; but there are many sons, [or descendants], if we are referring to the individuation, or reception, of the species. The case is similar as regards the Spirit that is from Eternal Wisdom. For there is [but] one Wisdom that is united to the humanity in Christ. This Wisdom illumines every man—even as one face that shows itself in all mirrors multiplies its appearance [*species*]. The [face] is determined in different ways in the different mirrors, which capture its image. Analogously, let it be the case that the light of a candle is, as it were, the image of the light of Wisdom and that by means of the lit candle (i.e., [symbolically speaking], by means of the man who is alive with a sensory life) that illumining light (viz., the image of Wisdom) is present. [And let it be] that, as a result, not only does the candle burn but it also enlightens itself by means of a *living* light of knowledge, so that

it knows those objects toward which it directs itself. Such a light shines forth in different ways in the different candles since it is received in different ways in the different burning [candles]. Thus, no candle shines as does another; rather, [it shines] either more dimly or more brightly [than the others]. But because the light is a living, intellectual light, then when the light is instructed, it can eliminate the dimness and the causes of its dimness. For we see that the intellect has found ways of pruning burning candles that do not shine brightly. And so, if a candle were alive with an intellectual life, it could—through Wisdom’s teaching—prune away its impediments.

[26] Note, furthermore, that the rational soul is like a mirror that receives into itself the Face-of-God that is imprinted on it, as says the Prophet.⁶¹ But every image in a material mirror is directed toward its exemplar. If you look into a mirror, your image appears. It is directed toward you, the viewer, and not at all toward anything else. And we see by a [comparative] similarity that even when the mirror is destroyed the image [still] aims to return to its exemplar and aims not to get divided into pieces but rather to return as entire. So too, the image of God in the soul does not aim to impart itself to anything else but aims to return to its Creator. And the wings of its returning are love. But if it does not return, it is because of the fact that it is held back by love of the world and is inclined [toward the world] through inordinate desire, which predominates in this world.

[27] Furthermore, consider carefully that Christ is the Father of spirits (as Paul is seen to call Him in Hebrews 12)⁶² and is the Exemplar of our rational spirit, which is an image of Christ. And, hence, just as Adam, the father of the flesh, lives in and through his descendants {for as is said in Ecclesiasticus 30:⁶³ “The father is dead, and, as it were, is not dead; for he has left behind one who is like himself. While [the father] lived, he saw [the one to be left behind], and he rejoiced in that one; and when [the father] died, [the father] was not sorrowful”}, so the delights of Eternal Wisdom are [the delights of] being with the children of men.⁶⁴ The latter are called men because in them is present the light of Wisdom’s life. For what was made was, in Him [i.e., Christ], Life; and the Life was the Light of men.⁶⁵ And this [spirit of ours] is a rational spirit, whose father is Christ Jesus, the Word of God. Accordingly, just as a father rejoices in his children,⁶⁶ so Christ [rejoices] in His spiritual children. And He loves them because they are His children; and He lives in them as their Father; and they

[live] in Him because their [respective] spirit has no place to return-to other than to its own Exemplar, because it has the Fount of its life from nowhere else than from its own Father, or Wisdom.

[28] Now, the world shall pass away together with its lusts,⁶⁷ because flesh and blood shall not possess the Kingdom of everlasting life. And the old, earthly Adam will be transformed as a whole into a Heavenly Adam, because the corruptible shall put on incorruption,⁶⁸ and what is carnal shall become spiritual. And Christ shall reign. All men are in Him, and He is in all men. And by means of Him all men are in God, and God is in all men. And [by means of Christ] all the saints are in each [saint], and each [saint] is in all saints. And this [state of being] is [constitutive of] the Kingdom of peace and of joy. In the kingdom of the flesh all men, who are in Adam their father, are in each descendant of Adam, so that each man is a [determinate] mode of human-nature-as-a-whole, which in its oneness enfolds all its modes and encompasses all individual men. Similarly, in the Kingdom of the spirit each [spirit]—qua son, having in himself the Father of spirits—has, enfoldedly in and through the Father, all saints. And [that spirit, in turn,] is present in the saints, so that there is present full joy and so that the Kingdom [of the spirit] is eternal. Eye has not seen this [Kingdom], nor has ear heard [of it], nor has [a true envisioning of it] descended into the heart of man. For the things that God has prepared for those who love Him are greater than are all things sensory.⁶⁹

NOTES TO *Loquere et Exhortare*

* Sermon CCLX.

1. Titus 2:15: “These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority.”
2. This was the day (in the Church calendar) commemorating Christ’s circumcision.
3. Titus 2:15.
4. John 6:51.
5. Wisdom 16:20.
6. Here (at 3:16) I am reading, with mss. *D* and *L* and with the Paris edition, “magnificaret” in place of “magni faceret”.
7. Titus 2:11.
8. Titus 3:4.
9. I Corinthians 15:45.
10. I Corinthians 15:45.
11. Titus 3:4.
12. Colossians 2:3.
13. Isaias (Isaiah) 45:15.
14. Hebrews 1:2. Jesus is God’s “Creation” in the sense that His human nature was created and was united to the divine nature of God the Son, who is not created but is eternally begotten by the Father.
15. Nicholas elsewhere, too, uses the illustration of a portrait that is alive. See *De Mente* 13 (147-149).
16. Sermon CLXIX.
17. “... is produced only by means of the free will of the artisan”: i.e., it is produced at the discretion of the artisan or artist.
18. Jesus, as being the God-man, has God as the Father of His uncreated divine nature; and He has Mary as the mother of His created human nature—an Adamic nature assumed from her.
19. Here (at 8:18) I am construing the manuscripts’ “adeitas” as “Adaeitas”, even as one construes “Ade” as “Adae” (“of Adam”).
20. The word “adama” is a Hebrew word meaning *earth*.
21. Genesis 2:7.
22. I Corinthians 2:14.
23. I Timothy 6:16.
24. Ecclesiasticus 25:10.
25. Isaias (Isaiah) 49:21.
26. Nicholas subscribes to the orthodox theological view of the eternal begottenness of God the Son from God the Father.
27. John 15:1.
28. Here (at 1 2:2) I am construing “adeitas” as “Adaeitas” (“of Adam-ness” or “Adam-ness”). See n. 19 above.
29. Psalms 71:17 (72:17).
30. Galatians 3:7-8.
31. I Corinthians 15:51 (Vulgate version, whose reading differs from that

of other translations of the Greek texts.)

32. I Corinthians 15:23.
33. Romans 4:12.
34. Luke 3:23 and 38. Matthew 1:1.
35. I Corinthians 15:51.
36. John 11:25.
37. I Corinthians 15:28.
38. Titus 3:5.
39. Colossians 3:9-10.
40. II Corinthians 5:17.
41. Titus 3:5-6.
42. Titus 3:8.
43. The name "Jesus" means *Savior*. Matthew 1:21.
44. John 14:19.
45. Cf. John 14:10 with Colossians 3:3.
46. I Corinthians 15:45.
47. Isaias (Isaiah) 9:6.
48. Galatians 2:20. Nicholas is here *alluding*, not quoting exactly.
49. Psalms 118:11 (119:11).
50. Nicholas here, as Meister Eckhart in his *Rechtfertigungsschrift*, teaches that Christ is born in the human soul. See Rudolf Haubst, *Die Christologie des Nikolaus von Kues* (Freiburg: Herder, 1956), pp. 30-38.
51. Matthew 12:50.
52. Matthew 6:21.
53. John 14:19-20.
54. John 14:10.
55. Nicholas here (as in *De Docta Ignorantia* and elsewhere) distinguishes between *ratio* (reason) and *intellectus* (intellect). See Hermann Schnarr, *Modi essendi. Interpretationen zu den Schriften De docta ignorantia, De coniecturis und De venatione sapientiae von Nikolaus von Kues*. Münster: Aschendorff, 1973.
56. Acts 17:26.
57. Hebrews 12:9.
58. Job 20:3.
59. The following section is important because it makes clear Nicholas's Thomistic-Aristotelian position as regards the ontological status of universals.
- *60. Here (at 2 4:10) I am reading, with mss. *D* and *L*, "incontracta" ("in" *supra lineam in D*) in place of "contracta" in *V*₂. The former reading is obviously correct.
61. Psalms 4:7 (4:6).
62. Hebrews 12:9.
63. Ecclesiasticus 30:4.
64. Proverbs 8:31.
65. John 1:3-4.
66. Ecclesiasticus 25:10.
67. I John 2:17.
68. I Corinthians 15:53.
69. I Corinthians 2:9.

Loquere et Exhortare (2)*

(“Speak and Exhort”)¹

[January 2, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “Speak and exhort and rebuke ...,” as [quoted] above [in yesterday’s sermon].

Because in accordance with the Apostolic commandment we are going to go, in procession, to the Church of the Sisters, let us beforehand—in keeping with the Apostolic teaching—set forth briefly an exhortation. And let it suffice to dwell a bit on the words of the Apostle and, for our instruction, to reflect on these words.

[2] Now, first of all, [let us consider] the fact that Christ is the Grace of God our Savior—a Grace which appeared in this world for our instruction. For God most recently spoke to us in His Son and for our instruction. For all the things that Christ did in this world the Apostle says to have been done in order that the people would be cleansed and would pursue good works.² And note that [the Apostle] says “The grace of God and of our Savior has appeared.”³ For Christ is only the Manifestation and Revelation of God’s grace, which is said to appear, as if coming forth from the hidden and the unknown into the light. Christ is the Revealer of the hidden things of God. [3] Below, in the next chapter [of the text, the Apostle] calls the *grace* about which we [are] here [speaking] God’s *goodness* and *kindness*.⁴ I understand kindness to be godliness⁵ that is impartible to us. We say that someone is kind when he is not exclusivistic in his works but, rather, is social and sharing and does not seek his own best interests but seeks things that conduce to the public well-being of all. Christ was such [a person]. In Him God manifested His goodness-and-kindness, or grace, for the benefit of everyone.

[4] [The Apostle] says: “... instructing us.”⁶ And note what the instruction of God’s Grace is. It is as follows: to appropriate from our good and kind Teacher goodness and kindness. And the time when it will be established that we have received the instruction of our Teacher is *then*, namely, when we renounce all ungodliness. Renunciation is [having] the firm intention of never going back to what was renounced—or, rather, [is the firm conviction] that going back is an abomination. Therefore, the renunciation of ungodliness occurs only when godliness has situated its throne in the will and takes possession

of the soul.

[5] When the warmth of love enters into a soul that is cruel and hardened and unteachable and unmanageable, the soul becomes like warm wax [and becomes] godly and pliant for receiving into itself all instruction and the impressing of the Divine form. Thus, godliness drives out the stiffness and cruelty of bestiality and is the mother of virtues. (For without it the soul is not made capable of receiving the Divine influence.) And there is a certain spiritual gentleness-of-soul that makes the soul come under the Lord's yoke as a tamed animal, according to Augustine.⁷ [And] according to Saint Gregory [godliness] teaches works of mercy, teaches patience, and introduces tranquility of soul. And [he says] that godliness is preparation for the coming of wisdom. Ecclesiasticus 43: "He gave wisdom to the godly,"⁸ (after the expulsion of ungodliness, so that the soul by indwelling godliness is made teachable and manageable).

[6] The renunciation of worldly desires ought to come next. For there is not true godliness in the soul if the soul is moldable unto conformity with this world. For [such a soul] would not want to displease anyone [but would be] like a foolish woman fulfilling the desires of sinners. Yet, in *these* matters the soul ought to remain stiff and unpliant, so that the heat of worldly desires not render it susceptible to pleasing the world. Rather, the renunciation of ungodliness ought to include, together with it, renunciation of worldly desires, seeing that [such desires] are most ungodly for our spirit, which accords with God. [7] Temporal, or worldly, desires turn the soul away from spiritual desires and from the Kingdom of the soul's life, a Kingdom which is not of this world. See how ungodly are those persons who, under the guise of godliness, lower themselves to worldly desires—as nowadays almost all do, even those who, [professedly], renounce worldly desires. No one in whom there is such ungodliness—which wars against the soul—is Christ's [disciple]. The Apostles, when asked to stop preaching about Christ in order to please the Jews, deemed the pleasing of men rather than God⁹ to be something that is only ungodly.

[8] Worldly desires are three kinds of illicit desire (which, as the Apostle John says in his canonical [epistle], include whatever the world instills into our desirings): namely, greed, lust, and pride. But the sign that we have received our Teacher's instruction and have made such a renunciation, is the following: namely, if we live soberly, justly, and godly in this world. Sobriety shows that lustful desire has been

renounced; justice shows that avaristic desire has been extinguished; godliness shows that desire characterized as exclusivistic, boastful, and proud has been fled.

[9] Lo, [such a soul as the foregoing is] a soul prepared for a receiving of Christ's form. And there follows [in the text] how it is that a pliable and teachable soul ought to be formed by the theological virtues, namely, by faith, hope, and love.¹⁰ The Apostle says: "... looking for the blessed hope."¹¹ No one *looks-for*, [or *expects*], unless he *believes*. This looking-for enfolds three things: the one who looks-for (1) believes, (2) hopes, and (3) loves. The expectation of the good occurs together with love; and the soul of the believer in God does not have doubts with respect to God's promises; and blessed hope follows from this faith. Assuredly, holy and blessed is the hope which trusts in the Lord, whom it believes. For God is Truth; whatever is hoped-for with respect to the promises of Truth has the highest certainty.

[10], Now, what is this expectation on the part of the soul? The Apostle answers: it is the promise of the advent of the glory of the Great God and of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is this latter? Surely, it is utmost happiness, which every rational soul loves, seeks longingly, and desires so very greatly. For that the glory of the Great God and of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, comes into the soul's knowledge and apprehension is [the soul's] attaining its goal, because the soul of the prophet spoke as follows: "I will be satisfied when Your glory shall appear."¹² The soul rejoices so very greatly in the great glory of its Great God and in the [great] glory of its Savior, Jesus Christ, that this rejoicing is its delight and life. For its apprehending the glory of its God and Savior is its apprehending the glory of its Creator and Reformer and Redeemer and Regenerator. This [state] is nothing but its being joined to its Fount of Life.

[11] But [the Apostle] adds¹³ why this advent of Christ's glory offers so much delight and happiness: [It is because] to see Him (who for me gave Himself over to temporal death, so that He would lead me unto eternal life, namely, unto a vision of the glory of God) as the Son of God in the glory of the Father (just as in this world I believed [to be the case]) is inexpressible gladness. Assuredly, I shall rejoice with Him who is exaltedly elevated unto the glory of God, who has restored life to me. And because [the Son of God] obtained glory in order to have it and to impart it, how will He (who through death on the Cross merited life for me from love alone, since I was still His enemy and was not at

all acceptable to Him) not impart to me (who believes Him, hopes for Him, and loves Him) the glory which He received as Heir to glory? And the King of Glory¹⁴ will make me a co-heir of His Kingdom and of His glory. [12] For He came into the world to the end that He might instruct me and make me acceptable to God through the laver of regeneration and the infusion of a new spirit¹⁵ that is in conformity with God, so that in this way, in the end, He might make me a co-heir of His glory.

And note especially that the image does not have within itself glory, but [the glory] is in the Exemplar, in whose Beauty [the image] delights. Because [the image] is the living image of such great Beauty, it rejoices and delights in the exaltation of the Exemplar; for [the Exemplar] is [the image's] glory and exaltation. And [the image] does not look to itself in this regard, since, as image, it has its eye only on its Lord and Creator, in and through whom alone it is whatever it is. And since [the image] cannot desire not to be the image of God (because [in that case] it would desire not to exist) and since it¹⁶ cannot be God and also does not desire that it not be able to exist, it desires only to behold the glory of its Great God and of its Savior Jesus Christ—in which glory it sees itself as in glory.

[13] The Apostle concludes: “Speak these things ...,” and so on. Lo, [I have here writt en] a short tract on the theology which the Apostle commands [one] to preach.

NOTES TO *Loquere et Exhortare (2)**

*Sermon CCLXI.

1. Titus 2:15.

2. Titus 2:14.

3. Titus 2:11.

4. Titus 3:4-5.

5. "Pietas" is a Latin word that has many translations, many shades of meaning. I am here following the Douay translation of the Vulgate (e.g., Isaias 11:2 and Titus 2:12) in translating "pius" as *godly* and "pietas" as *godliness*. Elsewhere, I sometimes translate "pius" as *gracious* or as *devout*.

6. Titus 2:12.

7. Augustine, *De Diversis Quaestionibus* 36 (PL 43:37).

8. Ecclesiasticus 43:37.

9. Acts 5:29.

10. I Corinthians 13:13.

11. Titus 2:13.

12. Psalms 16:15 (17:15).

13. Titus 3:4-7.

14. Psalms 23:7 (24:7).

15. Titus 3:5.

16. Here at **1 2:15** I add "ipsa", as does the Paris printed edition.

Obtulerunt Ei Munera*

(“They Offered Him Gifts.”)¹

[January 6, 1457; preached in Brixen]²

[1] “They offered Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”³

It has been two years since I began to expound the Gospel-message of this great feast in accordance with the smallness of my intelligence [and] in the way that God granted. And [during this time] I have arrived only at the passage where the Magi said that they had come in order to worship Him. It has been a year (1) since I took up the question “Where is He who is born [King of the Jews]?”⁴ and (2) since you have heard me [speaking] about God’s habitat. As I was thinking now about what to say, it seemed to me that the [following] Gospel-text ought to be included [for consideration]: “But Herod, hearing [this] was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.”⁵

[2] In connection with the things that I have hitherto said, I turn to this present passage: that the King of Justice⁶ (who was sought out by the wise men as God, whom they would worship) struck fear into King Herod and into all Jerusalem. For so it is that everyone who acts evilly fears the light. The king who knows that in all his governance he ought to obey the King of Justice (since he is only an emissary from Him) and ought not to avenge himself but ought only to serve justice—[such a king] fears the advent of the light of justice. In this light all hidden matters will be seen. Surely, Herod, who greatly misused his position as [God’s] emissary, should have feared the more greatly.

[3] See how it is that kings of this world fear wise men, since they are rebuked by them. Herod, the son of this [presently discussed] Herod, feared John the Baptist. It is no wonder that this [present Herod] feared Christ, than whom no greater [wise man] was expected. Note the reason that some wise man or other always assists tyrants, as Plato reports in his letters⁷ that he had assisted Dionysius, Tyrant of the Syracusans. However, wise men have always suffered persecution by tyrants; for tyranny fears a reprover. And so, [a tyrant] in order to be rid [of the reprover], ends up persecuting the wise man whom he at first was seen to honor in order to be furthered in his own undertaking. Thus, we read that Alexander the Great had had Aristotle as his instructor; and his kingdom was enhanced by Aristotle’s teaching. But once

the kingdom was in hand, Aristotle was persecuted by Alexander to the point of death. Such I remember to have read in the extensive discourses of Seneca.⁸

[4] Likewise, Seneca suffered from his pupil Nero; and Plato suffered from Dionysius; [and] John the Baptist from Herod; [and] Christ, the King of Justice and the Teacher of the virtues, [suffered] from the Prince of the world,⁹ i.e., the Prince of darkness.¹⁰ For Christ came to cast him out. And so, from all the adherents of this Prince, Christ suffered persecution—in particular, from all the Jews and from the rulers of this world—because He criticized their works as being evil. See that once it was heard that Christ was born, whom the wise men sought in order to worship Him, disquietude arose with Herod, an adherent of the Prince of the world, and with all Jerusalem, i.e., with [all] those who were in charge of governance.

[5] “And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes, [Herod] inquired of them where Christ would be born.”¹¹ The chief rulers of the Temple (because of the prophetic Scriptures of the Temple) and the teachers of the people and the scribes (because of their knowledge of the law) were gathered together in the belief that theologians and legal authorities, conferring together, would dispel doubt as to the place of [the Messiah’s] birth. And note that, in the case of heathen priests, [these priests] attempt to foretell hidden matters from the books of the Sybil and from the books of astrologers—as [occurred] at Rome in the Temple of Apollo in the Vatican, where now the Church of St. Peter stands. And elsewhere throughout the world there were soothsayers—even as the wise among the priests in Jerusalem [attempted to foretell the future] from the [writings of] the Prophets. For the Temple at Jerusalem, built by wise Solomon, was none other than a place for a viewing of the hidden mysteries of God—[a place] where the Lord God of gods spoke, whom the chief priest consulted. There the responses received by the prophets were maintained in writings, from which priests searched out hidden matters.

[6] To a certain extent, in the temples of particular gods ([e.g.] of Apollo, Aesculapius, and the others) those matters which the people wished to become known concerning the hidden things, in accordance with the dedicated purpose of the place—[these matters] the priests searched into. For example, in the Temple of Mars [they inquired] about military matters; in the Temple of Aesculapius, about health; in the Temple of Apollo, about all uncertain matters; and so on. Similarly,

[the people] ask for divinations from the divine priests who are dedicated to [a particular] temple—as even Herod did here [in the text]. But you will note from this text that by Divine providence the gathering of the wise and of the scribes was made for a disclosing of the Savior. For the whole of Jerusalem, along with Herod, was troubled by the coming of the Magi because of the fact that they had heard that the King of the Jews was born—[had heard it] from those who, because He was born, had come from the East. [The Magi] did not doubt that He was born; but they had uncertainty about the place where He was born.

[7] Thereafter came the gathering [of the wise and the scribes, who were being asked] where the Christ would be born. (Herod referred to Him as “the Christ” because the kings of the Jews were anointed, and so Herod called Him the Christ, [i.e., the Anointed One].) And thus the time of the birth now had its certainty from the Magi’s revelation that He was born. But the Magi, who were witnesses of this birth, adduced as the basis for their knowledge the fact that the knowledge was revealed to them from heaven by means of a star. Now, Herod did not gather the wise men and the scribes in order to inquire *whether* [the Christ] was born. For the ascertaining of the time when He was to be born was not easy [to make] from a searching of the Scriptures. Rather, He in whose power are [all] times reserved for Himself [the prerogative of] revealing it at the fitting moment. For the coming of Christ into the flesh was hidden to all—even as is the other advent of Him whom we are expecting that He will come in judgment, [an advent] which even Christ Himself said that He did not have the knowledge to reveal.¹² [8] Therefore, just as Christ will come in the clouds when that [future] time will arrive, so even now [in the scenario of our text] He came in the clouds, namely, in the stars and in a [heavenly] sign. Hence, in the sky He showed that He had come into the flesh; therefore, [the Magi] saw Him in terms of a star. And just as signs of His [future] coming in judgment are revealed in the Scriptures, so too are signs of His coming into the flesh. Among these [signs] are [the following]: that Herod was a foreigner,¹³ and that there were no kings of Juda, and [it was] after the seventy weeks of which Daniel speaks,¹⁴ and that [Messiah] was to be born from a virgin of the seed of David and in the City of David (namely, Bethlehem in Juda, not Bethlehem of the tribe of Zebulon), and other [signs] of this kind that are contained in the Prophets.

[9] Hence, it was certain that sure signs would precede [His

birth], and that sure signs would concur in regard to this mystery, and that the time [of His birth] was to be known only from heavenly revelation. Thus, angels proclaimed to the shepherds Christ's birth; [there was] Simeon and [there was] Anna the Prophetess; and, lastly, [there was] John the Baptist, who says that for the following reason he received from God the office of baptizing: [namely,] so that he would recognize and reveal Jesus (who would come, along with others, for being baptized) as the Son of God. But these things were done in this way in conformity with revelation. But because the Prophets had rightly predicted of what kind the future Christ would be and what His Divine works [would be]: Christ manifested Himself in these works which bore witness that He is the Christ of whom the Prophets speak and [manifested] that the Father (who even¹⁵ [is] God) bore witness, by the works that He worked through Christ, that Christ is the one in whom the Father did these works (which no [mere] man could do) and thus that the Father is in Christ and that Christ is His Son, in whom the Father is well-pleased.¹⁶

[10] There follows [in the text]: “And they said to Him: ‘in Bethlehem [of] Juda, for thus it is written: “And you, O Bethlehem [of] Juda, are not the least among the princes [of] Juda. For from you shall come the Leader who shall rule over my people Israel.” ’ ” According to the Hebrews, Micah the Prophet speaks as follows (Micah 5): “And you, Bethlehem Ephrata, are a little one among the thousands of Juda. Out of you shall come forth unto me He who is [to be] Ruler in Israel; and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity.”¹⁶ And according to the gloss,¹⁷ the meaning is: Although you are a small village compared to the cities of Juda, where there are so many thousands, nevertheless you are not the least, because from you shall come forth, born from the days of eternity, the Great Christ (who is not only from David; for His going forth is [also] from my substance).

[11] From the response [that quotes from Micah] it is held to be certain that Christ—who is Leader, or King, in accordance with the determination that is set down by the Prophet—was to go forth in the order of time from Bethlehem (just as from the days of eternity He goes forth from the Father, in whose person the Prophet spoke). The text says “Bethlehem [of] Juda” in distinction from Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulon (as I mentioned earlier),¹⁸ according to Nicholas of Lyra.¹⁹ According to the Gospel, the Prophet says that “that Leader shall come forth who shall rule over my people Israel.” ‘Ruling over

God's people Israel' has reference to the King who is said to be Christ. Ruling is the prerogative of a king. 'God's people Israel' [refers to] the people of the man who sees God. And this is the people of Christ, the Son of God, because no one has seen God except Christ;²⁰ and by His governance He draws [others] to a vision [of God].

[12] [Christ] was born in Bethlehem ([i.e.,] in the House of Bread),²¹ which [is] also called Ephrata²² by the Prophet. Now, "ephrata" is translated as *fecund* and as *sterile*—as Jerome states following Philo's lead. For virginity as such is sterile; but fecund virginity can be called *ephrata*. In this village [of] Ephrata Jesus the Savior was born in the House of Bread. This is the Living Bread,²³ the Refection of the soul, because it is the word of God. And note that the Prophet says that He is to be born in Bethlehem Ephrata. Just as He came forth in the *days of the aeon* (according to one translation, [the one] which Chrysostom has)²⁴ or in the *days of eternity*—i.e., just as the Son came forth unto me from the days of eternity, says God the Father, so also He comes forth unto me from Bethlehem. That is, [there comes forth unto me from Bethlehem] without any blemish none other than this same Son of mine.

[13] There follows [in the text]: "Then Herod, having privately called the wise men, learned from them the time of the star"²⁵ in order to know, in particular, when the birth was revealed to them. But he did this dissemblingly in order to know, in accordance with his scheme, how old the infant was, since he had planned deceitful measures against Him.

[14] Next comes: "And sending them to Bethlehem, [Herod] said: 'Go and inquire diligently about the Child. And when you have found Him, bring word back to me so that I may come and worship Him.'"²⁶ Note that the persecuter camouflages his wickedness. He sends the Magi to the location; he asks them to inquire diligently about the Child and to bring back word so that he may come and worship the Child. Although he said these things deceitfully—as all doctors [of the Church] interpret [the text]—nevertheless, [it was] not without [the benefit of] our learning. For we ought diligently to make inquiry in Bethlehem (i.e., in the House of the Bread of Life, which is the Church) about the Child Jesus; and when He is found, we ought to worship Him. I mean that he who has found Him with his intellect and in his spirit announces to the adversary of his spirit, namely, to his carnal desire, that he has found [Him]; and he leads the whole man²⁷ unto

worship and prostration and a humbling of himself in His sight.

[15] But the continuation of the story shows how it is that the Child is to be diligently inquired after. For all things are to be left behind, as the Magi [left behind their] country; and the one who is inquiring is to go forth under daily guidance. And his star is the prelate of the Church, by which star the one-who-is-inquiring is led unto the Child. And the prelate does not cease illuminating the journey until [the inquirer] finds [the place] where the Child is. And with great joy [the inquirer] ought to embrace the guidance of the star as being the Divine illumination—[illumination] which is the word of God that the prelate draws from the Gospel. And if the inquirer at some time turns to the Old Testament, where there is no illumining light but [where matters are] veiled and hidden, then he ought always [also] to turn to the living word of the Gospel’s light and ought to embrace by undoubting faith its teaching. For he will come to the point of *seeing* and will *recognize* and will *worship* and will *offer* all things to the Savior, who will restore [them] one hundredfold and will give everlasting life.²⁸ However, note that King Herod says “... so that I may worship Him.” He acknowledges that the Messiah is to be worshiped by kings (even though he is speaking deceitfully). For in the psalm we sing as follows: “And all kings of the earth shall worship Him; all nations shall serve Him.”²⁹

[16] “Who, after they had heard the King, went their way.”³⁰ [It is] as if [the Magi] had come to Jerusalem in order [only] to hear from the king about the location [of the newborn Christchild]. And because, from the considered counsel, they heard, unanimously [expressed], that Bethlehem was the location: they went their way. For just as the Magi revealed to King [Herod] (and, through him, to all who had not seen the star) that Christ was born, so too the King, on the basis of the consensus of all [the wise men], revealed the location of the birth to the Magi, who had not seen the prophetic-texts. The Jews were bound to believe the Magi because [the Magi] believed the Jews. And [the Magi] went off toward Bethlehem.

[17] Furthermore, there follows [in the text]: “And, lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them until it came and stood over where the Child was.”³¹ It is evident that the star is so-named because of its *illumining* rather than because of its *movement*. For it was not moved as is a star in the sky, [namely,] out of necessity, but [was moved] from east toward south, as certain say. But that illu-

mination did not lack the light of understanding; for it illumined their *eyes* (as light [customarily] makes itself known) and their *minds* (so that they might know the Child to be there where it stood). The light from the star that illumined the mind of the Magi is not a different light from that which attracted them from within the Child. The light of wisdom and of reason is everywhere one light; but it is present in the star otherwise than in the Child, even as light is present in a star otherwise than in the sun, although the light of a star is from the sun.³² Hence, in the sun [the light] is present as in its fount or its essence; in the star it is present in an imparted way. Just as the light of the morning star shows that the sun's light is forthcoming, so too the light of that star showed that Incarnate Wisdom [was forthcoming].

[18] Jesus says in the last [chapter] of the Apocalypse: "I am the Root and Stock of David; [I am] the Bright and Morning Star."³³ He calls Himself the Bright and Morning Star; but only the sun can be that bright and morning [star]. For the brightness of all other stars declines in the morning; only the sun shines brightly in the morning. He calls Himself the Star because of His humanity, for He is the Root and Stock of David. And so, just as all bright bodies that are in the sky are called stars³⁴ (even as men, who possess degrees of reason, which is a light, [are all called men]³⁵), so too He calls Himself a Star, even though He is the Sun among the stars. [19] Without the sun there can be no life or no joy in the perceptible world. Similarly, in the microcosm³⁶ [there can be no life or joy] without the brightness of the light of wisdom. In the heaven of reason every man is as a certain star shining with one or another degree of light from the gift of the Sun's light. But that Sun is the Man among men, as being the Root and Stock of David who enfolds within Himself the loftiness of the priestly, and of the royal, office. Every man has within himself a star which guides him from the East unto Jesus, the Word of God. For in conformity with the innate light of reason³⁷ we desire—and seek by means of the movement of reason—only the sun, i.e., the Fount of Light, i.e., Jesus. The star goes ahead of us; for reason leads to the Fount of Life. Thus, philosophers by means of their own light seek light in its Fount.

[20] Those who heard the brightness of the light-of-Jesus'-word [were] amazed [and] said: "Never spoke a man as did He."³⁸ The lucid word of Jesus illumines the eyes of the mind not as do our teachers, who impress onto a docile [mind] likenesses of concepts by means of frequent repetition, but as a word that illumines a blind man and, in

an instant, makes of peasants and fishermen very expert teachers, transforming their souls as an igniting fire. [The following] is a wondrous thing! Lucid reason leads [one] through regions and seeks Him whom it loves and does not find rest until it comes to the lowly Child who is King. For unless innocence and command-authority come together in one man, [reason] will not embrace him as teacher but will wander on until it finds a coincidence of stable and palace, of child and man, of servant and lord, of poor man and rich man, of man and God.

[21] Next comes: “And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy,”³⁹ as does a blind man who finds eyes. They had lost sight of the star while they were with Herod; and so, they rejoiced exceedingly over finding it, as being certain on the basis of the reappearance that they would obtain the goal of their desires. Take note of what kind [of joy] is the joy of finding Jesus, who is hidden in order that He may be found with greater joy. “Everything rare is valued.”⁴⁰ The Scriptures are difficult, and the epistles of Paul are ponderous (as the Apostle Peter attests in his canonical epistle⁴¹), in order that when Jesus, who is hidden in the Scriptures, is sought with diligence, He may be joyously found as a treasure. The better Christ is hidden, the more avidly He is sought by the zealous soul and the sweeter the joy with which He is found. All, even the wise Magi, would rejoice exceedingly to have found a teacher or a preacher, i.e., a star guiding [them] to Jesus.

[22] Next comes: “And entering the house they found the Child with Mary His mother.”⁴² Those who with the Star as guide enter into Bethlehem enter into the House of Bread and find the Child and His mother Mary. But those who are presumptuous—and who without guidance attempt to enter into the Church, where the Child is, who is the Bread of Life—do not find Him. Arrogance does not attain wisdom, which is united with humility. To find the Child with His mother is to find the Son of God and of Mary—[is to find] the Mediator⁴³ between God and man. O how delightful it is to find the Child who is the Son of God and to find His mother, who has merited to be *on earth* the mother of Him who has a Father only *in Heaven!* Suppose there to be a wise man who seeks only the creative wisdom of Him whose image he bears. Through this image he can find the wisdom that he seeks. And he knows that if the wisdom is found, it will give immortality. [And suppose] that he finds this wisdom made human—[finds it] (a) in his own human nature, (b) in the mother

[Mary] (as being another human being), and (c) in the lovable and good Child in the Inn, where He can always be approached. And [suppose that] the Child is always alone and is not busy with anyone so as to be prevented from giving an audience to each person. [Only] the Mother of Mercy is present, [and] she is concerned for those who approach Him; and she makes the Child available to those seeking Him out. [In this case, the wise man] would rejoice immensely.

[23] If Plato traversed the world for the sake of acquiring knowledge and everywhere sought a teacher [and] came upon Pythagoras, and [if], likewise, others (about whom Jerome [writes] in his prologue to the Bible) [did the same thing], they surely all sought only incarnate wisdom. In all teachers incarnate wisdom is sought. And so, unless [wisdom] is incarnated in someone—i.e., unless a man is found who is so wise that it is not possible for there to be a greater wisdom (this [found-wisdom] being essential wisdom)—all teachers would be sought in vain if wisdom could be found in none [of them]. But suppose that these men were today to have found Jesus, together with the Magi, in Bethlehem or [to have encountered Him] at the transformation of water into wine or at His baptism with John, and had heard the testimony of the Father.⁴⁴ Or [suppose that they had seen Him] in the desert at the feeding of so many thousands of men and had heard Him. Would they not (as Blessed Augustine infers in his Book *On True Religion*⁴⁵) have embraced Him as the Goal of their desire and have said with Andrew “We have found the Messiah”⁴⁶ Or [would they not have said] with Martha “The Master is here”⁴⁷ or with Peter “Where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”⁴⁸ Did not wisdom shine forth exceedingly in Socrates and, in him, [fore-]show what kind He is to be who is Wisdom itself?—namely, humble, just, mild, patient and standing up for truth even unto death. And [Socrates] had disciples who, even unto his death, did not forsake Him, as is told of in the *Phaedo*. What is to be thought about Christ Jesus and His teaching ministry? He is sought in all teachers—He who is the Light of the world⁴⁹ and the Teacher of teachers.

[24] There follows [in the text]: “Falling down, they worshiped Him.”⁵⁰ All the wise, falling down, adore—as being the Fount of immortal life—Wisdom when it is found.

“And having opened their treasures, they offered Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”⁵¹ A wise man from the treasures of his wisdom offers to Primary Wisdom, from whom he has all things, whatev-

er he has of value. [These things of value] are symbolized by the three [gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh]. And he gives to God glory for all the things that he has found in his treasuries. (About these gifts enough has been said [by me] elsewhere.)

[25] There follows: “And having received an answer in their sleep, they returned by another route unto their own country.”⁵² [God], who led them to the Child by means of a star, led them through His response during their sleep back to their own [affairs]. One who by way of faith comes to Christ, and to contemplation of Him, is returned by another route unto human [affairs]. [He is led] to Christ *by way of faith* [but is led back] to human [affairs] *by way of reason*.

Let these point have been made in the foregoing way.

NOTES TO *Obtulerunt Ei Munera**

*Sermon CCLXII.

1. Matthew 2:11.
2. January 6 was the Feast Day of the Epiphany.
3. Matthew 2:11.
4. Matthew 2:2.
5. Matthew 2:3.
6. Cf. Hebrews 7:2 with Hebrews 6:20.
7. Plato, *Seventh Epistle* (327a ff.).
8. See Tacitus, *Annales* XIV, 52-56 and XV, 60-64.
9. John 12:31.
10. The Prince of Darkness is Satan.
11. Matthew 2:4.
12. Matthew 24:36.
13. Daniel 9:24.
14. Here (at 9:15) the printed edition has “est” whereas the mss. *D*, *L*, and *V*₂ have “et”. No difference is made in the meaning. Cf. the use of “et” at 1 2:2.
15. Matthew 3:17.
16. Matthew 2:5-6.
17. Micheas (Micah) 5:2.
18. “... as I mentioned earlier”: see 8:2.
19. Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam Bibliam* (Matthew 2:1).
20. John 1:18.
21. The word “bethlehem” means *place of food*.
22. The word “ephrata” means *fertility*.
23. At John 6:35 Jesus calls Himself the Bread of Life.
24. John Chrysostom, *Commentarius in sanctum Matthaem Evangelistam*, Homily 7 (*Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 57, column 73).
25. Matthew 2:7.
26. Matthew 2:8.
27. “... the whole man”: i.e., body and soul; i.e., mind, will, and appetites.
28. Matthew 19:29.
29. Psalms 71:11 (72:11).
30. Matthew 2:9.
31. Matthew 2:9.
32. The Ancients were accustomed to call all heavenly bodies *stars*. The morning star, for example, is the planet Venus (as is also the evening star).
33. Apocalypse (Revelation) 22:16.
34. See n. 32 above.
35. As was the custom of the times, Nicholas frequently uses “man” (“homo”) in a generic sense, which is equivalent in meaning to *human being* and which is different from the gendered sense (“vir”) that means *male*.
36. In *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 3 (9 8) Nicholas refers to man as a microcosm, as did some of the Ancients.

37. This theme of the innate light of reason is a theme that Descartes later develops systematically. Nicholas holds that the light of reason can lead one to a knowledge of God's existence even apart from special Divine revelation. Descartes develops this theme also. One of the earliest writers to advance this idea was the twelfth-century Jewish writer Ibn Tufayl, who wrote *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*.

See my article "Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464): First Modern Philosopher?" pp. 13-29 in Peter A. French and Howard K. Wettstein, editors, *Renaissance and Early Modern Philosophy* (Vol. 26 in the series Midwest Studies in Philosophy). Boston: Blackwell, 2002. Reprinted on my webpage.

38. John 7:46.

39. Matthew 2:10.

40. "Omne rarum carum [est]."

41. II Peter 3:16.

42. Matthew 2:11 .

43. I Timothy 2:5.

44. Matthew 3:17.

45. Augustine, in *De Vera Religione*, seems not to have talked about Christ as the *finis desiderii*. But the theme is found throughout his works, including in *Confessiones*, Book One, Chap. One (*Patrologia Latina* 32:661), where there appears his well-known exclamation "fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te."

46. John 1:41.

47. John 11:28.

48. John 6:69.

49. John 9:5.

50. Matthew 2:11 .

51. Matthew 2:11 .

52. Matthew 2:12.

Quodcumque Dixerit Vobis, Facite*
 (“Do Whatsoever He Tells You”)¹
 [January 16, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “Do whatsoever He tells you to do.”²

In order not to cease with what we have begun, and so that the marriage-feast (which nowadays is a common occurrence) not make us carnal—we who readily return to [our own] vomit³—I will continue on [and] will explain the mysteries of the marriage about which we read [in today’s text]. And two of the assuredly greatest lights of the Church come to mind in this regard: [namely,] Ambrose and Augustine. For Ambrose’s rich and very agreeable sermon⁴ has seemed to me to be especially wonderful. And Augustine’s Homily⁵ no less impels me to fulfill the obligation of my office.

[2] “The marriage took place in Cana of Galilee.”⁶

First, I will run through the text very briefly. Then, I will return—ruminating at length—to the Gospel-writer’s words, which are to be digested as food for the soul. The Gospel-writer (1) has described how Christ, through John the Baptist’s disclosing, came to the attention of men and (2) [has indicated] that therefore some men followed Him as disciples and that Nathanel was converted⁷ and that after three days a marriage-ceremony was held in Cana. Prior to the especially solemn marriage-ceremony it was necessary that those events take place that are mentioned in the narrative. [It was necessary] in order that the Disciples (having already been gathered [by Jesus]) would see the glory of Him whom they believed and accepted as Teacher. Christ wanted to be present at the marriage because many people—and important people—were gathered there. He could manifest His glory to them for their instruction.

[3] Now, because of the word of Jerome (who says that John the Gospel-writer was called away from the marriage-feast [by Jesus]), it is commonly held that the marriage-feast was John’s, from which feast he was called away prior to the marriage bond (as Nicholas of Lyra reports). Nevertheless, Augustine seems to think otherwise in his homily,⁸ when he writes that the bridegroom had a solemn [public] wedding-ceremony for the sake of the [presumable, future] offspring. With the ancients marriage-ceremonies were held publically and solemnly in order that the certitude of the matrimonial union would

preserve its official status, so that later the matrimonial partners would not be allowed to transgress and so that their matrimonial union would be free of disgraceful suspicion and so that the offspring would be known to be legitimate.

[4] Cana is the town where the marriage was performed. Jesus's mother was present there as the matron who directed the servants, so that they would do all things properly. I think that at that time Joseph was already dead, for Mary would not have told the servants how they were to conduct themselves if no oversight of the marriage-feast had pertained to her. And, accordingly, certain [interpreters of the text] say that she—being one of John's relatives—had to be present at that marriage-feast of John, into whose care she later came.⁹

[5] According to Chrysostom the wine had not yet totally run out. Jesus's mother, wanting to prevent a complete running-out, said to Jesus: "They have no wine"—as if to say: "It is in Your power that they have wine." But Jesus replied: "Woman, what is that to me and to you? My hour has not yet come." These words seem harsher than [those] of a very devout and very gentle son to his very beloved mother. But [He said] this perhaps because the woman did not understand that miracles are to be performed not for pleasing [people] but for confirming His teaching. Hence, He calls His mother not *Mary* but *woman*, so that she would understand that blood-relationship does not motivate Him to [perform] miracles but that the will of the Father, who is in Heaven, does. He had this [miracle-working] power from the Father and not from the flesh that was taken from His mother. [It was] as if He were to say: "If they do not have wine, then why will it for this reason be incumbent on me and on you, O Woman, to supply it? For I have not come into the world for the following purpose: [namely,] that I might be the administerer of wine at a marriage-feast and might show my glory in order that men might take pleasure in the perceptible wine or might become intoxicated and for this reason praise or honor me. My hour has not come—namely, the hour [for me] to show the will of the Father, from whom I have the power of miracles."

[6] Thereafter, it was known to His Disciples (who were with Him and who, perhaps, occupied the farthest place that was distant from the chief-steward, who as chief among the guests held the head place at the nuptials) that there was no wine. And they desired—for the glory of the Master and for confirmation of their faith—that their Master perform a great miracle, not so that they could drink wine but

so that it would be known that they had a true Teacher, whose teaching was like the power of an omnipotent word. Since [all of the foregoing was true], then Jesus, seeing that His hour had come—namely, the opportunity to do the will of the Father and to sow faith in the hearts of His Disciples—ordered that the urns be filled with water. And His mother now instructed the servants to do whatever He said. Accordingly, the servants, putting fresh water into six large urns, filled them to the brim. [7] These urns were designated for the water of purification, and this was well-known. And so that there could be no suspicion that wine had secretly been poured in, He ordered that the emptied urns be filled anew; and so that all the people could see on the surface the color of water, the urns were filled to the brim. And then by the hidden power of His word the pale water was turned into red, or barley-colored, wine. Of all those who occupied this part of the courtyard where Jesus was, no one had doubts about this [transformation].

[8] But the chief-steward perhaps did not know that the wine was running out. For the lack of wine is sensed at the table of the servants before it is sensed at the table of the overseers. But to the end that the chief-steward would *judge*—and that from his judgment all the others who knew that there had been water would be certain that there was no deception but was truth—Jesus ordered that [wine] be drawn and be brought to the steward. Now, the chief-steward, amazed at the good wine and at the fact that it was brought late [in the feast], called the bridegroom and reproached him for his imprudence. For every man holding banquets sets out at first the good, intoxicating wine when the tasting is unrestricted. But after intoxication has beset the guests, he sets out the less good wine, because the intoxicated [guests] cannot tell the difference. [9] Now, if someone considers carefully, [he will realize that] the reality of the miracle could not better have been made evident than by the following arrangement: namely, (1) that the judge [of the wine] be the more sober and more prudent chief-steward, and be someone who was ignorant of the miracle, (so that his judgment could not be believed to have been made on the basis of a prejudice) and (2) that [the chief-steward] would reproach the bridegroom (so that the steward would be [seen to be] serious and so that his judgment would be free of all suspicion).

Therefore, Jesus made this beginning of signs in Cana of Galilee in order to manifest His glory. And there follows [a statement of] the outcome for the sake of which [He acted]: namely, “and His

Disciples believed in Him.”¹⁰ [10] Let us note from the text that spousal marriages are not only licit but are also—when the goal of the marriage is faith—consecrated by the presence of Jesus, of His mother, and of His Disciples.

St. Ambrose in his assuredly very eloquent sermon for today adduces the fact that God works beyond the flux of time, and he concludes that with God all time is to Him as one day.¹¹ Hence, considering that Jesus worked this miracle for our edification and that He works presently, then because of the fact that He was present at that marriage, we believe Him to be present at all true marriages. [11] But a true marriage occurs when its end is happiness. For [marriage] is only a sacred sign of the union of the soul—the bride—and of the Son of God (who is Wisdom furnishing immortality¹²), according as the Apostle says that in this regard [matrimony] is a great sacred sign.¹³

Adam-the-man joined to himself a virgin who was his image and who had her existence from him. And this agreeable union—which makes of two [human beings] a oneness, where the image (i.e., the virgin) comes into union with the man, so that they two are in one flesh¹⁴—signifies the union of the soul and of the Son of God, so that they are one, in one spirit.

[12] Marriage is rightly a great sacrament, for it brings about a conformity of wills, so that the will of the wife and the will of the husband are not discordant wills but there is one will in respect to those features by means of which [the bride and the groom] are one, namely, [one] in flesh.¹⁵ Similarly, between the soul and its Bridegroom (the Son of God) there is only one will with respect to those features by means of which [these two] are one, namely, [one] in spirit.¹⁶ Because the Divine will is spirit that is love (*caritas*), so too the will of the rational soul is spirit that is love (*amor*).¹⁷ In the bride there is supposed to be no other spiritual love than [love] of the bridegroom; and there is one spirit of bride and bridegroom. Likewise, in marriage there is supposed to be no other carnal love on the part of the bride [for the groom] than on the part of the groom [for the bride]; and there is one flesh of the two.

[13] Very great goods follow from true marriage, for there is a certain very delightful immortality in the preserving of human nature (which is renewed by means of moist, [i.e., seminal], propagation, as you have heard elsewhere); and there are the goods which are pursuant to that [propagation]. Similarly, the bride of the Son of God is

renewed—in the oneness of the Bridegroom—with eternal joy. And with regard to carnal marriage the delight of carnal life (which is called sensory delight) is present in [that] power of sensing which is the quintessence of the sensory life, namely, the sense of touch; for every sensing is a certain touching. But with regard to immaterial [touching, delight is present] in reason’s faculty-of-detecting, which is called intellect; for intellect is an immaterial faculty-of-detecting. For he-who-understands senses himself in his rational life. The intellect that understands senses itself to understand and is a certain immaterial touching, in which the intellect delights very agreeably.

[14] But with regard to this [immaterial] touching—which is described in various ways in the Cantic of Canticles and is described extensively in the *Book of the Sensory Delights of Paradise*—I say only the following: that [such delight] does not enter the mind of man before [the mind] is united with the Bridegroom. For just as a hungry man does not by the sense of hearing attain to the delightfulness-of-satisfied-hunger that comes from the prepared food, i.e., from the [immaterial] food prepared by the Heavenly Bridegroom, so too in this world, which is [a world] of hearing, there is not captured the joyfulness of touching (and of marrying and of kissing and of embracing) Living Wisdom. And so, we must note that the wedding was held in Cana of Galilee, for “Cana” [signifies] *zeal*, and “Galilee” [signifies] *going to another land*.

[15] In this world the zealous soul that is chosen as bride by the Son of God (who dwells in immortality,¹⁸ i.e., in Heavenly incorruptibility) conforms herself to the laws and customs of the Bridegroom so that she may be a glorious and worthy [bride]. And she is cleansed and is adapted for going to another land, even as stones are polished—[stones] that, for the construction of the Temple, have to be transferred to Jerusalem, where there is the vision of God. And in order that all the stones have the required shape, the construction-master comes down from Jerusalem to the unhewed large rocks of the desert and hews them. Thereafter, he trims them so that he may place them in the edifice, once they are brought [to Jerusalem]. Similarly, the Wisdom of God came down from Heaven into the flesh, and He selected a bride, whom He washed with His own blood so that she would be lovely and would realize that she was exceedingly loved by the Groom, who for her sake gave Himself up unto death.

[16] Now, the zealous bride, called to marriage with the Lamb,

i.e., with her immaculate Bridegroom, can celebrate the marriage only in Galilee, i.e., only by going to another land. For she must forget the house of her father and must go away from her country and from her relatives and must follow the King (who desires her loveliness-of-form), even as in this world the more noble the brides are, the more often they are transferred to more distant bridegrooms. (For example, the Empress of Portugal [was transferred] to Austria.)¹⁹ But this Galilee, where the Immortal Bridegroom is seen to be present after the Resurrection, demands [that the bride] move to His [Heavenly] country for purpose of the indissoluble marriage. (For the law of marriage is that [the marital bond] is never dissolved except by death.) [17] Therefore, life is the basis of the [human] substance. Since life never fails after the resurrection from the dead, the [marital] union in eternal life will be [a union] with everlasting happiness. And, hence, the marriage [in Cana] was made after three days.²⁰ We base all things on threes. And so, the length of a temporal period is represented in three stages: from a beginning, through a middle, to an end. When the wine—i.e., the temporal enjoyment of life—is lacking, the marriage is renewed. For the marriage of this world comes to an end with death, but it will arise as an immortal marriage that is always full and unailing. For the wine in the urns—wine ever renewed from water—fills the urns; and the spirit of fervor, as [is true of the quality of] good wine, is not diminished by aging.

[18] And note that the urn, whose name is taken from the water that it contains,²¹ is made to be—in Cana of Galilee—a vessel that contains wine. For in passing to [a Heavenly] country, our nature, which was accustomed to containing a human, or watery, spirit, contains a more fiery and celestial spirit that comes from the Word of God, i.e., from the true Vine.²² Hence, if we note that Moses writes that the spirit of the Lord moves over the waters²³ (taking [the word] “spirit” to stand for the executing-power of the word of God), then note [also the following]: that just as in water there is a certain mirroring clearness that captures within itself shapes, so too within this clearness there is a certain universal force that can be turned into every perceptible form—namely, mineral form, vegetable form, and sensory form. Thus, the water is somehow the potency of every perceptible form; [and] all perceptible figures are present in it [potentially]. For if water is taken away from the world, there remains no tree, no stone, nothing composed of parts, no disposition, no adornment, no figure. Nor will there be stars if there are no waters that are above the heavens. What

will earth be, which is thickness of water? What will air be, which is water-vapor? What will fire be, which is subtlety of air, i.e., is spirit?²⁴ [19] But what can water do? For unless all things are formed from it by the word, or art, of the Omnipotent One, water produces nothing by or from itself. For in the way in which a potter makes urns from clay, so God [is] the Creator of water. That is, [God is] that Intellect who created the intellect of the potter, the maker of the urn. So too, the human soul is like water; in the soul the intellect forms, as it were, all things. But if wisdom is lacking to the intellect, the intellect is not alive in the soul. Just as art makes the potter, so wisdom forms the intellect; and this [wisdom] comes from the Word of God.

[20] Subsequently, note that water in and of itself cannot maintain its form, because it putridly decomposes and passes away. But if celestial power enters into it, so that it becomes actually something, it does not putridly decompose, and its form remains. Through this [celestial] power it is preserved and kept from putrid decomposition. Similarly, the spirit of wine preserves the water because it is water's *form*, so that [the water is] not [any longer] water but is wine. But the wine is water whose potency is thus determined by the form [of wine], which gives it being. And the water has this [wine-]spirit as a result of celestial influence. Similarly, the human soul is tasteless water [if it is] without the spirit that is given to it by the Word of God, who renews it and enlivens it and makes it glad.

[21] Someone might say that I am repeating the opinion of Hippo, who said that the soul is [composed] of water—[an opinion] formerly rejected by Aristotle²⁵ and by all. I reply: he who makes this [accusation] does not rightly understand me. For I mean that water is *like* the human soul. For [the soul] receives sensory forms representationally and, once received, retains them and deposits them in its memory. In this respect it resembles water, which receives into itself, actually, all sensory forms, even as the sensible soul [receives forms] sensibly, or representationally.

[22] Blessed Augustine²⁶ called it amazing that the soul by its inner sensory power makes for itself an image of the object so immediately that when it sees a man, it at once forms by its inner visual-power an image of him. Through this image it knows him. And the image is formed because [the soul] directs its attention toward knowing the man. For if [the soul] does not direct its attention toward [the man] and does not observe [him], then the image does not remain.

Hence, it is not enough that the object multiply its likeness so that it reaches the sense-organ; rather, there is required that the sense-faculty receive [the likeness] in its inner sensory-power. And this reception is made in terms of a befiguring representation. Similarly, when (in the case of an incorporeal object) [I hear] someone's words that I wish to repeat, I represent them inwardly; and the way that I afterwards read them within [my mind] is the way that I utter them. And if someone reads very speedily, he takes into [his mind] many words and sentences of a large book; [and] he [later] reads them as he has written them inwardly.

[23] And see how quickly the [sensory] spirit writes the sensory images on the imagination. And if someone looks further, unto the intellectual spirit, which does not direct its attention toward representational forms, or writings, but toward the quiddities of things, he sees that man's senses, which receive external representations of objects, present them to the intellect as sensory images, or written (or depicted) books. Thus, by means of sensory images the intellect attains to the essence, or quiddity, of the object. Only from this quiddity is the intellect fed. [The intellect's] turning toward these things is its *becoming* all these things,²⁷ so that the sensory world is united to the intellectual nature in order that through the presence of the *sensible* the intellect may behold its own nobility. For the sensory world is the image of the intellect. For [the intellect] finds the essence of all things within itself as in a faculty-of-understanding that is full of forms. And it views itself intellectually as a truer world (namely, an intelligible world), of which the sensory world is an image. [24] For example, a circle in the sensory world cannot be as true [a circle] as it is in the intellect, which does not at all deviate from truth but permits each thing to be as it is. For the intellectual nature is [a nature that] *frees* and does not constrict. Now, with regard to things abstract and free from contraction the intellect cannot be falsifying, because in the intellect a thing is present in its quiddity. Something similar must be considered to be true regarding all things [in addition to circles]. Thus, you see why our inner man strives so greatly to have the figure of this world presented to itself in a sensory image—namely, so that [the inner man], who is a microcosm,²⁸ may attain to a knowledge of himself

[25] You doubt, perhaps, that the spirit that is described as moving over the water²⁹ is the executing-power of the Word through which God creates all things. I say that that spirit is full of forms, just

as the art of a potter is full of forms; for from his art proceed all the forms which appear in the potter's urns. His understanding is full of forms, just as a teacher has an intellect full of forms. And [the teacher] deposits these forms, [and] he expresses them by means of his formed spirit in order that the soul of his student may be formed with the form of the technical-knowledge or of the art. For by means of the word that [the teacher] speaks when expiring air, he passes on in-forming technical knowledge. For his voice is a spirit, [or breath],³⁰ that conveys an intellectual word that is full of forms—[conveys it] to the soul of the student who is capable of [receiving] the knowledge and of becoming informed. And in this way we see how it is that God, by means of the spirit of His word, or the spirit of His mouth, [a spirit] which moves over the waters, creates all things—as the Prophet said: “Send forth Your spirit and they shall be created.”³¹

[26] Therefore, in [God's] first breathing-out, the intelligent being is created as a creature capable of receiving the art of [Him who is] Omnipotence. This [creature] is not the art but is capable of receiving the art. However, [the creature] is not *by nature* capable of receiving the art, because he is a *creature*. Rather, he is capable insofar as the spirit of wisdom descends upon him and in-forms him. By way of illustration: If Plato by means of technical knowledge or by means of an art could make [a man] similar to himself, to which man he could give an intellectual nature capable of receiving the Platonic art, that creature would not for this reason be, by nature, in-formed with Plato's knowledge, although he would have within himself the aptitude for having Plato's knowledge.

[27] Hence, there is required the gift of receptivity of the art. This receptivity-of-the-Holy-Spirit, about which the Apostle speaks,³² is that through which the inner man is perfected and is in-formed by means of a form that perfects him. This form is the form of the Word of God, i.e., of Christ our God—just as in this miracle where Christ by His act of will transubstantiated the water into wine without saying a word. Hence, the wine-spirit, which was created in the water by the will of Jesus, formed (in accordance with the will of the Creator) from the water *wine* by causing the water to pass over into the substance of wine, so that it was no longer water but was wine. And the impressions that appeared to the senses—namely, the scent, the color, the taste, the gladness-of-heart (for wine gladdens the heart of man³³)—showed this [miracle] to be real. Similarly, when the spirit of Jesus is sent into the

human soul, it makes the soul Christlike; and the virtue and activity of this soul show this [coming of the spirit] to be real. (“By their fruits you shall know them”³⁴; for when the works are Christlike, then, necessarily, they proceed from a Christlike soul.)

[28] Note, too, that this miracle [at Cana] is the first miracle that Jesus did (in order to show His glory). Therefore, we ought to concentrate on this [miracle] as on a sign of the omnipotence of the Savior, who is able and willing to convey, by the word of His power,³⁵ our nature unto the immortality of a joyous life. Nor do other signs say anything more. Rather, this [sign] is a sign whose significance is unfolded by all [other] signs. And [Jesus] did all [signs] for the same end: namely, in order to strengthen the faith (1) that He is the Son and Heir of God and (2) that His power encompasses all things.

NOTES TO Quodcumque Dixerit Vobis, Facite*

*Sermon CCLXIII.

1. John 2:5.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. II Peter 2:22. Proverbs 26:11.
4. E.g., Pseudo-Ambrose, Sermon 8 (*PL* 17:617-618).
5. E.g., Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*. Tractatus VIII and IX (*PL* 35:1450-1466).
6. John 2:1.
7. John 1:45-51.
8. Augustine, Sermon 51 (*PL* 38:347).
9. John 11:25-27.
10. John 2:11.
11. II Peter 3:8. Ambrose, *De Cain et Abel* II, 4 (*PL* 14:348 CD).
12. I Corinthians 1:30.
13. Ephesians 5:32.
14. Ephesians 5:31. Genesis 2:24.
15. *Loc. cit.*
16. Romans 8:9-10.
17. In general, Nicholas makes no systematic distinction between his use of “*caritas*” and his use of “*amor*”. God is *Caritas*, but He is also *Amor*. See, e.g., Sermon IV (3 5:33-41). Cf. (3 5:45) with (3 5:50). Note I John 4:8 and 4:16, where the Vulgate has “*Deus caritas est.*” See also Sermon CCLXVI, margin number 2.
18. I Timothy 6:16.
19. Eleonora, daughter of King Eduard of Portugal, was married to Fridericus III, Emperor of Austria.
20. John 2:1 states that the marriage was held on the third day.
21. The Latin word “*hydria*” (meaning urn) is cognate with the Greek word ὑδῶρ (*hydōr*), meaning water and from which we get the word “hydrate”.
22. John 15:1.
23. Genesis 1:2.
24. The ancients regarded the four primal elements to be earth, air, fire, and water. Thales reasoned that all things were basically water.
25. Aristotle, *De Anima* I, 2 (405^b).
26. *De Genesi ad Litteram* XII, 18 (*PL* 34:470).
27. Aristotle makes something like this point when he says that thought (*nous*) becomes all things. *De Anima* III, 5 (430^a).
28. See Sermon CCLXII, my endnote 36.
29. Genesis 1:2.
30. The Latin word “*spiritus*” means spirit or wind or breath, and the likes.

31. Psalms 103:30 (104:30).
32. Ephesians 3:16. II Corinthians 13:13.
33. Psalms 103:15 (104:15).
34. Matthew 7:16.
35. Hebrews 1:3.

Volo. Mundare*
("I Will. Be Thou Made Clean")¹
[January 23, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "I will. Be thou made clean." From the Gospel.

As is read in Mark 1, Jesus said that He had come in order to preach.² And, thus, in order that His sermon would edify effectively, He worked miracles so that [the people] would know that His word was [the word] of God. So He preached a sermon on Mount Thabor. And after that divine and excellent sermon that He preached on that Mount and that is reported by the Gospel-writer Matthew throughout two chapters,³ He descended from the Mount, the sermon having been finished. In this [sermon] Jesus showed the power of God's word, which He was teaching not as [did] the scribes and the pharisees but as one having power.⁴

[2] Note that these [words of Jesus] are to be taken seriously. For Jesus's preaching was both a teaching and a commanding. For, [on the one hand,] there is the word of someone of little authority because the speaker lacks power and is cold [and] unmotivating. [But, on the other hand,] there is a firey word, about which the Prophet says that God's word is very firey.⁵ Now, the word of a contemptible man is readily despised; but the word of Jesus was penetrating, because it proceeded from a spirit-of-love that was strongly blazing. If a man who has power commands by his word, so that he moves his subjects as does a ruler and so that his exhortation is full of command-authority, then how great was the efficacy of the word of [Him who is both] God and man! He was unwilling to compel free choice; and so, He *taught*. Yet, His teaching was wonderful, because it was full of power, strongly motivating every teachable hearer toward consent and toward obedience to God.

[3] Much more potent is the word of him who is holy than of him upon whom a dignitary-title is conferred. I [once] saw that Pope Martin in Rome was unable to persuade the people that certain of his counsels be accepted. He called Bernardinus (a lesser Brother who has now been canonized because of his observance) to induce the people; [and] Bernardinus did that which the Pope was unable to do. This Brother was accustomed to speaking. (Moreover, I [once] heard [it said] in Padua that a preacher who has fire in his spirit can get a fire

going from dead coals.) I am speaking [now] about those who are teachable by God—[those] in whom the word of God takes hold. Because they are from God, they hearken to His words. A sunray is not captured by ice and snow, because these latter never grow warm without being resolved into water. Similarly, when the soul remains subject to bestiality, by which it is compressed and confined, the word of God (which has its place only in the rational spirit) is never laid hold of. [The soul] must, like ice, be resolved into liquid water, which is capable of receiving the Divine motion, i.e., the Divine spirit, and of receiving the infusing of heat, i.e., of love. That which especially hinders intellectual sight is bad habit, which is like a thick film spread over the eye [and] which grows through subsequent uncleanness that collects on the pupil. This film is difficult to remove once it has become long-standing. (Origen touches on this [topic] in a homily.)

As to the fact that in Egypt the children of Israel were infected from long-standing bad habits, [you may read] about this elsewhere.

[4] The text says: “But when Jesus went down from the Mount, great multitudes followed Him.”⁶ Mark says in Chapter 1, near the end, that after the fame of Jesus had spread among the people, Jesus no longer entered a city.⁷ The reason [for this avoidance of cities], according to the doctors [of the Church], is that so great a crowd followed Him that the common places were not big enough to hold both Him and the crowd. And the leper about whom [we read] in this Gospel-passage was the original cause (according to Mark)⁸ of this assembling. Yet, this [crowdedness] was especially due to the fact not only that Jesus preached so engagingly but [also] that He healed all [who came to Him];⁹ and these miracles attracted all [the others]. [The text] says “great multitudes” because the multitudes were gathered together from many places. Moreover, at the foot of the Mount many people were awaiting His descent; among these people was a certain leper, about whom there follows [in the text]: “And, lo, a leper came and worshiped Him and said: ‘Lord, if You will to, You can make me clean.’”¹⁰

[5] “A leper came and worshiped Him.” When [the leper] comes to Jesus, he comes to Him in worship, as the Magi came. [The leper] had faith that He whom He worshiped was the Savior, in whose power it was—the leper had no doubt—to bestow all healing. Another Gospel-writer says that the leper knelt down (Mark 1);¹¹ and [another says that] he fell on his face (Luke 5).¹² See what the devotion of one

coming to worship the Savior ought to be [like]: namely, [it ought to be such] that he not doubt (1) that Jesus is the Savior and (2) that He is the only one who can heal from that infirmity which is incurable by all others. Moreover, [he ought not to doubt] that the infirmity [of sin] is unbearable and always leads to death and that he is like one in agony who does not actually die but who is always [in the process of] dying and who wills for either healing or death. With this feeling he seeks healing, [and] he sees that never-ending punishment looms perpetually over him unless he is saved.

[6] Leprosy rightly is [a symbol for] mortal sin, even as an incurable infirmity of soul can well be called mortal sin because the infirmity is not death but is mortal. And how ought the one [with mortal sin] to speak? Assuredly, as [did] this leper: “Lord, if You will to, You can make me clean.” It is as if he were to say: “You have no need to procure anything from apothecaries or from the powers of herbs; for Your power is so great that it exceeds all these things which can effect something; for all these things are powers [only] by Your gift. Only let Your will be present so that You will that which You are able to do, and I shall be healed.” Surely, the faith of the leper was great, who saw no such miracle worked openly by Jesus but who believed on the basis only of what he had heard.

[7] “And Jesus, stretching forth His hand, touched him saying ...”¹³ This extending of the hand confirms the faith of the leper. For Jesus would not have extended His hand if He had not seen his faith. Nor was the extending of His hand anything other than the imparting of His power. For [the leper] said: “If You will to, You can make me clean.” The hand is [a symbol for] power; and he who extends his hand wills to show his power. “[Jesus] touched him.” [He did] not [touch] the leprosy, lest He act against the Law;¹⁴ but He touched *him*, who was healed by the touching. For [Jesus] said when He touched: “I will. Be thou healed.” He did not say “Be healed by this touch” but said “I will. Be thou healed.”

[8] What do You will, O most sweet Jesus, with respect to Your touching (when the Law prohibits it) a deformed man infected with a contagious disease? You answer: “I will to heal.” Therefore, this touching is a sacrament of healing. [Jesus] does not say this word [“to heal” in the following sense: namely,] ‘I will something that shall at some time occur’ — as when we say ‘I will to go’ [or] ‘I will to come.’ Rather, [He says “to heal”] as we say ‘I will to speak’ — because then

that which you will [to do] occurs at the same time [as you will it]. You will to speak; and when you say this, you *are* speaking. Good Jesus, You will to heal; and when You say [this], You *are* healing. Therefore, Your word occurs together with its execution.

[9] O what power is Yours, Good Jesus! When we say “I will to write,” not for this reason is that thing written. I will to build a house; not for this reason is [a house] actually built. For power is not the same thing as will. For I cannot do that which I will, except with [a lapse of] time. The will’s consent is instantaneous; but its execution requires time. But You can do [instantaneously] that which You will to, and You can do it in the way in which You will to. [It is analogous to] the way in which marriage is contracted [by us] by consent; and when the intent accompanies one’s having the power, a sacramental transformation occurs. All the things that we do in imitation of You, O Jesus, are accomplished by the will.

[10] You understood well, O Most Perfect Jesus, the desire of the leper who is prostrated in front of You. He did not *ask* that You have mercy on him and heal him. For he knew that You are Loving-Kindness itself, who came into the world for the sake of the world’s salvation. He did not *remind* You to do it—You who came to seek and to save.¹⁵ Rather, with complete faith he presented himself to Your Eyes-of-mercy so that You would heal [him] if You willed to. [It is] as if he were to say: “You know whether that which I exceedingly desire is expedient for me. You will that which is expedient for me; and that which You will, You can do.” [11] This lesson about praying and about seeking health-of-soul is very good. We ought to prefer¹⁶ health-of-soul to health-of-body, [the latter of] which is often for a strengthening of the soul, as Paul said: ‘When I am weak in body, then I am stronger in spirit.’¹⁷ And Paul was content not to ask for removal of the “thorn,”¹⁸ which he had in order to acquire merit by resisting. For the grace of patience amid adversities makes the adversities to be beneficial to the soul. When God made our body, which [in certain respects] is opposed to the spirit, then lest this adversity be harmful to the soul’s health, He made [adversity] a by-product of temptation, so that adversity is as something curative, although it is a bitter potion [to drink].

[12] Now, Jesus saw that the healing of the leper was useful for manifesting the glory of God; and so, his leprosy was cleansed immediately. Immediately, without a temporal interval, the leprosy, which over time spread because of temporal corruption, was suddenly

cleansed—just as when light comes, the darkness suddenly withdraws. [The text] says “*his* [leprosy]” because no sin or no infirmity of soul comes from God, who did not create death or those features which are characteristic of death. For He is Life and Salvation. Man has nothing which is his own except for that which he does *not* have from God; and this [latter] is “nothing”. Infirmity, sin, death (and whatever such evils) are not from God; for they have no being. Therefore, they are not from God, who is Being itself. And so, whatever is done without Him is nothing, i.e., does not have any being.

[13] “And Jesus said to him: See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priests”—as if to say:

I have come [in order] to fulfill the Law. You are held to be a leper. And if you say that you have been cleansed, no one is obliged to believe you unless a priest affirms it.¹⁹ See, then, that you do not say it; rather, show yourself to a priest. When you show yourself to him as [being now] clean—you, whom he knew to be a leper (leprosy being incurable by any man)—then the work [of cleansing] bespeaks the glory of God. And both your deliverance and the power of God will be lawfully reported publicly.

If beforehand [the leper] had let it be known that he was clean, and if he had presented himself to the community, he would have been hindered on account of [the requirements of] the Law. And there was no more fitting manner of making [his cleansing] known than by his first not saying [anything about it] to anyone.

[14] “And offer the gift which Moses commanded, as a testimony unto them” (Leviticus 13).²⁰ Lo, this prescribing of the offering of a gift is a recognition of the real healing. Therefore, in testimony of the truth that you are truly made clean, there ought to be done that which the Law prescribes, so that thereupon the social-ambience that was previously removed is restored. The receiving of the gift is testimony that the one who offers it is clean; for from someone unclean [the gift] would not be accepted. [The text] says “gift”; for although it is an offering, nevertheless it is also a gift of the priest who is judging [the leper’s condition] and who is restoring social-ambience to the outcast. Accordingly, it is not blamable if the prescribed gift is offered to the judge-who-has-excommunicated when he absolves.

[15] Let us now return again to considering individual points related to our instruction [from the text]. And, first of all, there is the lesson to us that Jesus, who is our Head,²¹ descended from Mount

Thabor, where He is read to have been transfigured. [He descended] into the valley so that He drew with Him the crowds that were following Him. For He descended in order to cure the leper. We see that the Lord descended, humbling Himself even to the point of [making] contact with the leper. If our Head descended, we [His] members ought rightly also to descend by means of humility. It is a monstrosity that we who are the feet endeavor to ascend by means of pride, when our Head descends by means of humility.

[16] The crowd that admires Jesus follows Him. Let us, too, follow our Savior and Physician. Christ draws the crowd after Himself, because no one approaches Him unless he is drawn.²² The Father draws in and through the Son—as if there were to come someone from Gaul who were called son of the king of France. Many would follow along to see him because his father (namely, the king of France) would draw them. For unless [the son] were the son of the king, they would not care to approach [him]. Therefore, the Father Creator in and through His Son draws [people] to the Son. For the creature wishes to know his own Father in and through the Son, just as the subject of the king [wishes to know] his king in and through the [king's] son. [17] The infirm are drawn by a physician because they seek to be healed. But Christ draws every rational soul after Him because He is God's Word and Reason, of which each created reason is the image. And so, just as an image in a mirror follows every movement of him of whom it is the image, without whom it neither exists nor is moved, so the rational soul [follows] the Word of God. Moreover, our soul, weighed down by infirmities, naturally knows its Alleviator. Analogously, certain injured animals are read to have fled to a human being for refuge, as a lion [fled] to St. Jerome in order to be freed from an infixed thorn. Similarly, man, in all his hardships, flees to God for refuge. Therefore, he who believes that Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of human beings follows Him. For Christ takes away the sins that weigh down the soul; and He draws [us] to Himself in order that we may be saved, as the Apostle Peter says that He bore our sins in His own Body and hung on the Cross.²³ And Paul [says]: He died because of our sins.²⁴ And Matthew 8 [says]: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."²⁵ Therefore, our sin killed Christ on the Cross; thus, it can be called mortal sin because it nailed Christ to the Cross. One who sins mortally can be called a murderer, because as much as he can he kills Christ. About these persons it is said that they crucify Christ anew.²⁶

[18] But [God] does not draw [one who is] disinclined [to come]. (For example, the fact that the sun does not draw all things unto itself but [draws] flowers less than trees is due to the fact that there are varying dispositions of the tractable objects.) The soul ought to dispose itself [in such a way] that it can be drawn. For if it flees from the one who calls it and withdraws from the one who invites it, then it is the soul's own fault that it is not drawn. But the reason that God draws unto Himself the intellectual nature is apprehended from the following [consideration]: the soul's appetite is like an empty vessel that wants to be filled—but only with what is good. Yet, whatever things are not the Absolute Good do not satisfy the soul; for from these things there follows something opposite [to fulfilling]—even as sadness follows from joy; and ugliness, from beauty; and old age from youth; and so on. Therefore, those things which are lacking in good cannot satisfy the appetite for the good. [19] Moreover, Aldobrandinus's²⁷ reasoning seems sound: [namely,] that we can *desire* in the degree that we can *understand*. But the intellect is that by which to *become all things*; for it is in potency with respect to understanding all things. And so, it is never complete unless it understands the Cause of all things, namely, God. Therefore, apart from God [the intellect's] desire cannot be satisfied. Note the example of Solon, who when he was about to die raised his head in order to hear a certain observation and to depart, more enlightened, unto happiness.

Moreover, close-association is appealing, because *like* seeks *like*. Such we see in the case of all things—as with all angels in the empyrean heaven, the stars in the eighth sphere, fish in water, animals on land, those who are noble with those who are noble, servants [with servants], the young [with the young], the aged [with the aged], and so on. But in this world the soul does not have anyone with whom closely to associate, because it is a likeness only of God. Therefore, it is drawn to God, in whose likeness it was made.

Subsequently, let us consider why this miracle of cleansing the leper was the first miracle done openly, as says the Teacher in his *Histories*.²⁸ It occurred because of the fact that the Savior had preached an excellent sermon, which He wanted to confirm with signs. [Hence,] He first of all worked this miracle by means of which He showed two things: namely, (1) that the disease of leprosy is like a disease of a soul that is infected with mortal sin and (2) that only He who has cleansed the leper can cleanse the soul. For, as He says elsewhere,

it is not more difficult for Him to say to the paralyzed man “Arise and walk” than [to say] “Your sins are forgiven you.”²⁹

[21] Now, leprosy results from a corrupting of all the humors. But every harm is located in something good—as infirmity in a body, vice in a soul, blindness in an eye, curvature in the tibia. Since leprosy, however, results by nature from a general corruption, it cannot be cured. For [nature] would have to work through a non-corrupted humor and would have to expel the corrupted humor. If, for example, a fire is totally extinguished, it cannot be restarted; but if a little bit of it has remained, then by means of that bit, the fire is rekindled. Likewise, the soul walks into mortal sin and cannot by itself be turned back from it. And so, the soul is called “a wind that goes out and does not return.”³⁰ Hence, the soul needs help, as does someone stuck in mire.

[22] Leprosy infects society. So [at the Judgment Day] when the hidden things will be made manifest: just as lepers are cast out of the city, so too those lepers-in-soul will be sent outside the society of the blessed unto Hell and into outer darkness. Moreover, note that lepers, always and progressively, become more infirm and become more infected from their associations [with other lepers]. Similarly, in Hell the associations add to the torment; and the punishment is always increased because the worm will not die,³¹ because the vice will always grow. Therefore, they can never be saved because their vice will never be lessened but is always increased. He who is envious is [envious] with such envy that his soul is infected with that “leprosy”. When on the Day of Judgment [his soul] is separated from the good [souls] and is sent into the fire [of Hell], the envy always grows; and the worm of envy, always eating away at itself, will never die.

[23] Moreover, leprosy deforms the face, which it alters in accordance with the corruption of the humors. The face is [a symbol of] knowledge. And so, the Savior says that He does not know sinful souls, or foolish virgins,³² because [their names] were deleted from the book of knowledge. But those who are *just* will be in eternal remembrance.³³ Therefore, let us sinners with many mortal sins recur as lepers to the merciful Physician of souls—[recur] together with this devout leper [in the text] so that in doing as he [did], we may obtain cleansing for ourselves.

[24] Let us ponder well the word[s] of Jesus, when He said: “I will. Be thou made clean.” For Christ is the Word of God. Hence, when He says ...

I will; i.e., I the Word of God will. Be thou made clean
as elsewhere [He says] ...

- “I am the Living Bread”;³⁴ i.e., I the Word of God am Living Bread for the soul.
- “I am Life”;³⁵ i.e., I the Word of God am Life, just as I am Truth.³⁶
- “I am the Resurrection.”³⁷
- “I am the Way,”³⁸ or “I am the Door.”³⁹
- “I am in the Father”;⁴⁰ i.e., I the Word of God am in the Father, and the Father is in me, because I am His Word. So the Father is in me as the intellect is in its word; and I am in the Father as the Word of God is in God, or as the word of the intellect is in the intellect, or as the begotten word is in the begetter-intellect.
- “He who sees me, the Word of God, sees the Father also.”⁴¹

... then all such Scriptural passages that speak about cleansing, setting free, making alive, or feeding the soul, we ought to refer to the Word of God, which (as [we read] in the Apocalypse)⁴² is the name of Christ the Liberator. ([We ought] not [refer them] to the visible flesh.) [This referral is such] as the Savior Himself explains in John 6, when He says: My words are spirit and life, but the flesh is of no profit at all.⁴³ And elsewhere He says that His word cleanses and has made His apostles clean.⁴⁴

[25] Hence, bodily touching did not cleanse the leper; rather, the word of God—applied through the will—did. Similarly, washing in the Jordan [River] did not free Naaman [of leprosy];⁴⁵ rather, God’s word, expressed through the prophet did. Likewise, in Wisdom 16 it is said that the word of God saves unharmed those who believe; and they are not healed by that which is seen but by the Savior of them all.⁴⁶ [Nor are they healed by] herbs or by an emollient; rather, the word of God heals.⁴⁷ And in Matthew 8 it is said that [Jesus] cast out the [evil] spirits by His word.⁴⁸ Now, the will is the spirit of the word, i.e., is the application of the intention. The intention is the will conveying unto itself a word; [the intention] heals, just as [Christ] said “I will. Be thou made clean.” The will had within itself the intention-of-cleansing, which united with the leper.

[26] We must also consider the fact that Jesus cleansed the leper in the presence of the multitude but nevertheless prohibited him from telling [of it]. Assuredly, Jesus said this for the instruction of the hearers, so that they would know [that] this [miracle] was done for

their instruction, not for ostentation. But as Mark reports, the leper then—perhaps after he was judged [by the priest] to be clean—divulged this miracle everywhere, so that all [people] came running. The prohibition served [to bring about] the divulging (as is read elsewhere: The more He forbade it, the more they divulged it. [Read] about this in Origen’s homily.)⁴⁹ Therefore, we ought to show, as best we can, that we do not seek our own glory in the word of God. Rather, we ought to give glory to God and ought not to forbid that it be given to God. And so, [the leper] was sent to the chief priest, as Mark says,⁵⁰ in order that glory would be given to God.

[27] We can postpone the remaining part of the Gospel-passage about the centurion until Lent, when the time will be more fitting for commenting on it.

NOTES TO *Volo. Mundare**

*Sermon CCLXIV.

1. Matthew 8:3 and 2:41.
2. Mark 1:38.
3. Matthew 5-6. (The Sermon on the Mount.)
4. Matthew 7:29. Mark 1:22.
5. Proverbs 30:5.
6. Matthew 8:1.
7. Mark 1:45.
8. Mark 1:44-45.
9. Matthew 8:16.
10. Matthew 8:2.
11. Mark 1:40.
12. Luke 5:12.
13. John 8:3.
14. Numbers 5:2. Leviticus 13.
15. Luke 19:10.
16. Here at 11:2 I am following the Paris printed edition in reading “*praeferre*” in place of “*praeferri*”.
17. II Corinthians 12:10.
18. II Corinthians 12:7-9.
19. Leviticus 13.
20. Matthew 8:4. Leviticus 14 (rather than 13, as Cusanus has).
21. Ephesians 4:15. Colossians 1:18.
22. John 6:44.
23. I Peter 2:24.
24. I Corinthians 15:3.
25. Matthew 8:17.
26. Hebrews 6:6.
27. Aldobrandinus of Tuscanella.
28. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*.
29. Matthew 9:5.
30. Psalms 77:39 (78:39).
31. Mark 9:45 & 47.
32. Matthew 25:1-12.
33. Psalms 111:7 (112:6).
34. John 6:48.
35. John 14:6.
36. *Loc. cit.*
37. John 11:25.
38. John 14:6.
39. John 10:7.
40. John 10:38.
41. John 14:9.
42. Apocalypse (Revelation) 19:13.

43. John 6:64.
44. John 15:3.
45. 4 Kings 5:10 (II Kings 5:10).
46. Wisdom 16:7.
47. Wisdom 16:12.
48. Matthew 8:16.
49. Origen wrote several homilies on Matthew 8. One of them—not the one here alluded to—is Homily LIV (*PL* 95:1189 ff.).
50. Mark 1:44.

Plenitudo Legis Est Dilectio*
("Love Is the Fulfilling of the Law.")¹
[January 30, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." (Romans 13 and in the office of the mass).

The Apostle [Paul] stated: "[Pay] tribute to whom tribute [is due],"² adding the following words: "Owe no man anything." He wanted to persuade [the readers] that debts ought to be repaid quickly, so that love, which is never supposed to cease, may be that alone by which we are obligated to one another. Nevertheless, "debt" can be understood, in accordance with the Lord's Prayer,³ as sin—in particular, that we are not to sin against our brother but that if perchance we do offend, the sin is to be remedied, together with satisfaction [being made].

Regarding love of neighbor, [Paul] adds those [statements] that are obvious. For he who loves his neighbor as himself fulfills the Law. For he does not do to another what he does not want done to himself. He does not kill him whom he loves as himself; he does not commit adultery with his wife. He does not lie to his neighbor, whom he abhors when lying to him. He does not covet his neighbor's goods but rather gives from his own. And if there are any other commandments, they are included in, i.e., fulfilled in, this [commandment to love thy neighbor as thyself].⁴

[2] One who examines more deeply will discern that in accordance with the Gospel's parable⁵ Christ is the Neighbor. Christ finds the human race wounded by evil spirits. On this wounded race He pours olive oil and wine and furnishes mercy and treatment. He bound up the wounds by forgiving the sins. He set [us] on His own mule by virtue of the fact that He suffered in His body for our sins. He led [us] to the Inn (i.e., to the Holy Church); and He committed us to the care of the Innkeeper (i.e., to holy preachers), with two denarii having been given (i.e., the Old Testament and the New Testament). The wounded one loves this Neighbor, so that he conducts himself with all circumspection lest he do something that is offensive in the eyes of His majesty.

Next, the Apostle says things that are obvious, namely, that he who loves another does not do him harm; and in this way the whole of the Law will be fulfilled. Hence, it is rightly concluded [by the

Apostle] that love is the fulfilling of the Law.

[3] Our teacher Paul instructs us very briefly about fulfilling the Law. I promised to say something today about the teacher and his teaching. For very recently we had [the feast-day of] his conversion, and I was not expecting that I would have listeners then, because it was falsely reported to me that, customarily, no celebration is made such that the people are free from work. I will [now] say something very briefly, because it is impossible for me to go into detail about the whole [text] or about a given part [of it].

Paul [was] a Jew of Tarsus, a noble man and a Roman citizen, dressed in a cloak as are citizens going to court. He [was] very learned, more so than other of his contemporaries. He [was] a zealous and fervid emulator of the fathers' traditions, a persecutor of Christians. [He was] led not by envy but by a zeal for the Law, being eager in this way to please God. At length—when now he had come to the final stage, namely, that he carried letters authorizing the capture of Christians⁶ (because he was faithful to God and did not know that he was displeasing God, on account of service to whom he did these things)—he was recalled from his error by a Divine miracle. And as he had obtained a delegation against Christians, [so too] he was made a legate of Christ.

[4] But how the foregoing happened is clearly described in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 9 and 22 and 26. In midday outside of Damascus he was thrown to the ground, and a light shone round about him, and he heard a voice from heaven [saying] “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Having heard this voice, he asked: “Who are you, Lord?” (But his companions on the journey heard only this voice of *Paul*.) And the Lord [responded]: “I am Jesus. It is hard for you to kick against the goad.” And trembling and astonished, [Paul] asked: “Lord, what will You have me do?” And the Lord [said] to him: “Arise and go into the city, and it will be told to you [what to do].” And arising, he saw nothing—even with opened eyes—because of the brightness of the light.⁷ And his companions led him by the hand to the city of Damascus unto a street [called] *Strait*,⁸ where he remained for three days neither eating nor drinking nor seeing, but praying. Then the Lord sent to him Ananias, who restored sight to him and baptized him and told him that the God of our fathers had foreordained him to know His will and to behold the Just One and to hear the voice from His mouth, in order that he would become a witness of Him unto all men as

regards the things he had seen and heard. And so—as Jesus had said beforehand to His disciple Ananias in a vision—Paul, made a vessel of election, carried the name of Jesus to the Gentiles, to kings, and to the children of Israel.⁹ Moreover, Paul was concerned for the poor, because, with respect to them, he and Barnabas had made a promise to the Apostles Peter and James.¹⁰ And Paul was all the more concerned because he had earlier persecuted those [Christians].

I am reserving for the [feast-]day of Paul’s birth [a detailing of] the rest of his life.

[5] Paul was converted suddenly because not out of malice but out of ignorance he persecuted the Church, which is the Body of Christ. Hence, we must note that that which is done to the least Christian is done to Christ,¹¹ just as when someone strikes me on the *foot*, without doubt he strikes *me*. Believers are members of Christ. Reflecting on the manner of [Paul’s] conversion, let us infer that although the soul that is zealous for truth may err, it comes to truth by means of Divine light. And this [coming] happens through the Savior’s grace. For he who hastens along and thinks that he is on the way to truth—to him truth shows itself by calling him back from a false pathway so that by the right pathway he may attain [the truth] that is sought. [6] Paul sought truth, and he persecuted that which he sought. Truth said: “Saul, you seek to serve truth. Why, then, do you persecute me, who am Truth?”¹² Paul, astonished and trembling, answered: “Who are You, Lord?” The Lord said: “I am Jesus of Nazareth.” See how Jesus manifested Himself to Paul, adding: “It is hard for you to kick against the goad” so that [Paul] would understand that he was not able to succeed. Paul, who was immediately converted, said: “Lord, what will You have me do? [It is] as if he were to say:

Command, O Lord, whatever You will to, and, lo, I am prepared [to do it]. For I thought You to be dead—[You] whom I know to have been crucified and buried. But since I [now] perceive You to be alive, I confess that You are the Lord, who is to be obeyed.

[7] And why is it that [Paul], who in his spirit saw Truth, was made blind in the eyes? [Why?] except that he sought truth by means of perceptible things and by means of the letter [of the Law].¹³ And this was an erroneous way. When light came, that eye was blinded, because it was not able to tolerate the light. But in his spirit he saw and heard. For *there* [i.e., in the spirit] seeing coincides with hearing. Hence, his companions did not see the light [and] did not hear the voice of Jesus but [heard] well [the voice] of Paul. For in spirit Paul heard whom he saw,

just as David saw the Lord when he heard Him speaking in him.¹⁴ But when the spirit is repaired, sight is repaired. Sensory sight hindered the spirit from seeing immaterially. And so, [Paul] was blinded for a time in order that in the meanwhile his spirit would grasp what was seen [by it]. For during three days of external blindness, while praying in spirit, he saw the word of the Gospel, i.e., the *spirit* of the *letter* of the Old Testament.¹⁵ With his sight rooted in spirit, Paul was made, in newness of spirit, a new man. And he was baptized in spirit and was filled with the Holy Spirit, and in this way [he became] a vessel of election.¹⁶ Everyone who deems himself to be someone well-learned and prudent in this world must become as blind and foolish¹⁷ before he becomes Christlike. For by means of no human intelligence, but only by means of a gift from on high, does one arrive at the enlivening spirit which is the spirit of understanding and of wisdom.

[8] Paul loved truth. But he did not recognize Truth Incarnate. It revealed and manifested itself to him in his spirit. And when he apprehended it, he bound himself to it, [and] it made its dwelling with him. [And] he carried it as a chosen vessel full of fragrances. So let us say a few things about that light which Paul received for *imparting*—a light of glory, as it were, for illumining the Church. First of all, Paul taught the faith that God exists, when he says in Hebrews: “One who comes [to God] must believe that He is.”¹⁸ Secondly, he taught that there is one God, when he says in I Corinthians 8: “We know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is no God but one.”¹⁹ Next, [he taught] that the one God is trine; for He is God the Father, from whom are all things,²⁰ God the Son, through whom are all things,²¹ and God the Holy Spirit, in whom are all things.²² Next, he taught that Jesus is the Son of God, and he affirmed that Jesus is the Christ,²³ according to the Scriptures.

[9] But how Christ is to be understood to be the Son of God [Paul] explained in various ways. For because of the fact that the weakness of the flesh appeared in Him, He seemed not to be the Son of God, who is immortal. Nevertheless, the power that was in Him—power for healing the sick—showed that He was God. The Crucifixion seemed to be a certain manifestation that He was not the Son of God; but the Resurrection destroyed [this] consideration. [There was] a marvelous coincidence of human weakness and Divine strength. But the Divine power that was in Him in all fullness (as [Paul] writes in Colossians)²⁴ showed Him to be God.

[10] God is invisible, as [Paul] says.²⁵ Perhaps this point can be argued persuasively in the following way:

Everything that can be sensed is composite. But prior to everything composite is what is simple. And so, [Paul] calls eternal those things which are not seen and which precede things that can be sensed. But things that are seen are temporal and originated. Therefore, the causes of all visible things must be invisible, and [the causes] of all sensory things [must be] intellectual causes.

Likewise, by means of the intellect we see all things—prior to the world of the senses—in their causes. Hence, just as by means of perceptible light we see with the sensory eye things that are perceptible, so by means of intelligible light we see, with the mind’s eye, intelligible things. Therefore, all sensory things are to intelligible things as the eye of the rational spirit is to the eye of the sensory spirit.²⁶

[11] The eye of the rational spirit—which is called the eye of the heart, which can attain to a vision of God—if it is clean, does not have either flesh or solid parts. But the sensory eye has no being apart from these. Therefore, visible things lead to invisible things, as says Dionysius, the disciple of Paul,²⁷ just as images and things caused [lead to] exemplars and causes. Our Paul says in Hebrews 11: “By faith we understand that the world was framed by the Word of God, so that from invisible things visible things were made.”²⁸ And, likewise, he says in Romans 1 that the invisible things of God are revealed in and by created, visible things.²⁹ Hence, if I understand Paul rightly, he means by “visible things” *created things*; by “invisible things” he means *uncreated, or eternal, things*. But [Paul] says that God by means of His Word created all things whether they be creatures *invisible to us* (which are not for this reason eternal) or creatures *altogether invisible*, as are angels, thrones, principalities, and powers—about which, speaking in Colossians, he says that all things exist by the Son of God.³⁰

[12] Therefore, the Word of God, which is the name for the Son of God the Father, is prior to all created things (as [is said] in that very same place),³¹ because all things were made by Him, and He is the Image of the Invisible God, i.e., is the Form and Figure of God’s substance, upholding all things by the Word of His power.³² Hence, since God is eternal and altogether invisible, the Son is altogether like Him, because [He is] the substantial Image which can be called the Form of God.³³ And He is as Power that is begotten from Infinite Being. For such a Power, which [this] Being begets, upholds all things

because it is the Power of Absolute Omnipotence. Therefore, all the things which could be made and can be made are contained enfoldedly in that Power. Therefore, the world is present in that Power as in its Cause and Form or as in its Wisdom or Idea. And to say the foregoing is not [to say] anything other than that visible and originated creatures are present *there*, in Eternal Truth, and are created by that Power—even as time is created from eternity, for it is the image of eternity.³⁴ And just as time contains all things insofar as they are created and originated, or begun, so this Eternal Power enfolds all things insofar as they are eternal.

[13] Therefore, nothing is new with God the Father, in whose Word, or Power, are enfolded all things that can be made. Analogously, he who with the eye of the intellect looks unto an art through which are made all the things that are possible to be made [within that art]—he sees nothing new in the things that are made [by means of that art]; for previously he saw them all in the eternal art. Therefore, Paul concludes [in his letter] to the Colossians that it pleased God the Father that in His Son, namely Jesus, all fullness dwell³⁵—i.e., that in Jesus there be absolute fullness (and fullness is not absolute unless it is Absolute Perfection, which is God). [Moreover, it pleased the Father] that through the Son there be reconciled [to God] all the things that [God] made,³⁶ so that, indeed, just as God created all things through the Son, so He would restore all things through the Son.

[14] And so, lest [created things] be out of harmony with one another and with their Author, the Father made the Son to be incarnated in order that, having been made a man, He would teach [men] that heavenly and earthly things can become reconciled to their Creator. And this is the Word of life. And in order that this [Word] would lead to the perfect [state of being], He allowed Himself to be put to death for the sake of men. And this is the very excellent work of restoration, namely, that the Son by His death has reconciled the human race to God the Father by presenting to God the Father—[presenting] as blameless, immaculate, and holy³⁷—those who, in their mind, were enemies [of God].³⁸ For men, in that state of mind in which [God] determined to redeem the human race, were enemies [of God]—because the sensual and carnal man, as descended from Adam, was, in mind, an enemy of God. For the sensual man does not perceive ..., etc.³⁹ For he prefers the sensual, mortal life to eternal life, which consists of a union of the spirit with God. This reconciliation is of benefit

to all those who keep the faith and who, being now guided, do not turn back from the hope of the gospel.⁴⁰ Paul speaks about this topic in the same place in [his letter] to the Colossians.⁴¹

[15] And in the same [Gospel-passage Paul] concludes that this is true Wisdom, namely, to know Christ. [Paul] attests that he teaches this [wisdom] with great care in order that, instructing every man in this wisdom, he may present, to Christ, [every man] as perfect.⁴² Hence, [it was] the Apostle who desired that the Colossians be ready to partake of (1) all the riches of the fullness-of-understanding and (2) of a knowledge of the mystery of God the Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴³ [And he desired that] they take note that these are the riches of wisdom, so that he-who-knows-Christ is seen to have a knowledge of all things, whatsoever they are. And so, [Paul] says, fittingly, that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,⁴⁴ because he who knows Christ has need of nothing more.

[16] But [Paul] concludes as follows: “Now, I say this in order that no one may deceive you by loftiness of words . . .,” and so on.⁴⁵ He wanted to caution them that they not be drawn away—through human philosophy or through disputes—from this teaching and from the hope which is in Christ.⁴⁶ Those in this world who wish to become practically wise are accustomed to be deceived by philosophy, i.e., by earthly knowledge. And [Paul] calls this [knowledge] “vain deceit in accordance with the tradition of men.”⁴⁷ For although human wisdom hands down many [teachings] that are plausible, nevertheless they are vain, because they are according to the elements of this world and not according to Christ, in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.⁴⁸ For all the things that the Father has He gave to the Son when He begat Him in fullness of the Godhead. And in Christ such fullness dwells bodily, i.e., when He received a body, in which He remained fully God.

[17] In Christ, says [Paul], they, [i.e., believers], are filled⁴⁹—[with] more than can be gleaned from the elements of the world⁵⁰—because through Christ those who are in Christ receive abundance of the Godhead. This is the simplicity of faith, in which [Paul] preaches that one is to remain steadfast. And he teaches that all other things are to be counted for nothing⁵¹—especially human concoctions that are inspired by evil angels, about whom [Paul] speaks in the same selection.⁵² (We must consider these matters more at length elsewhere.) For these teachings about spirits were causes of idolatry; for they gave

instruction about the art of astrology, so that by means of astrology men were led to fortune-telling. Then, from this [practice they were led to] the art of [predictive] figurings based on the forms of constellations. And from this [practice they were led to] the art of attaching themselves to influential spirits—e.g., to the spirit of Saturn and of Jove and so on. Then [came the art] of appeasing those spirits with acts of reverence that are owed only to God—e.g., with acts of worship, sacrifice, incense-burning. In this way the evil spirit introduced a certain religion in which that spirit is worshiped and which turns [the practicante] away from God. Paul is seen to speak about this [form of religion in his letter] to the Colossians, who were sometimes idolaters because of their [false] conviction that that [form of] religion was from [good] spirits or [good] angels.

[18] But the true religion of Christ invalidates this false deception; and true faith is the foundation of [Christ's religion], just as false faith [is the foundation] of false religion. Therefore, *to believe* that the teaching of Christ is the teaching of the true God through His true Son—this *faith* invalidates the teachings that are alleged to be from angels.⁵³ And it proves that those teachings are [the teachings] of evil spirits, who are cast out by Christ. Hence, the following is the central point of our Paul's teaching: [namely,] that whatever things draw a man away from this simplicity of faith—as do earthly wisdom and the persuadings regarding a religion-of-spirits—are to be rejected because they do not contain sound doctrine.

[19] Next, [Paul] says that this Savior, who is the Power of God,⁵⁴ ought to be accepted as a Savior in whom there is abundant fullness from which all those who approach Him receive life and salvation. For he who clings to Him is made one spirit with Him. And so, he obtains in Him enlivening; for everyone who draws near to Fullness of life is enlivened, as a man who draws near to fullness of heat is made warm. Now, this approaching to Christ is a being conformed to Christ; and [Paul] calls this conformity “a putting-on,”⁵⁵ i.e., “a choosing,” because the one-who-is-to-be-saved puts on, [or chooses], Christ as Savior.

[20] This putting-on [of Christ] is a clothing of oneself with incorruptible virtues by mortifying corruptible desires and by putting on things incorruptible—for example, justice, godliness, truth, peace, love, and other things of this kind. For these things are members of the inner man (who was created in conformity with God), just as we find

them in Christ, the Head.⁵⁶ Hence, this putting-on has still another aspect; for he who puts on Christ by receiving His form enters into the form of Christ and becomes a Christian, i.e., Christlike. And so, just as Christ died on account of men's sins, in order that sins (or the body of sin) would die, so too in and through Christ's death the sins of him [who is Christlike] die and he [who is Christlike] arises in Christ.⁵⁷ For in him who has put on the form of Christ, there are done, in a similar way, all the things that he believes to have been done by Christ.

[21] Now, baptism is the sacrament (1) of the washing away of sin (i.e., of the old man) and (2) of the putting on, by faith, of the new man (i.e., of Christ). And so, a man dies with Christ (by means of a denial, or renunciation, of the old life), and he arises with Christ. And this resurrection [is], to be sure, that by which the old man arises as a new man in spirit. This [arising] is accomplished, in this world, by the putting-on of Christ by faith and, in the next world, through true conformity by means of regeneration at the time of Christ's coming in a glorified body, at which time we shall be like Him.⁵⁸ Therefore, in Ephesians and Colossians Paul speaks about this matter—[i.e., about] how it is that (1) here [in this life] we, by faith, die and arise and are enlivened with Christ but that (2) in the next world we (who here put Him on by receiving, through faith, His form in the inner man)⁵⁹ shall be like Him in fact.

[22] This [present reflection] is a certain small remembrance of Paul and his teaching, which he had from Christ, who spoke in and through him. [Paul] functioned as Christ's ambassador.⁶⁰ He displayed this ambassadorship in and through the power of his word and of his miracles. At another time the Lord will again give, in greater abundance, an understanding, and an interpretation, of the meaning that is contained in the divine letters of our Paul. Let us now give thanks to God for this [brief sermon] which has thus been granted [by God] and delivered [by me]. [Let us] devoutly ask Him to impart unto us the spirit of Paul for the sake of our salvation and [as a tribute] unto His⁶¹ own everlasting glory.

NOTES TO *Plenitudo Legis Est Dilectio**

*Sermon CCLXV.

1. Romans 13:10.
2. Romans 13:7.
3. Matthew 6:9-13.
4. Romans 13:9.
5. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 3 10:30-35) is here being alluded to.
6. Acts 9:1-2.
7. Acts 22:11.
8. Acts 9:11.
9. Acts 9:15.
10. Galatians 2:9-10.
11. Matthew 25:40.
12. John 14:6.
13. Romans 7:6. II Corinthians 2:6.
14. Psalms 84:9 (85:8).
15. See note 13 above.
16. "... a vessel of election". Acts 9:15.
17. I Corinthians 1:27-29.
18. Hebrews 11:6.
19. I Corinthians 8:4.
20. I Corinthians 8:6.
21. *Loc. cit.*
22. Romans 11:36.
23. Acts 9:22.
24. Colossians 2:9.
25. Colossians 1:15.
26. Nicholas would do better to say: "... as the eye of the sensory spirit is to the eye of the rational spirit."
27. In his dialogue *De Li Non Aliud* Nicholas alludes extensively, in his Chapter 14, to Pseudo-Dionysius's works. The point that he presently makes is an echoing of the first part of Chapter 14.
28. Hebrews 11:3.
29. Romans 1:20.
30. Colossians 1:16-17.
31. Colossians 1:15-17.
32. Hebrews 1:3.
33. Philippians 2:6. In I Corinthians 1:24 Christ is called the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.
34. Plato, in his *Timaeus*, calls time the moving image of eternity.
35. Colossians 1:19.
36. Colossians 1:20.
37. Colossians 1:22.
38. Colossians 1:21.

39. I Corinthians 2:14.
40. Colossians 1:23.
41. *Loc. cit.*
42. Colossians 1:28.
43. Colossians 2:2.
44. Colossians 2:3.
45. Colossians 2:4.
46. Colossians 2:8.
47. *Loc. cit.*
48. Colossians 2:9.
49. Colossians 2:10.
50. Galatians 4:3.
51. Philippians 3:7-8.
52. Colossians 2:18.
53. 53. II Corinthians 2:18.
54. I Corinthians 1:24.
55. Romans 13:14.
56. Ephesians 5:23.
57. Romans 6:4-5.
58. I John 3:2.
59. Ephesians 3:16.
60. II Corinthians 5:20. Ephesians 6:20.

61. Here, at **2 2**:11, I follow the Paris printed edition in interpreting Nicholas's words "*in eius gloriam sempiternam*" to mean, really, "*ad suam gloriam sempiternam*".)

Adorna Thalamum Tuum, Sion*
 (“Adorn Your Bridal Chamber, O Sion”)¹
 [February 2, 1457; preached in Brixen]²

FIRST PART

[1] “Adorn your bridal chamber, O Sion.”³

You have heard in years past about this feast-day that God has mandated. I do not deem it necessary to now repeat all [the previous points]. But I do call again to mind one thing: [namely,] that Pope Sergius transformed the Feast of Candles (which in Rome was in vogue at the time of idolatry) into the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin. Analogously, Christ came as Savior of the world, not removing all [the religious practices] that were with the Jews and the Gentiles but, rather, perfecting [them] and leading [the practicants] unto truth by infusing light into these observances, which were enshrouded in the darkness of errors. (For [Christ] led every religion that was in the world unto what is perfect by converting its adherents unto the Living God [and] by wresting them from the ignorance in which they were being held by the spirit of error.) Hence, the religion of the Jews, with respect to its institutions and feasts and law-giving, was led from earthly promises unto hope of resurrection-unto-eternal-life. Likewise, the religion of the Gentiles—which, by faith and by rituals that manifest faith, was in varying ways received throughout the world—was elevated from vain hope and from a plurality of gods unto the one Living and True God of gods and unto the hope of immortality. And thus the religion of Christ, of which He is King and Priest, is the union of all believers in one spirit that illumines the rational soul with respect to the true worship of the one Living God. [This God] by means of His own Word, through whom He creates all things, did not cease perfecting those who come to Him in the spirit of faith; [and He will not cease perfecting them] until they are transformed, from glory to glory, into His image.⁴

[2] The Head and King of all these [Christian believers] is Jesus, in whom [is] the Omnipotent Word of God. [Jesus] is the Supreme Image of the Living God. From the abundant fullness of God’s grace that is in Him He grants to all-who-receive-Him to become like Him. He died and arose, showing [thereby] that all in whom His spirit (which is Love (*caritas*)) is present likewise live after

their death. *Caritas*⁵ closely binds spirit to spirit. If *caritas* is natural [love], then [it binds] naturally and is called *dilectio* [i.e., love]. If it is rational [love], then [it binds] rationally and is called *amor* [i.e., love]. If it is intellectual [love], then [it binds] intellectually and can be called *conexio* [i.e., union]. If it is divine [love] and incorruptible [love], then [it binds] divinely and inseparably and eternally and can be called *unio* [i.e., union]. And so, the rational spirit, which is united by Divine *caritas* to Truth, which is God, is made one spirit with God Himself, who is Absolute Life and Eternal Life.

[3] But so that this perfection of religion would be received with peace, not all the [practices] that were in vogue were eliminated in the ceremonies, lest the elimination of customary practices hinder the receiving of the spirit. But after the error of the understanding was removed, then the spirit of truth was infused into the purified souls. For example, just as candles were [previously] lit, and purifications were [previously] made, in honor of demons, so now these candles are consecrated in praise of Christ for expelling demons. See how the faith of Jesus transforms from death to life! And in this way the Prince of Darkness is captured by the method by which he deceived. Paul understood the Christian religion to be such that the Spirit perfects every believer without difference—whether [the believer] be Jew or Greek or Sythian or from a heathen nation.⁶ So too, Peter found in and through the conversion of Cornelius,⁷ that, in reality, there is no acceptance of persons with God.⁸

[4] We know that this present feast-day was instituted for several reasons and was solemnized at the time of Emperor Justinian for obtaining mercy and deliverance from the devastation of an epidemic—as is reported in *Rationale Divinorum*.⁹ However, I think that the Feast-day of Proserpine—which with the Romans is [called] the Februae and the Lustra (about which [something] is written in the *Historia Lombardica* and in the *Rationale Divinorum* and in other places) and which is also [called the feast] of the Presenting of the first-born and [the feast] of Purification after a birth—was ordained among the people of Israel to the end that we commemorate solemnly, with candles and devotion, the presentation of Christ in the Temple.¹⁰ The Greeks do not speak of purification but of *hypapante*, i.e., of *meeting*, or *presenting*—namely, when Christ was presented at the Temple, as Luke writes about in his Gospel.¹¹ Hence, the law regarding the first-born (namely, that all things born first, even of human beings, and

that tithes and that first-fruits were given to God as a sign that He alone is Lord of all things)—I think that this [commandment was given] for the following reason: so that it might extend to that First-born who is the Heir of God the Father [and] the King of the living and the dead [and] who holds the primacy in all respects.¹²

[5] Therefore, Christ, who is the end of the Law,¹³ is the First-born prior to every creature.¹⁴ Now, John the Baptist says¹⁵ that he was sent by God to baptize with water in order that the Son of God would come and by receiving baptism would be known. Similarly, just as the goal of John's baptism was the knowledge of the Son of God, so the goal of the statute that all first-born are to be presented in the Temple was (1) that Jesus, the First-born Son of God, be presented and, in being presented, be known and (2) that the knowledge of Him be thus disseminated. Hence, that law received its end and fulfillment in the presentation of that Child, who was presented in order to be known. And so, Just Simeon let it be known that he had seen God's Salvation and had held [Him] in his arms.¹⁶ So, too, Anna¹⁷ [saw Him] and perhaps many others who were present, about whom no special mention is made in the Gospel. It suffices that Just Simeon made it known throughout the whole world that he had seen Christ and had recognized Him by means of that offering when He was offered before God and was presented in the Temple.

[6] See: not without reason was that witness of Simeon greater than any exception [that could be taken to it]; and it was held to be such [i.e., to be unexceptionable]. Simeon was held in esteem and was a man of repute; i.e., he was a man just [and] reverent and elderly [and] full of the Holy Spirit. [He was someone] who was to be believed, first, (1) because he had received word [from God] that before his death he would see Christ and (2) because, taking Him into his arms he saw [Him] and bore witness that was, assuredly, lucid and very weighty. That is, [he bore witness] that he had seen the Salvation-of-God that was prepared before the face of all peoples,¹⁸ a Light of the Gentiles, and the Glory of Israel.¹⁹ These words are not less important than is the witness of John the Baptist, who later pointed out Christ with his finger, saying: "Behold, the Lamb of God! Behold, Him who takes away the sins of the world!"²⁰ And the testimony of John—a just and God-fearing man, who was upright and, for that reason, esteemed and held in repute—was without any exception and any ambiguity, as was also [the testimony] of this aged Simeon. Great is the strength to be derived from

this witness on the part of an elderly saint—[a witness] made in the Temple, where he was known. [It is] analogous to [the witness of] the shepherds in the stable and of the angels in the sky, i.e., on high.

[7] And so, the purification of the Virgin was ordained in order that knowledge of the Savior would follow. Her immaculate virginity did not need to be purified. [She was] a rose among thorns,²¹ a lily of the valleys,²² a woman at whom the sun and the moon marveled.²³ Nor was it necessary that the Word of God be presented in the Temple in the sight of God, as if He were ever alienated from the Father. [Nor was it necessary that] He be carried with [human] hands—He who upholds all things by His power.²⁴ [Nor was it as if] this Word of God were held liable for something so that He had to be redeemed [through the ritual of the first-born]. Rather, all these things—which [would have] had no reason why they were being done if the mother had been known but the Son unknown—were done in this way by Divine dispensation in order that, in the Temple, the Savior would come to be known. And this [coming to be known] could not have happened more fittingly than by means of observance of the law [of purification], so that by means of this [series of events] the law would be shown to have been ordained to the end of disclosing the unknown Word of God, made incarnate for our salvation. Nor does the law of purification diminish praise for the immaculate Virgin. For when the Son is known, the mother is glorified. As a humble, unassuming woman with an aged husband, she appeared in the guise of a woman who was blamable and who needed to be purified. She showed by means of her sacrificial offering that, as it were, she needed purification from sin (as being one who is sinful) by making an offering in accordance with the institution of the Law. Afterwards, by all who received the testimony of Just Simeon, she was held to be the Mother of God, who brought forth for us Christ the Son of God as God and man. Thus, it was known that this humble handmaiden of God conceived—not from the seed of elderly Joseph—this Christ whose Father is God alone, who by His Will, i.e., by His Holy Spirit, brings to realization all things.

[8] O how great Mary, the God-bearer, was held to be (subsequent to this knowledge of her Son) by this aged Simeon and by the widow Anna and by all those who were enlightened by their testimony! At that time those who viewed the law [of the first-born] rightly found that Mary was not included under it. (That [law] speaks of a woman who gives birth from a seed received from a man.) Therefore,

each one said to her: “I do not know with what praises I shall repay you, Mary, because you have brought to your bosom Him whom the heavens could not contain.” Those from pagan countries [acted] in a similar way: they honored Februa as the mother of Mars with so very much zeal (because of [Mars,] the god of war) in order thereby to reconcile to themselves her son in matters of war. And [they honored] the virgin Proserpine because of king Pluto, whose kingdom is in the underworld [and] who ravished her and loved her. There came into their knowledge this begetter-of-the-Word [namely, Mary,] who begot Christ the King, to whose authority all created things are subject [and] who can do not [simply] *this* or *that* or *one thing* more than another but who does whatever He wills to. For all things are subject to the authority of the Word of God. The things of Jove in heaven [are subject thereto, as are] the things of Juno in the sky and the things of Ops on earth and in the underworld, where the pagans said that the kingdom of Pluto is located. When [this knowledge of Mary came to them], they rightly exalted the most worthy Virgin with all praise, so that by means of her they implored the Omnipotent God to be merciful to them.

For the time-being, let these statements have been made in this way about this [topic].

PART TWO

[9] “Adorn your bridal chamber, O Sion.”

For the sake of our stimulation unto devotion I have taken up this beautiful antiphon that is chanted today.

We know that Jerusalem, the City of God, had a Temple in which Christ was presented [to God], as is read today. Now, that holy *Mount Sion* is Jerusalem, and [the name] translates as *vision* or *contemplation*. But the city of Jerusalem [is symbolic of] a manly soul that sees God. This [seeing] is the vision of Peace; for God is Peace,²⁵ because [He is] Rest and is the Goal of rational movement. Sight is moved in every direction in order to see him whom it seeks. The soul moves sight-that-is-intellect in every direction in order that [the soul] may find the Beginning and Cause and Truth of all things—which is the life of the soul’s being. And [the soul] can find rest only when it sees God, who is called *Theos*, from “*theōrō*,” i.e., “*video*”.²⁶ For when intellectual sight sees Him who sees all things, then it sees the Beginning from which it came forth. (For intellectual sight has its being from Absolute Seeing, even as one who is just [has his being]

from justice, and man [has his being] from humanity, and what is white, from whiteness.) Therefore, [intellectual sight] is thereupon at rest; for it has come to Him in whom Beginning coincides with End, and so there is rest and peace in this soul.

[10] *Sion* is [symbolic of] loftiness of contemplation, i.e., [of] a more Godlike spirit that is the living image of God and that frequently is called *mind*, whose alertness [consists in] continually contemplating. The Holy Spirit speaks as the Author of the antiphon, [telling] *Sion* to adorn her bridal chamber. Now, the bridal chamber is [symbolic of] the image of God. In this image God delights to be present as in His own living and perfect likeness—as we experience with respect to ourselves.²⁷ For the bridal chamber ought to be adorned in order to attract the one wanting to come. Accordingly, the chamber of the bride is adorned in order that the willing bridegroom may be attracted. This adornment [is] within in the golden borders of the soul, which is clothed round about with various colors.²⁸ For all the glory of the King's Son is present within [the soul] in the inner man, where the word can be grasped and understood. For the soul of one who is *just* is a seat of wisdom. The word of God is wisdom that is grasped by, and concealed in, the rational spirit. And so, wisdom says: "Heaven is my throne."²⁹ The soul of one who is just is a heaven that is incorruptible and very ornate with light and virtue. In it is hidden God's word as life's treasure. Does not one who finds a treasure hide it lest he lose it? Similarly, the intellective soul reposes the word of life in its innermost being as a treasure of life. And so, the Savior compares him who has obtained the Kingdom of Heaven to a scribe who is learned; for the scribe has a hidden knowledge (or word) from whose treasury he brings forth new things and old.³⁰

[11] But what are the adornments that attract the King, the Giver of life? Surely, [they are] those things which are celestial, because He is the King of Heaven. But celestial adornments are incorruptible and are the immortal virtues, even as it is *justice* that makes one just and *faith* that makes one a believer and *hope* that makes one strong-and-steadfast and *love* that makes one pleasing-and-acceptable—and similar such adornments. Hence, since these virtues are immortal and since the King, who is the Word of God, is Lord of the virtues,³¹ the Lord of virtues can be attracted only by virtues—which are from Him. And so, that wise man said that if the rational soul is the soul of one who is just (because, indeed, it is adorned with justice),

then it is the seat of wisdom. The soul cannot be justly adorned if some disordered and unjust things are still in it.

[12] Let us, then, in accordance with St. Thomas *On the Canticles*,³² say [the following] with regard to the adornment of the whole man (i.e., outer man, inner man, and both): “Perfect are the heavens and the earth and their adornment.” [The word] “heavens” stands for the soul; [the word] “earth” stands for the body. Those who are adorned outwardly are compared to the idol Bel, which was bronze outwardly, clay inwardly. Those who are adorned inwardly (and not outwardly) by good conduct are compared to Solomon’s Temple, [which was] inwardly golden, outwardly of stone. Those who are totally adorned are compared to the Ark of the Lord, which was golden inwardly and outwardly.³³

Again, adorn your bridal chamber—not only the bridal chamber but [also] your house and your bed: the house of the flesh, the bridal chamber of the heart, and the bed of conscience. With our members we at times do good things, at times bad things. When we do bad things, then we commit wickedness against ourselves, iniquity against our neighbor, impiety against God. When [we do] good things, then [we do] good works of penitence toward ourselves, good works of mercy toward our neighbors, good works of piety toward God. In the bridal chamber we deliberate over the things to be done and over their circumstances: in particular, [we deliberate over] *who, what, where, with whose help, why, how, when?* By means of conscience we make judgments on the matters deliberated about—[judgments as to] whether the things deliberated about or [actually] done are true or false, good or evil, suitable or unsuitable. Rightly, our house (i.e., the members of our body) is to be adorned with good works; the bridal chamber of our heart [is to be adorned] with virtuous concerns; the bed of our conscience, with just decisions. But because every adornment is useless unless the things to be adorned are first cleaned, let conscience be cleansed by contrition, the bridal chamber by confession, the house by [the making of] satisfaction.

[14] But contrition is then true [contrition]

- if it grieves over sin; hence, [the words of the Psalmist]: “My sorrow is ever before me.”³⁴
- if it says “I will declare my iniquity.”³⁵
- if it abhors [iniquity]; hence, [the words] “I have hated and abhorred iniquity.”³⁶

But four things hinder confession: (1) There are those who hide a part of their sin, as Ananias and Saphira [hid] part of their money.³⁷ (2) There are those who confess everything but are silent about the *manner*, which David was seeking when he said “How the mighty have fallen in battle!”³⁸ (By “manner” I understand all the aforementioned circumstances: namely, *who, what, where, . . .*, etc.) (3) There are those who tell everything and confess the manner but who make excuses, as [did] Adam. (4) There are those who speak with euphemistic words in order that their sin seem less grave. These [words] are the loin-cloths made from leaves-of-trees with which our first parents covered their private parts; for *leaves* signify *words*.

[15] Now, the house of our body is purified by penitence, which is either (1) voluntary and terminable (and done in this present lifetime) or (2) necessitated and terminable (which is done in Purgatory) or (3) necessitated and interminable (which is done in Hell). Once the following things have been purified in the present lifetime—conscience by means of contrition, the heart by means of confession, the body by means of [making] voluntary satisfaction—there still remains that they be adorned for receiving Christ the King. Hence, St. Thomas says subsequently:³⁹ The body is adorned (1) by means of good association, namely, with religious practicers in the cloister, by conforming ourselves to them with respect to discipline; (2) by means of associating in the world with evil ones, putting up with their insults; (3) by means of associating in Heaven with angels, by thinking of Heavenly things.

Hence it occurs that above the Tabernacle of Moses there were curtains of goats' hair⁴⁰ and rams' skins dyed red and hyacinth-colored skins.⁴¹ The curtains, which are inexpensive, symbolize association with members of the cloister, who think of themselves as lowly and abject. The skins dyed red pertain to the patience of those putting up with evil ones. The hyacinth-colored skins, since they have the color of the sky, pertain to association with the angels—about which Paul [writes]: “Our way of life is in Heaven.”⁴²

[16] But the bridal chamber is adorned with love of God and of neighbor. And the love is fourfold: namely, *shame-faced, strong, pleasant, wise*. In Solomon's Temple there was a partition of cement and of stone, a fragrant tree, and gold [covered] with mortar that is clay. And among the rocks shame-faced love is hiding. [This love] is strong because of the stones, pleasant because of the fragrant tree, wise

because of the gold.

[Love] is *shame-faced* in three respects: with regard to the injury of faith, with regard to theft, with regard to betrayal. For (1) it is ashamed that, in sinning, it has injured the faith which it pledged in baptism. (2) It is ashamed that it has committed theft by concealing sins. (3) It is ashamed that it has betrayed its heart and its members, which were God's tabernacle, by surrendering to the Devil. As regards the first [of these] it is said: "They made void their first faith."⁴³ As regards the second [it is said]: "If as a man I have hid my sin ...," etc.⁴⁴ As regards the third: "Taking away the members of Christ, do I make them members of a harlot?"⁴⁵

Love is *strong* in three respects:

- It spurns fear; hence, [it is written]: "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear?"⁴⁶
- It desires sorrow; hence, [the text]: "Let rottenness enter into my bones and swarm under me."⁴⁷
- It does not flee from shame; hence: "Because for Your sake I have born reproach..."⁴⁸

These are the three valiant men who brought David water from the fountain that was at the gate of Bethlehem.⁴⁹

Love of God is *pleasant* in three respects:

- with respect to mercy through forgiveness of sins; hence, [it is said]: "The Lord is pleasant in all regards, and His tender mercies ...," etc.⁵⁰
- with respect to grace through the infusion of spiritual gifts; hence, [it is said]: "... the memory of the abundance of [Your] pleasantness ..."⁵¹
- with respect to glory through acceptance of supernal joys; hence, [it is said]: "Taste and see that the Lord is pleasant."⁵²

Love is *wise* in three respects:

- by avoiding the crafty devices of the Devil.
- by considering the beginning and the end of love.
- by arranging for the increase of affection of the one for the other; hence, [it is said]: "Wisdom overcomes wickedness ...," etc.⁵³

[17] Next comes the bed of conscience: It must be known that

- One conscience is *seared*; hence, [it is written]: "... having [their] conscience seared."⁵⁴
- Another [conscience] is *good*; hence: "... from a pure heart and

a good conscience and unfeigned faith.”⁵⁵

- Another [conscience] is *floral*; hence: “Our glory is this: the
tes- timony of our conscience.”⁵⁶

A seared [conscience] is [a conscience] not free of guilt; a good [conscience is] unrestricted; a floral [conscience is] much-adorned with virtue, (particularly, with a violet, a lily, a rose—so that there is in the conscience Christ’s *humility, purity, and love*. For the sake of these the Bridegroom, namely Christ, follows after [one] in order to enter and to take possession of the human being who is thus adorned.)

Let the foregoing things—from Thomas—have been said on behalf of adornment, in order that Christ the King may be received. [The word] “King” is used. For [Christ] ought to be received as a King in order that He may reign and that His governance may live and that His laws may be observed.

[18] Next, there follows [in the antiphon]: “... to embrace Mary, who is the Gateway of Heaven.” She *is* the Gateway of Heaven. Through her we enter into concealed matters that were hidden from the world but were made manifest most recently. For she comes to our temple carrying the King of glory and of new light.

The Virgin Mother brings in her hands her Son, begotten by God the Father before the day star⁵⁷—[the Son] whom Simeon too took into his arms. And [Simeon] proclaimed to the people that He, the Lord God, is the Author of life and of death, because he said that He is the cause of the ruin and of the resurrection of many.⁵⁸ [He is the cause], indeed, of ruin because [many] have not accepted Him who did those things which were done by no one previously and which showed Him to be God. And so, they rushed headlong unto death, because they have no excuse. He is the Resurrection of those who receive Him, because He is Savior of the world.

Let each person extend these [considerations] more greatly by reflecting upon [them], so that by the coming unto him of Christ, whom Mary leads into his temple, he may taste the pleasantness of the presence of the Author-of-life, whom she is holding—[taste thereof] in order that he may live by means of the presence of Him who is forever blessed.

NOTES TO *Adorna Thalamum Tuum, Sion**

*Sermon CCLXVI.

1. See Psalms 18:6 (19:5). But the title is taken from the antiphon attributed to St. John Damascene (7th - 8th centuries; his dates are not known exactly).

2. Wednesday, February 2, 1457 was the feast-day of the Purification of the Virgin Mary. I am using the spelling "Sion," as does the Douay-Rheims Version's translation of the Vulgate.

3. See the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (under "Candlemass") for a full discussion of this feast-day celebration. Note also:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03245b.htm>

4. II Corinthians 3:18.

5. See Sermon CCLXIII, note 17.

6. Galatians 3:26-28.

7. Acts 10.

8. Acts 10:34-35.

9. Guillaume Durand (ca. 1230-1296), *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*.

See the section entitled "De Purificatione Beatae Mariae Virginis."

10. Luke 2:27-39.

11. *Loc. cit.*

12. Colossians 1:18.

13. Romans 10:4.

14. Colossians 1:15.

15. John 1:33.

16. Luke 2:25 ff.

17. Luke 2:36-38.

18. Luke 2:30-31.

19. Luke 2:32.

20. John 1:29.

21. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 2:2.

22. *Ibid.*, 2:1.

23. *Ibid.*, 6:9.

24. Hebrews 1:3.

25. God is Peace because He is the God of Peace, the Prince of Peace. Philippians 4:9. II Corinthians 13:11. Hebrews 13:20. Isaias (Isaiah) 9:6.

26. The Greek word θεωπέω and the Latin word "video" mean "I see," "I look at".

27. Cf. Ephesians 5:28-29.

28. Psalms 44:14-15 (45:13-14).

29. Isaias (Isaiah) 66:1.

30. Matthew 13:52.

31. Psalms 23:10 (24:10).

32. Thomas Cisterciensis (Thomas the Cistercian, 12th c.) wrote a commentary on the Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon). See *PL* 206.

33. I.e., the Ark of the Covenant. Exodus 25:11.

34. Psalms 37:18 (38:17).
35. Psalms 37:19 (38:18).
36. Psalms 118:163 (119:163).
37. Acts 5:1-10.
38. II Kings (II Samuel) 1:25.
39. See Note 32 above.
40. Exodus 26:7.
41. Exodus 26:14.
42. Philippians 3:20.
43. I Timothy 5:12.
44. Job 31:33.
45. I Corinthians 6:15.
46. Psalms 26:1 (27:1).
47. Habacuc (Habakkuk) 3:16.
48. Psalms 68:8 (69:7).
49. II Kings (II Samuel) 23:15-16.
50. Psalms 144:9 (145:9).
51. Psalms 144:7 (145:7).
52. Psalms 33:9 (34:8).
53. Wisdom 7:30.
54. I Timothy 4:2.
55. I Timothy 1:5.
56. II Corinthians 1:12.
57. Psalms 109:3 (110:3).
58. Luke 2:34.

Simile Est Regnum Caelorum*

(“The Kingdom of Heaven is like ...”)¹
[February 6, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.” Matthew 13.

This likeness of the Kingdom is stated by the Savior. Two other [likenesses] are connected with it: namely, that of the grain of mustard² and that of the leaven.³ And when the sermon was finished and the people sent away, Jesus at home explained to His disciples this likeness of the tares.

[2] Hence, I understand that the likeness of the grain of mustard and of the leaven conduces to knowledge by explaining parabolically the power of the Kingdom of which this [likeness] is a likeness. [It is] as if [Jesus] were to say: “The Kingdom of Heaven is a Kingdom in which there are good [human beings] who are elect and loved.” For it is a Kingdom-of-love in which are present those who are loved by God, not with a simple love but with a primary and maximal love that is filial—as Paul said to the Colossians that we are transferred unto the Kingdom of the Son’s love.⁴ And although this power by which man is transferred unto this Kingdom is compared to a seed, nevertheless it should not for this reason be thought that the power is small. Rather, [the power] is like that of a grain of mustard. For although the grain looks small to sight, nevertheless it is very great in power. Moreover, a similar thing holds true of the leaven that is hidden by the woman in three measures of flour until the whole is leavened. Consequently, just as there is no end of the power of the mustard [seed] and of the leaven, but it is continually increased, so too, the power that is sown in the inner man transfers the [human] spirit from death unto ever-lasting life and will enliven the [human] spirit forever. And so, in this Kingdom, life will forever after have dominion; and that life, which will eternally have dominion over death, will be supreme.

[3] Accordingly, as I was thinking about how I would explain that which is found [in today’s text] about the Kingdom of Heaven, there occurred to me that Paul states that death reigned over all the sons of Adam.⁵ And death had dominion because of sin. But sin entered because of the Devil’s prompting; for the Devil is the author of the lie [and is], from the beginning, a liar.⁶ For [this] enemy of man’s

life prompted—under the appearance of the good—disobedience and lying in order that God’s authority would not reign over [our first] parents but that his prompting would. He suggested that by not obeying [God], they would become like gods, knowing good and evil—as if God were someone envious who, lest they become like gods, prohibited their eating from the tree. [4] And so the kingdom of Satan entered the earth, i.e., entered into Adam. Death is hidden within this kingdom, because [the kingdom] seduces away from love of God and from union with Him. For through disobedience one is drawn away from the Ruler. But in God’s word and authority and law is hidden life, because [this word] is the word of the Living [and] Enlivening God, whose word bestows being and living. For God’s Word is His Concept, which gives being. By way of illustration, if a house-builder were omnipotent, then his conceiving would be the existing of his house. For by virtue of his conceiving, he would also will; and by virtue of his conceiving and willing, then [that which he willed] would exist, because an omnipotent being is one who can do, [and does], as much as he wills to.

[5] And so, when Adam sinned through the Devil’s prompting, the kingdom of death entered into him and his descendants.⁷ And this kingdom—by which the Prince of the world,⁸ who can also be called Death, ruled over man—can be called the kingdom of the earth, or of this corruptible world. The Word [of God] came from Heaven in order to destroy this kingdom of death (i.e., this earthly kingdom) and in order to introduce the Kingdom of life (i.e., the Heavenly Kingdom). For He who [is] from Heaven [and is] Heavenly⁹ came to introduce Heavenly life in order that once the kingdom and dominion of the Prince of [this] world was destroyed, there would come about the Kingdom of Heaven, in which life would prevail.

[6] Jesus taught me the foregoing in Matthew 12, showing {from the fact that by the power, or Finger, of God He cast out the demonic possessor of a man (something which could not be done unless He were the stronger [of the two])} that the Kingdom of Heaven had come to them. For that the Kingdom of Heaven comes to us is this: [namely,] that the Kingdom of eternal life rescues us from the power of darkness and situates us in light, i.e., amid Heavenly things. (In Heavenly things there is always light.) Thus, the rational spirit—which always exists in its own light (which is its life), i.e., [always exists] in eternal wisdom—is situated amid Heavenly things.

[7] Moreover, note that “Kingdom of Heaven” is not signi-

ficative of the visible heavens, because [the Kingdom of Heaven] is an incorruptible Kingdom, [whereas the visible] heaven and earth will pass away.¹⁰ Rather, it is significative of the kingdom of the intellectual soul, which is called the invisible inner man; and the intellectual soul's kingdom, where it reigns, is likewise invisible light. And so, the Teacher of truth says, further along in this chapter [of Matthew], that in the Kingdom of the Father the just shall shine forth as the sun.¹¹ [It is] as if He were to say: As this visible sun is present in the visible heaven, so in the invisible Heaven (of the Kingdom where Wisdom that is Justice reigns) are present just ones who are invisible to our present eyes. For those who are just will be present in the Kingdom of Justice, whose light is called Wisdom. Or better: Justice *is* Wisdom and Life. For Justice makes just; and this [making just] is only that [justice] gives being to him who is just. And this being is living; and this living is understanding. Therefore, in justice there coincide life and wisdom. Here, then, [in this text], "heaven" is understood [in the same sense] as there where we read that Paul was raptured unto the third heaven,¹² i.e., [unto the heaven] of a vision of the secret things of God.

[8] From the foregoing [considerations] I understand that it is not possible for the sinner to enter into the Kingdom of Eternal Life, because in him reigns death, i.e., Satan, the Prince of death. And so, before all [other] things the Savior preached that penance is to be done by him who desires to come to the Kingdom of Life, i.e., of Heaven. [The Savior] said: "Do penance; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."¹³ He said "is at hand." For He who said this [about the Kingdom] was able to give it; for [the Kingdom] is a grace. For when sin is removed from the inner man, {so that the old man,¹⁴ (whose kingdom is concupiscence that enfolds within itself three kingdoms because it is a triune kingdom of the world: namely, concupiscence of the flesh, of the eyes, and of vainglory)¹⁵ is altogether crucified and dies}, then because of grace [and] by the power of God the new man¹⁶ arises, who is of the Kingdom of Immortality, over whom death will no longer rule.

[9] And this is what the Savior says: "Unless someone is reborn of water and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God,"¹⁷ because the old man (i.e., flesh and blood) cannot possess the Kingdom of God.¹⁸ For because those who are carnal do not know the things that are of the Spirit,¹⁹ they cannot possess the Kingdom of the Spirit. By way of illustration, a blind man cannot possess the gladness

that sight obtains from the beauty of colors; or touch cannot attain to the delight of fragrances. Therefore, the Savior teaches—and after Him Paul and all the saints—that we who will to be children of the Kingdom of the life of the [Holy] Spirit not be carnal.

[10] And Paul states in many places what those sins are that show us to be carnal. And so, he says in I Corinthians 6: Neither fornicators nor idolaters, etc., will possess the Kingdom of God.²⁰ Likewise, in Galatians 5.²¹ Moreover, the Kingdom of God is not a different Kingdom from the Kingdom of Heaven, but they are the same thing—just as the kingdom of the king of France is the same thing as the kingdom of the Franks. But the Kingdom of God is said to be of Heaven because Christ is the King of heaven and of earth and of all things. But He calls us from His temporal kingdom unto His Heavenly, or Eternal, Kingdom (I Thessalonians 2 and II Timothy 4: “He will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom.”²²) And Peter calls this [Kingdom] the Eternal Kingdom in the canonical [letter] of II Peter,²³ and [calls it] immovable in Hebrews 2.²⁴ [11] Therefore, for the foregoing reason, our Teacher calls this invisible and eternal Kingdom—to which He invites us—the Kingdom of Heaven. For the Jews themselves believed that God dwells in Heaven and rules over and governs all things celestial. Yea rather, all Gentiles [believed this] (as even Aristotle reports)²⁵ and all [others] without exception. Therefore, [Christ] names God and His Kingdom in a way in which it could be understood [by His followers of that day]—until such time as they would put on the [Holy] Spirit, who would then teach them all the truth that they previously were unable to grasp.²⁶

[12] But someone might raise the question: “Why is it that Paul says that we have received the Spirit’s guarantee of acquiring an inheritance?”²⁷ I reply that Paul, writing to the Corinthians²⁸ and to the Ephesians,²⁹ mentions (1) that God gave us the guarantee of the Spirit and (2) that we believers are imprinted by the Spirit and have accepted the guarantee of this [inheritance]. For the Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink but is peace in the Holy Spirit.³⁰ For the Holy Spirit is the one in whom this Kingdom of eternal and love-filled life is present. And when we become believers, we are imprinted with that spirit of faith, because by faith we are children of that Kingdom; and this spirit of faith is highly reliable as a pledge, or guarantee, of that promise. For we experience the power of that spirit of faith in the saints who by its power have dominion over the Prince of death and of darkness.

Thus, after we are imprinted with this spirit of faith, (by which spirit we see mighty works to be done by the saints in building up the faith of those who are weak), we are strengthened and assured, as if we had a guarantee that we shall live by the power of this spirit and that death shall no longer have dominion over us.

[13] You might ask: “Why is it that we read that the children of the Kingdom will be cast out?”³¹ I answer through Moses in Exodus 19 that God chose the Israelite people as a special people and as His priestly kingdom insofar as they would keep His commandments.³² Thereafter, God willed to show that the commandments which Moses made known to them were His commandments, even as we read about *there* [in Exodus]. So Christ came and showed that His words were the words of God His Father—showing this fact not by thunder and dreadful voices, as with Moses,³³ but by healings, resurrections of the dead, and those things which must have been only very pleasing to all. Still, these children of the Kingdom, namely, the Jews, did not believe the words of Jesus to be the words of God. And so, Jesus says that those children of that Kingdom are to be cast out of the future Kingdom, so that they will reign there where their Prince Satan reigns, namely, in eternal death.

[14] You might ask further: “Does not St. Gregory in a homily, and do not the other doctors [of the Church], interpret the Kingdom of Heaven as signifying also this Church militant—on account of our text, at the end, where [it says that] many are cast out?” I answer: Only the elect belong to the Kingdom of Heaven. And so, the Savior always befigures the Kingdom of Heaven in terms of a certain selection—as here [in the present text] and as [in the parable] about the fish-net³⁴ and [the parable] about the virgins,³⁵ and so on. These elect ones are, properly speaking, the children of the Kingdom and those predestined to the Kingdom of Life. And they constitute that Church militant which is transformed into the [Church] Triumphant. Hence, those who here [on earth] are truly children in faith and hope, [and] there [in the next world are children] in truth, will never be cast out of the Kingdom. Rather, [the following is true]: It is expedient for their edification that [in this world] evil persons be mixed in with good persons; for the evil ones conduce to edification of the good ones and cannot harm them. Hence, in this world the Church includes good persons and evil persons, although the children of the Kingdom, who will be known in the end, show that they alone have obtained the Kingdom of Heaven.

Hence, properly speaking, “Kingdom of Heaven” does not stand for *Church* but for *those in the Church*. And they are predestined unto life.

[15] Moreover, you ask whether “Kingdom of Heaven” is to be understood [as indicating] that each saved individual is a king or that all the saved—i.e., all those in whom God reigns—are the Kingdom of God. I reply that both [meanings], conjointly, are to be understood. For there is only one Kingdom of Heaven, and it is the possession of each of the saved. For each possesses the Kingdom, and each is possessed by the King; and the Mediator of this [Kingdom] is Christ.³⁶ Through Christ each possesses Immortality, which is God;³⁷ and God through Christ reigns in all [the saved] and possesses them all. But how it is that all reign in Christ and possess God, who is in Christ, and how this possessing of God coincides with being possessed by God through Christ, is understood by means of a likeness: The rational soul by the medium of the intellect possesses wisdom, and wisdom by the medium of the intellect possesses the rational soul. And there is only one wisdom, which gives *being* and *living* and *understanding* to every rational spirit; and it is possessed by all [rational spirits] that live and understand. For unless it were present in them, they would not be wise. And this wisdom which is possessed is one kingdom in all [rational spirits]; for it enfolds within itself all things, for there can be nothing [apropos of understanding] that is not enfolded in it. And the one wisdom reigns in all the wise because it possesses them all. For how would they be wise apart from wisdom? Therefore, wisdom has dominion over them all and, hence, governs them all. And in this passage [in today’s text] the mediation of Christ is understood. This mediation is the bonding of this coincidence of (1) the ascent of the inner man unto God and of (2) [the descent] of God unto man.

[16] Let us now turn our attention to our Gospel-text, going over it in sequence.

Our Teacher says: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like ...” We can say: All the things that are understandable by us are a certain likeness of that Kingdom. For it is the Kingdom of Truth, and things which here below are understood by us are a likeness of Truth. The wisdom (*prudentia*) of this world, or of the flesh, is not true [wisdom]. And so, it is mortal, i.e., corruptible, so that the Apostle states that it is death.³⁸ However, the intellectual spirit can grasp immortal wisdom [*sapientia*], which is called the wisdom (*prudentia*) of the spirit.³⁹ The chil-

dren of this world are wiser in their generation than are the children of light.⁴⁰ For in this world the children of light attain unto that-which-they-shall-be only through faith and in a symbolism, or likeness.⁴¹ But the children of this world expect nothing besides this temporal world; and so, [their] wisdom is death, because this world will pass away together with its lusts.⁴² And because in this present world nothing is more desirable than to rule, ruling expresses the spirit's desire in a likeness. Moreover, all things endeavor to express [symbolically] the beauty of that decorous Kingdom. [Christ] says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sows good seed in his field—something which the Teacher subsequently explains.

[17] [Christ] says that this man [in the parable] is the Son of man and that the field is the world.⁴³ From this [declaration] I infer that Christ is the man who is signified by *man* as such, as being the Manhood of men, or the King of men, who is also the Son of man. [It is] as if the perfection and purity of human nature were contained in Him as in the Prince of nature [and] were partaken of by all men, so that in the human nature in Christ we come to the first [and] pure and perfect [man]. [We come] not only [to Him] than whom there never was or will be a purer and more perfect man but also [to Him] than whom there cannot be a more perfect man. In Him the purity and perfection of all positable [men] are enfolded, so that He alone is the Most High and is the Sun or the one and only King in the kingdom, or heaven, of humanity.

Next, I will reflect on [the passage] where [Christ] says that the field is His and that it is [to be] understood [as symbolizing] the world; to be sure, He means only the world in which there are human beings. Man is called a microcosm⁴⁴ because the things that are of the world are found in Him contractedly. And, thus, He possesses this field of humanity as His own, because He is Son of man and King, as is stated earlier [in the text].

[18] I will reflect on the good seed sown by Him—[seed] which He interprets to be the children of the Kingdom. Accordingly, that which in us is the sonship of God is not brought forth from the potency of this world and of the worldly nature but is the good seed sown in the field, or in the man, of this world by Christ and by the word of God. [It is] as if the seed were to attract unto itself the nature of that earth in which it is sown and were to make it alive with its own life. By way of illustration: When wheat is sown in the earth of the

[farmer's] field, it attracts plentitude and makes out of it wheat. Hence, the earth brings forth that grain not from itself and from its own nature but by means of the seed. Similarly, the rational nature, or nature of the inner man, passes over into the good seed of eternal wisdom; not of its own doing but in and through the seed, [the rational nature] bears fruit and is made a child of the Kingdom. For a child of the Kingdom is one who is transformed from an earthly nature into heavenly, or divine, or spiritual light—which is also called wisdom. And the children of this light are children of the Kingdom, because Light in which there is no darkness⁴⁵ reigns there.

[19] Just as a farmer sows wheat, so I understand Christ to sow the children of the Kingdom. And if you look closely, [you will recognize the following]: Since Christ is the one and only Son of God, i.e., Word of God that gives to all who accept Him the power to become sons of God,⁴⁶ then the good seed about which He speaks is only He Himself, who is the Word of God. And the Son of God, who is also the Son of man, sows Himself in His own field in order to bear as fruit the sons of God. (By analogy, Plato's word, or concept, which puts on an audible sound, sows seed in the rational soul of his disciples in order to bear Platonic fruit, i.e., children of Plato, in accordance with their inner man.) See of what kind is that spiritual seed which is sown not by parts but as a whole in every field and in every part of the field—just as the one word of faith is received by all hearers.

[20] There follows [in the text]: “But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and oversowed tares amid the wheat and went his way.”⁴⁷

Men—namely, those who [symbolically] are the field—were sleeping. As the Teacher states, [the sower's] enemy came, namely, the Devil, who is the enemy of him who sowed good seed. Note that the Devil is the enemy of our Savior and attempts with his whole effort to hinder salvation, lest the Savior have His way. And because Satan chiefly opposes the Word of God, he persecutes Christ in and through Christ's members. And so, Christ, the Head and the Victor, comes to help [the members] amid that persecution. By way of illustration, when a prince proceeds against a king (whom he has distrusted) in and through the king's subjects, the king, with force, comes to the aid of these subjects in and through whom he suffers adversity. But why is the Devil the enemy of Christ? It is because when he departed from obedience [to God], he put on vainglory and self-love to the point of

contempt for God. Established in this contempt, he errs; and error is inimical to wisdom, just as a falsehood [is inimical] to truth. But the aim of error and of falsehood is to eradicate truth and beneficial wisdom—i.e., [to eradicate] the life of the spirit.

[21] The text says “he oversowed”; for it is not [in] the power of Christ’s enemy to preempt this seed of the word with his own seed, namely, tares, in order in this way to make use of the field earlier [than the other]. For the field is the Word of God’s, i.e., is his Creator’s. The Devil cannot create anything; but in and through God’s creature he endeavors to impede salvation of the spirit. Hence, [the text] says, notably, that after the sowing of the good seed, [the Devil] approaches those who are asleep, in whom the seed of the Spirit was newly sown, and oversows tares. This is the cunning of Satan, who cannot prevent the sower from sowing. From his own [seed] he adds [to the original sowing] in order to prevent the grain [from growing]. For tares in the field reduce the yield of the good seed, for they draw unto themselves that from which [the good seed] was supposed to bear fruit. Similarly, an heretical opinion turns a man’s reason toward itself, and it seems to him that his asserted-opinion proceeds from the seed of true reasoning. Nevertheless, this [asserted-opinion] is erroneous and has its origin from a spirit of error. Therefore, there is a separation through which the Evil One deceives, as Paul in Romans 1 discloses⁴⁸ that philosophers have good seed from God but it does not bear fruit, because the good seed is changed, by another oversown seed, into the nature of the oversown, i.e., into idle chatter. Thus, the Evil Spirit sows human contrivances over the disseminated good seeds of faith in order that [nothing] be believed unless it is understood. [It is] as if nothing were true except that which man’s intellect undoubtingly apprehends. [22] In this way, Averroës scorned Moses, Jesus, and his own Mohammed. And so also do many philosophers who rely on human investigation. So too do heretics. Although they accept the tree with the twelve leaves of the articles of faith,⁴⁹ nevertheless in the shadow of this same tree they hide their own specious reasoning, sown in their hearts by Satan. I fear that the tradition of men—i.e., of the liberal arts and of the laws of the forum—is an instrument not only by means of which Satan busies men so that they do not give themselves over to relishing the word of God but also by means of which [good] seeds are sown over with tares, which detract from the simplicity of faith and which hamper the fruit of faith. Not without reason were these subject-matters (*scientiae*) detestable to true Christians from the beginning; but now, when the

fervor of faith⁵⁰ is waning, they are more appealing [to many] than is the Gospel. But we are taught here [in the present passage] and [also] by the Apostle,⁵¹ who explains in more detail that we ought to accept nothing of [the doctrines] that are sown on top [of Scripture's teachings]. Even if an angel were to descend from Heaven and were to cite something other than what was sown by Christ, [that angel would be] teaching what is to be spurned as anathema. Hence, those who turn to sundry doctrines are misled. But if one stands simply and steadfastly in the seed of the Gospel—so that he shuns one who brings another doctrine, even if by means of miracles that one seemed to show that he was Christ—such a one is secure [in his faith].⁵²

[23] [The text] says: “amid the wheat”; for [the enemy] sows there in order that it may appear [that the tares] are growing from good seed. For vices often pass themselves off as virtues. (About this [topic see] St. Gregory's *Moralia*, [Book] XXII, and Albertus Magnus, at the beginning of his small book on the virtues. And Jordanus [de Quedlinburg] says some [relevant] things in his sermon for today.)

The text says: “and he went his way.”⁵³ That is, in order that that which grows may be believed to come from the earlier [good] seed, [the Devil] goes away in order not to be seen. Note the stratagem of the Deceiver—[a stratagem] which, notwithstanding, we can recognize from the fact that when [the Deceiver] is recognized, he flees. And so, [as regards] those who are tempted by him: when, having become known, he is spurned, then being proud he no longer sticks around but departs.

[24] “And when the blade was sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares.”⁵⁴

See how it is that when the tares first spring up, they are not recognized; but when they grow, then they are recognized by their yield. The Teacher mentioned this [point] for an illustration of those who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves, who are known by their fruit.⁵⁵ Error at first is so cloaked that it is deemed to be true, whereas it enfolds falsehood.

[25] “And the servants of the head of the household coming said to him: ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Whence, then, does [the field] have tares?’ ”⁵⁶ The servants of the head of the household are those who serve under Christ, [our] Head, who here [in the parable] is called the head of the household. They wonder from where vices and heresies arise in the Lord's field—whether, indeed,

from the field or from elsewhere. He answers: “An enemy has done this.” Note [that] Christ is said to be a Lover of human beings; the Devil, to be an enemy. Since [the Devil] is a spirit, he sows spirit-like wickedness, which does not spring up from the field without a sower. The [human] soul is pure [when it comes] from the Creator; and it does not produce bad fruit from itself, since it does not have this [bad] seed from the Creator. Thus, if [the seed] produces [bad fruit], it is because the Enemy has sown [it].

[26] “And the servants said: ‘Do You wish us to go and gather them up?’” Without the Lord’s giving the command, His servants ought not to cast sinners out of the Church, for He alone is the Knower of hearts. (But where [the sin] would be notorious and tolerance [of it] would pollute [others], and where the sinners could be gathered up without danger and could be removed, *there* [the course of action is] otherwise.) “And he answered: ‘No, lest perchance while gathering up the tares you uproot with them the wheat too.’”

Here is the reason that he said “No”: [namely,] because the wheat ought not to be uprooted. And when there is doubt that it might be uprooted together [with the tares], then the tares ought to be tolerated until the end, namely, until the harvest.

[27] “Allow both to grow until the harvest. And at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: ‘Gather up first the tares and bind them into bundles for being burned; but gather the wheat into my barn.’” You see that we servants of the Head of our household have a commandment (1) as to how we are to conduct ourselves amid the [present-day] mixture of good individuals and evil individuals and a commandment (2) to leave it to the angel-reapers to separate the tares and burn them and to gather up the wheat into Christ’s Storehouse. And [this] Storehouse is the Kingdom.

NOTES TO *Simile Est Regnum Caelorum**

*Sermon CCLXVII.

1. Matthew 13:24.
2. Matthew 13:31-32.
3. Matthew 13:33.
4. Colossians 1:13.
5. Romans 5:14.
6. John 8:44.
7. I Corinthians 15:22.
8. John 12:31.
9. I Corinthians 15:47.
10. Luke 21:33.
11. Matthew 13:43.
12. II Corinthians 12:2.
13. Matthew 3:2.
14. Romans 6:6.
15. I John 2:16.
16. Ephesians 4:24.
17. John 3:5.
18. I Corinthians 15:50.
19. I Corinthians 2:14.
20. I Corinthians 6:9-10.
21. Galatians 5:16-21.
22. I Thessalonians 2:12. II Timothy 4:18.
23. II Peter 1:11.
24. Hebrews 12:28 (not in Hebrews 2).
25. *Metaphysics* XII, 7 (1072^a21-24).
26. John 16:13.
27. Ephesians 1:14.
28. II Corinthians 5:5.
29. Ephesians 1:13-14.
30. Romans 14:7.
31. Matthew 8:12.
32. Exodus 19:5-6.
33. Hebrews 12:18-21.
34. Matthew 13:47-50.
35. Matthew 25:1-13.
36. I Timothy 2:5.
37. I Timothy 6:16.
38. Romans 8:6.
39. *Loc. cit.*
40. Luke 16:8.
41. I Corinthians 13:12.
42. I John 2:17.
43. Matthew 13:37-38.
44. See Nicholas's *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 3 (198).

45. I John 1:5.
46. John 1:12.
47. Matthew 13:25.
48. Romans 1:19-23. Cf. Romans 2:14-15 and Colossians 2:8.
49. The twelve articles of faith are those that are adapted from the Nicene-Constantinople Creed of 381 A.D.
50. Here I am reading, with ms. *L* and with the Paris printed edition, “fidei” in place of “Dei”.
51. Galatians 1:8-9.
52. I regard the text at **2 2**:19-25 as syntactically problematical. I have taken liberties with it.
53. Matthew 13-25.
54. Matthew 13:26.
55. Matthew 7:15-16.
56. Matthew 13:27.

Sic Currite ut Comprehendatis*
 (“So Run that You May Obtain”)¹
 [February 13, 1457; preached in Brixen]

PART ONE

[1] “So run that you may obtain” (I Corinthians 9 and in the office of [today’s] mass).²

[In the context of the verse] above,³ the Apostle stated that he became all things to all men so that he might save all. And [he did] this for the gospel’s sake in order to be made a partaker thereof.⁴ He adds: “Know you not that they who run in a race ...,” etc.⁵ Accordingly, I understand that the Apostle—to the end that he might obtain [the prize]—[said] that he became with the Jews a Jew [and became] with the Gentiles as if he were without the Law (although he was under the Law of Christ).⁶ For every method by means of which he was able to win them over was permitted in carrying out the [task of] evangelizing that was committed to him. For so great is the liberty of the gospel that nothing besides it is of necessity. But in the gospel there is found neither [any] of the ceremonial [requirements] of the Law nor [any] commandment regarding uncircumcision or circumcision. Hence, [Paul] became all things to all men,⁷ placing the requirement for salvation only in the receiving of the Law of Christ.

[2] Let us look at the text. Our teacher speaks as follows: “Know you not that they who run in a race, all indeed run, but [only] one receives the prize?” [This race-track analogy] is a likeness of the pathway of believers. For faith sets-in-motion; and the greater the faith, the greater the hope. Therefore, hope lays out the course. Unless the believer hoped that he would obtain that which he believes, he would not run.

“But [only] one receives the prize.” For obtaining [the prize] is only the union of the runner with the goal and with rest. And so, since he who first reaches the goal is the first one united to the destination-point, then several persons cannot be equally first; only one receives the prize.

[23] From the foregoing [consideration] it must be noted that among runners he who runs in [the short race called] the *Stadium* can arrive more quickly. The *Stadium* is a straight route leading to the goal

[and having a length originally] measured-out by Hercules, the strongest of men, who did not stop [in the foot-race] to take a breath until after the course of 120 paces, which constitute the [length of the] race-track.⁸ Hercules was a man in this world who excelled in knowledge and in virtue and in strength of body. Hence, he obtained divinity in the opinion of the men of that time, [who] made sacrifices to him as to a god—as is read⁹ in II Machabees 4. Therefore, a Herculean course is supposed to be [the course] of a virtuous man who is strong and persevering; for only one who perseveres to the end obtains the prize.

Hercules befigures Christ, who on His own course made His way and ran the *Stadium* and received the prize. For no one except one who has made his way [to the goal] also obtains the prize. Many were running prior to Christ—but not by the [straight] way. And so, Christ first obtained the prize; and because there is only one prize, only one person gets [it]. Therefore, he who wants to run in order to obtain [the prize] must put on Christ¹⁰ in order to run on the race-track and to obtain in and through Him alone the prize of victory.

[4] Only one person obtains [the prize]; and unless someone is in that one, he will not obtain. By way of illustration: One house of Bavaria obtains in and through its one very noble first-born the nobility of dukedom, by means of which pathway all [the others in the house] run. And they all run in and through the first-born; and in and through the first-born they obtain the same ducal nobility. Nonetheless, that first-made [duke], through whom all [the others] obtain the dignity of the office of duke, excels the later members not only temporally but also in authority and dignity. [He excels them] as being the Cause and Beginning and Form of so great a gift and of such great grace. Through this Cause they are elevated—beyond their first [and] everyday common nature of the sons of Adam—unto [the dignity of their Cause and] Beginning.

[5] The Apostle says: “So run that you may obtain.” Elsewhere, [namely,] in Ephesians 3, he says: “... in order that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length, width, height, and depth.”¹¹ He says “to comprehend,” not “to know,” in order that we not be content with respect to our curiosity concerning organized knowledge [*scientia*]. For not in *knowing* but in *comprehending* is the fruit. Now, that which we are supposed to comprehend is Happiness, which is God. But if we wish to inquire [about] what God is, then the Apostle says that by means of length, width,

height, and depth we enter (with all the saints) into comprehending. I have expounded these matters elsewhere in a sermon whose theme [is that of being] rooted in love.¹² Nonetheless, I will add [here] that which occurs [to me] now.

[6] Absolute length can be called infinite rectitude and infinite justice, which is said to be creative because it gives to each what is its own.¹³ For everything that exists has its existence from the gift of justice and rightly claims [existence] for itself because [existence] is the gift of Justice that is God. And, assuredly, that *infinite length is [also] width*, as being a surface that includes within itself all things. (For justice, which gives to each thing what is its own, is spread out over all things and contains all things. Even as in *justice* all things *just* are contained, so too in *rectitude* all things *right* [are contained] and in *being*, all things that *exist*.) [*Infinite length*] is also height and depth, which are the same thing. Thus, indeed, because it is length it is the beginning and the end; because it is width it is outside of all things as containing all things; because it is height and depth it is within all things. Hence, [absolute length] is the absolute measure, enfolding all modes of measuring: namely, length, width, height, and depth.

[7] God is the Measure of measures because He is Absolute Measure. Now, in the case of finite measures, with regard to material objects, there is one [measure] of length, another of width, another of height and of depth, or thickness. And so, God, who is Infinite Measure, enfolds length, width, and depth. Nor is infinite length anything other than infinite rectitude or infinite measure. And so, *infinite length* enfolds width and depth. Similarly, *infinite width* enfolds length and depth. Likewise, too, *infinite depth* enfolds length and width.

[8] Moreover, when I envision God's length, there comes to mind [His] eternity, which seems to be absolutely long without any end of time or place. When I envision [God's] width, there comes to mind [His] power, which cannot be localized because it is extended to all possibility-to-be-made. Likewise, it is illimitable; therefore, [God's] width is not lesser than [His] length. When I envision height and depth, through which He is within all things, I marvel at His abundant-presence, because He spreads Himself unextendedly throughout all things. His eternity is not one thing, His power another thing, His abundant-presence [still] another. For since each of these is infinite, and since there cannot be more than one infinite thing, it is evident that they are [one and] the same Infinite God, to whom I ascribe length because of

[His] eternity, width because of [His] power, height and depth because of [His] abundant-presence.

[9] The Apostle saw that in this perceptible world it is of the perfection of a perceptible object that it be long, wide, and thick. (Now, thickness bespeaks height and depth.) Since these [dimensions] are of the essence of a perfect material object, [the Apostle] transfers [the application of] these terms when considering the Absolute Essence, which is God. He frees [the meanings of these terms] from all contractedness related to the senses, the imagination, and the intellect—i.e., from every mode by which they can befit a creature. [He does this] by means of *coincidence* (in particular, by viewing the [Absolute] Essence, with whose length the width coincides and with whose height the depth coincides) and by means of a *coincidence of coincidences* (in particular, by a coincidence of (1) the coincidence of length and width and (2) the coincidence of height and depth). [10] And in this way [the Apostle] entered into the veil, or the Third Heaven¹⁴—[entered] *from the sensory unto the intellectual* (where there is a coincidence of opposites), [and] *from the intellectual unto the Third Heaven* (where there is a coincidence of coincidences). *There* [in the Third Heaven] is the hidden treasure of riches; *there* is the Ark [of the Covenant], in which are present all concealed matters.¹⁵ And so, led into a state of astonishment, he cried out: “O the depth of the riches of God’s wisdom and knowledge!” (Romans 11).¹⁶

[11] But you might say: “When the Apostle exclaims ‘How incomprehensible are Your judgments!’: if they are incomprehensible, then God is incomprehensible. Why, [then], does [the Apostle] say ‘Run [in such a way] that you may comprehend?’”¹⁷ I answer: We must take note of the fact that he adds [the words] “with all the saints.” For God cannot be comprehended by [human] intelligence. The created mind knows by measuring.¹⁸ But how could a finite mind measure the Immeasurable, who is the Absolute Measure? Therefore, the Infinite God is not comprehensible except in the way in which He is comprehended by all the saints. But all the saints comprehend in and through the Holy One of holy ones,¹⁹ who comprehends truly.²⁰ For just as royal highness is not comprehended except with respect to its power or might (i.e., the might in its activity), so too Absolute Highness [is comprehended] only with respect to its *might* and the *activity of its might*. (These latter are the Word of Absolute Highness and the word of each spirit.)

[12] So, then, suppose that [a king] gave all his power to his son. In that case, one comprehends in the son's power the glory and majesty of the father, or king. Now, the son has this power in such a way that he can impart this same power—namely, sonship—to one who receives him. For sonship is a power and an inheriting. About this [topic I have] elsewhere quite frequently [written].²¹ But this receiving—i.e., that the son is received—is just as Paul set forth in the same place in Ephesians 3: namely, [it occurs] by means of the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the inner man. This Spirit increases the strength of our spirit so that in our inner man Christ may dwell by means of our faith.²² Thereupon being rooted and founded in love, we shall be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length ..., etc.²³ Thus, when by formed faith²⁴ and imitative conformity²⁵ we put on Christ, we arrive at comprehension, because this form—namely, the form of Christ—is sanctifying. Hence, all the comprehending saints are Christlike.

[13] And do not neglect to note that which comes next there [in the text]: namely, “to know also Christ's love [*caritas Christi*], which surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”²⁶ [Note] that a knowledge of *caritas Christi* is that through which we obtain all fullness. For there is no knowledge of God without *caritas*. A man is free to believe. And undoubting faith is that through which one arrives at loving. And through loving God one comes to knowing [God]; for, with respect to God, one comes through *loving* to *knowing*, so that the one who loves knows what *caritas*, which is God, is. No one can know what love (*amor*) is except one who loves; and even he does not fully know what *caritas* is, although he has a taste of it. For the more he loves, the better he comprehends *caritas*.

[14] But love (*amor*) always grows; so too does the knowledge of it. So no one knows [love] except him who receives [love]. No one knows how saints obtain [holiness] except him who is holy: he understands [holiness] by receiving [holiness]. Therefore, *caritas* that dwells in [our] heart teaches [us] to know *Caritas itself*, which is God. And *caritas Christi* teaches us. It is a knowledge of the *caritas* through which a man is filled with all the fullness of God—[a fullness] which is a joyful happiness.

[15] Let us also note Paul's wonderment, in Romans 11. For the goal of all study, contemplation, and rapture is wonderment. For he is led into an amazed state of wonder who meditates deeply on his

Creator's eternity, or essence, and on His power, or might or wisdom, and on His will, [or] love [*amor*] or *caritas*.²⁷ Those who investigate the causes of things in nature arrive only at a love of that wisdom which arranges and disposes all things. They do not *comprehend* this [wisdom] but they *wonder* at it. The goal of philosophy is wonder.²⁸

Let these thing have been said in the foregoing way.²⁹

[16] Let us look next at what follows in the text. The Apostle says: "And everyone who strives for the mastery refrains from all things . . .," etc.³⁰ Therefore, to the end that our course not be futile, we must learn how the course is to be run. [It is to be run], specifically, in the way that everyone who is in a contest in an area of open competition strives to win and to bring back the crown. For he refrains from all things that could hinder him from winning and obtaining the corruptible crown. In particular, he strips off his garments—down to [and including] his shirt, so that it not be an interference—and he puts on [clothes] that lend speed and strength for the race. And so, likewise, it is all the more true that we who struggle against evil are to abstain from all vice, so that we may obtain an uncorrupted and untarnished crown of virtue. [17] And note how it is that we are to struggle—not superficially or perfunctorily but as when in combat in a duel, where one struggles for his life and strives for honor. That which motivates those who struggle in [athletic] combat is the crown. For they believe that they can obtain it if they struggle according to the rules. Next, they hope that they will struggle in this way, [i.e., successfully] if they refrain from all the things that can hinder strugglers. Thus, in the end, they approach the match confidently and bring back the crown. Similarly, the [prospective] attainment of an uncorrupted crown motivates those in the Church who are struggling. They believe that one who struggles lawfully can obtain immortality. And they hope that if they refrain from all things disabling, they will contend in this way, [i.e., successfully]. And, in the end, they struggle confidently and are crowned with an incorruptible crown.

[18] Here we must pay attention to the fact that the faith by which mortal man believes that [he] can obtain immortality is acquired only in the combat of a competition. For the greatest contest consists in the victory by which faith overcomes reason. For example, when Abraham believed that which reason judged to be impossible, he was victorious.³¹ Likewise, when a man believes the following—namely, that he will arise unto immortal life, for which [belief] he has neither

rational justification nor empirical foundation but his reason pulls [his belief] in the opposite direction—then it is necessary that this reasoning die. And the man's practical wisdom must yield; and his pride must be humbled; and his mind's presumptiveness must be mortified. And he must become as one who is foolish and simple-minded and lowly—backing away from his free-wheeling reasoning [and] reducing himself to captivity. And this competition [between reason and faith] is the greatest: [it is] not against flesh and blood but is against a presumptuous and haughty spirit, where humility vanquishes pride.

[19] Therefore, to be able-to-believe is the greatest power of our soul, for it excels intellectual power; for it pertains to those things that [the soul] *wills*. For believing proceeds from freedom of will; for the rational soul can believe if it wills to or, on the contrary, [can withhold belief if it wills to]. And this [gift of free will] is God's greatest gift [to man's soul]. Thus, [man's] spirit, or free will, has—through the faith which it takes on—dominion over the intellect; and it informs the intellect with its own form. For it speaks to the intellect peremptorily. And this is what certain [writers] meant [when they said that] in the speculative intellect faith is under the authority of the will because [the will] does not allow the intellect free rein unless the intellect is habituated by faith. But the intellect easily lays hold of faith (which it does not understand) when the will, by faith, signals to the intellect to believe the things that the will has heard—[to believe them] because they have been revealed to the intellect by the Son of God, i.e., by the Word of God. For the will is, as it were, the soul's hearing; [and] the intellect is, as it were, [the soul's] sight. And so, the things that the zealous soul has heard as regards the good, it announces to the intellect so that [the intellect] may [somehow] see [them within] itself, because the things that [the will] announces are such that they cannot [ordinarily] be seen. [The intellect] believes that the things announced to it are true, and it grasps them as if they were seen—i.e., [it grasps them] with certitude as if it had seen [them]. Thus, faith with respect to the intellect is present in a coincidence of the visible and the invisible, for it is the seeing of the unseeable.³²

[20] And note that when the will imprints the intellect with this faith (namely, that God has spoken to us in and through the prophets [and] most recently in and through His Son, who has revealed to us these [truths] about immortality), the intellect does not doubt that the word of God is to be believed. Therefore, the *desire* of the intel-

lectual soul by which it desires to know is the *will* for truth, or *love* for truth. Since [the will] cannot by means of the intellect obtain that which is desired, it believes the word of God as if by its own strength. And it does not believe this to be the word of God *because it understands*, but it understands *because it believes*. [21] Divine Reason—which has given to our rational soul this desire for obtaining immortality—by speaking in and through the spirit-of-desire instills [the belief that] this desire [for immortality] would not be given unless the rational creature could obtain [immortality]. And so, He who has given this desire is also able to give the object of the desire. In this way, [the rational soul] is moved to faith, so that it believes to be possible for God that [with respect to] which it cannot understand how it happens. And so, it believes the word of God, which promises happiness to believers, and it believes to be the word of God that which makes the promise. Thus, [the rational soul] receives the word of Jesus as the word of God, which alone promises that it will give eternal life.³³ Above all [other] things the [rational] spirit desires, with groanings, eternal life. And it receives Christ as Teacher and as Word-of-God-made-flesh—[receives Him] in order by means of Him to be made happy.

[22] And so, it is evident by way of which struggle one comes to the true power of faith: [namely], through that struggle by means of which the soul is made to be believing and by which it believes God. Thereafter, [the soul's] struggles are according to [the soul's] degree of faith; for that which prevails in every struggle is faith: if there is great faith, temptations immediately submit; if there is [but] small faith, temptations are battled for a longer time. For having the sure faith that through victory you will obtain immortality, you esteem as of little worth all the things that are pleasing to this temporal life. For since all things visible, mortal, and temporal contribute nothing to immortality and perpetuity, you will count them as nothing and [even] as dung.³⁴ And insofar as they draw you away from the expectation of immortal happiness, you flee from them as from poison. [23] And in this fight you have no other example than Christ, the Vanquisher of death, whose pathway you hold to. And you shall conquer just as shall all the saints, together with whom you hope to be crowned with an untarnished crown. But if your faith is small or is not in-formed [by love], very great conflicts threaten you daily—not only [with respect to] those things that impose themselves from outside through your senses (such as things beautiful, gratifying, pleasing, delightful) but also [with

respect to] the flesh itself which you carry around [and which] was vehemently against the spirit. And very often you succumb and put on a beastly form, because you do not have the shield of faith³⁵ so that you may repel spears and may ward off the enticements of the carnal life.

[24] There follows [in the text]: “I indeed so run, not as at an uncertainty.”³⁶ Elsewhere [Paul] said that he was certain that the Just Judge would keep his commitment safe until that day.³⁷ Therefore, each Christian ought likewise to run with sure and firm hope; for if he vacillates, then nothing is certain regarding the outcome. Doubting nothing [and] trusting in Jesus, he will find in reality that which he was harboring in hope; for hope does not make ashamed.³⁸ He who serves God not out of obligation but as one trusting in His grace: he, as one who is faithful and practically wise, will obtain from a most gracious Lord a most pleasing reward that is not less than is owed for such great faithfulness—[owed] by a very generous and very grateful lord [here on earth].

[25] Next comes [in the text]: “I so fight, not as one who beats the air”³⁹—i.e., [not as one] who futilely tires himself when there is not present the one against whom he imagines that he is fighting.⁴⁰ Hence, we are to fight when the opponent is really present—not by beating the air as do those who talk [about doing something] but who do not do [it]. But [the Apostle] says: In the way in which I *state* that one is to fight against carnal delights, in this [same] way I *act*. For I chastise my body and bring it into subjection lest when I have preached to others, I myself become a castaway.⁴¹ Lo, to the end that our body not impede our race for an untarnished crown—as if [the body] had in us the power-of-commanding, so that it would be obeyed⁴²—the body is chastised and is to be brought into subjection. By way of illustration: a well-fed, unruly donkey is chastised by the taking away of superfluous and tasty nourishment; and [thus] it is made subject to obedience.

[26] I think that [the passage taken from] the letter [to the Corinthians] is read today because of the foregoing words [in that text]. For according to the ancient canons, [today] begins the time of (1) restraining lust and haughty hostility by means of abstaining from meat and by fastings and of (2) restraining greed by means of alms-giving.⁴³

“... lest after I have preached to others, I myself become a castaway.”⁴⁴ To preach correctly to others and to exhibit in oneself what is contrary [to what one preaches] makes oneself a castaway:

[such a one] pronounces a judgment against himself. By means of these [words of the text the Apostle] admonishes us Christians—especially preachers—that we so run as does he.

[27] And lest we believe that this [good conduct] is not necessary but that faith alone suffices, [the Apostle] adds: “For I do not want you to be ignorant, Brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all crossed over the sea; and in Moses all were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. And all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink. But they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them. And the Rock was Christ. But with very many of them God was not well-pleased, but they were overthrown in the desert. But these things were done in a figure of us.”⁴⁵

[28] Lo, if someone were to flaunt himself because of his future obtaining of the prize and of the untarnished crown—[obtaining them] because he was baptized and was [spiritually] nourished by the sacrament of the Eucharist—he would err. [The Apostle] proves this [erring] by an example: All our fathers who were led by Moses out of Egypt [and] through the Red Sea (as we read in Exodus 13 and 14) so that they came to the Land of Promise, which is [the land of] *Israel* (meaning “a man who sees God”): through the cloud they were baptized in Moses (who was their leader) in the cloud and in the sea. Also, they all ate the same food (namely, bread from heaven, or manna) and drank from the water which flowed from the rock in the desert. [29] And these things are, in accordance with a spiritual understanding, not other than our sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, because they befigure these [sacraments]. And so, just as our sacraments have their efficacy from Christ, so too do those. For the Rock that followed them—by satisfying the desire of thirst—was Christ. Therefore, baptismal washing and [Eucharistic] partaking have efficacy only from Christ, from whom flows all that cleanses and nourishes the [human] spirit, just as did the water [that came] from the rock by the word of God.

[30] But although the spirit of the fathers was washed by means of that spiritual washing that today is done through the sacrament of baptism, [nevertheless] the [baptismal] washing was befigured at that time by the water of the cloud and by the sea. And [the spirit of the fathers] was [spiritually] nourished by the spiritual eating of the manna that befigures our sacramental bread and by the water from the rock that befigures the chalice of blessing.⁴⁶ Thus, these things were

done with respect to the human spirit not by two different [divine] spirits then and now. To be sure, at that time the [divine] spirit was more hidden and concealed under the symbolism [of the cloud and the manna] than [it is concealed] nowadays beneath the sacraments. For [those symbols] befigured these sacraments and befigured the fact that beneath those sacred befigurements was contained spiritual grace that reached out to the human spirit, cleansed it, and nourished it. Nevertheless, that spiritual reality is one [and the same] now and then.

[31] And [just as] because not for that reason⁴⁷ were all at that earlier time existing in the grace that makes [one] pleasing [to God] and not all arrived at the land of promise (which befigured happiness), but were overthrown in the desert,⁴⁸ so also nowadays many drop out of the race and do not arrive at the crown, i.e., at happiness. What the reason was that they were overthrown is added by the Apostle: namely, because they departed from God and made void the faith promised to them, as the Apostle expresses by means of particular instances.⁴⁹

[32] Therefore, he who wishes to examine specific points with regard to our doctrine will find to be necessary, according to Aldobrandinus of Tuscany, four things that cause a man to receive the prize. First, the acquiring of what is delightful; for the object desired motivates the desire. The second thing is the straightness of the route, i.e., that one walks on the straight path—not in a circle, as do the wicked. The third thing is the continuance of the work, because he who perseveres . . . , etc. The fourth thing is the laying aside of a burden. A horse with a heavy load cannot run fast. Vice hinders, because sin separates from God,⁵⁰ the Mover of the soul. Just as the soul [is] the mover of the body, so God [is the Mover] of the soul. God is absent when He is separated [from the soul] by sin. God is Justice, which is separated from what is unjust.

[33] As concerns the first point, note that three things are required for movement: namely, (a) the desired Object that is the Unmovable Mover, as Aristotle [says]⁵¹ in *Metaphysics* XII. And (b) the intellect is a movable mover; for it is moved by the desirable object, and it moves the appetite. (c) The appetite is only moved and does not move [anything]. As an example, a hawk that sees birds is moved to fly because it desires food. Similarly, the saints are moved to running [the race] because through their intellect they apprehend the eternal. Accordingly, the Apostle said: “Forgetting those things that are behind, I reach out to the things in front of me, and I pursue the desired

prize of the eternal calling.”⁵²

PART TWO

[34] “Go you also into my vineyard” (Matthew 20).⁵³

At a previous time, when on my mission as a legate I preached this gospel-message in the vernacular,⁵⁴ I considered sufficiently why the Savior, wanting to set forth a likeness of the Kingdom, introduced this present [likeness]. Through it He expressed [the thought] that the last [shall be] first,⁵⁵ although [in the parable] all [the laborers in the vineyard] receive a denarius.⁵⁶ By means of the denarius they have, [i.e., they can buy], all that is desired. Similarly, in this world: by means of the *denarius*, which can be called *value*, there are obtained all the things necessary for life, inasmuch as [these things are] in its power. For the denarius enfolds the value of things necessary for life; and [the denarius] is a means of exchange. Therefore, just as in this present life you have in the denarius, potentially, bread, wine, clothes, etc, in order that you may live with a sensory life, so too you will have a denarius in which is present, potentially, happiness [and] through which you will have all things necessary for the life of the spirit.

[35] But who will give you the denarius? Assuredly, the Head of the household [will do so], namely Christ, of whom the Gospel speaks. Thus, Jesus says above, in Chapter 13 [of Matthew], that He is the Head of the household.⁵⁷ For no one except Him has the treasure of riches from whose abundance we all receive. For because He is the Word of God, He is the nourishment of the inner man, because man does not live by bread alone but also by every word ..., etc.⁵⁸ The outer man [lives] by material bread; the inner man, by the word of God, i.e., by spiritual bread. Hence, Jesus is the Lord of the vineyard in accordance with the fact that He is the Son of God. And [He is] the true Vine⁵⁹ in accordance with the fact that He is Son of man. And, likewise, He is called the Steward of the household⁶⁰ in accordance with the fact that He procures and judges all things in the House of God the Father. From there He distributes His word, as in the eucharistic meal He distributes Himself.

[36] But what is the denarius? It is the enfolding of number, of weight, and of measure. For its value contains within itself, potentially, all things numerable, weighable, and measurable. And God, who creates all things in number, weight, and measure,⁶¹ creates all things

through the Denarius, i.e., through His Word and Image. The truth of God's Denarius is known from the Image of the King. Christ, who is the Word of God, is the Image of the Father, [who is] the King over all things. That [Christ] is the true and living Denarius we know by means of the fact that He bears the true and living Image of the Father,⁶² as being the Son of the Father. And this Denarius is worth the entire inheritance of the Father—indeed, is the very Inheritance.⁶³ [37] This Denarius gives Himself to those believing in Him. For He is the Great Reward of the faithfulness of all believers. For thus spoke the word of God to the father-of-believers, Abraham: “I will be your Great Reward.”⁶⁴ By means of this Denarius a believer purchases the Kingdom from God the Father. Christ is the Mediator, or the Means of exchange. See what results [therefrom]! The Prophet—having this Denarius in order assuredly to offer the Fount of Life, which is the entire Possession of the Creator—invites all who are thirsty to the waters,⁶⁵ i.e., to the waters of the Fount of Life, so that they may come and buy wine and milk, i.e., [may buy] all that is desired by one who thirsts. If [this] is to be bought, it is necessary that it be bought by means of a fair payment. And no payment is a fair payment other than that Denarius by means of whom all debts are paid—[all debts] that are owed to God and to neighbor. For that Denarius is of the worth of God and neighbor.

[38] However, you might ask: How do I acquire that Denarius? I reply: [You acquire it in the way] that the Gospel teaches, namely, you offer your faithful service to the Denarius [i.e., to Christ], and you be prepared at whatever time He calls you—whether in the morning, or in the evening, of your lifetime. And consider that those who serve by an agreement receive their [agreed-upon] wage; but they must abide by the terms of the agreement very strictly. Others serve but not with an agreement for a set-wage but on the basis of the fact that there was the promise of a just wage. Thirdly, the last ones,⁶⁶ and fewest ones,⁶⁷ serve neither from an agreement that they will receive a certain fixed-wage nor [from a promise] that they will get what will be just; rather, they trust only in the goodness of him whom they serve. [39] And these latter are the true Christians. For the ancients served God by contract and by pacts and covenants; and there was the agreement that God would give them the paradise of this world, namely, a land flowing with milk and honey.⁶⁸ Thereafter, others served on the basis of the promise that God would give a remuneration—as the Prophet David said that he had inclined his heart to doing God's “jus-

tifications,” i.e., commandments, because of remuneration.⁶⁹ But the last⁷⁰ [group of servants] serve only as being those who trust in the grace of Him who is Best; and so, they do not receive a reward on the basis of a contract [and] on account of their merit, but they are rewarded because of their faithfulness and trust. So, then, let us serve as the last-hires [in the parable]; and we shall obtain for our small labor [the result] that we will be the first. For who is rewarded as being more faithful than the first? For believers, even if they seem to be last, are the first.

[40] For example, a believer says: “O Lord, I do not want to enter into an agreement with You, because I am a useless, wretched—very wretched—servant who throughout all my servitude do not deserve to be the least among your servants. Suffer me to be only some kind of small servant to you and to be the least of all. For I do show myself to be faithful, although useless, to You, who are Loving-Kindness, Mercy, and Grace. I desire to serve [as one who is] certain that Your mercy surpasses [Your] condemnatory] judgment. You can be only most gracious to those whom You accepted as faithful [to You] and as loving You with all their heart. Here is such a one, who knows that he is at the bottom-end of the servants and who does not deem himself worthy to obtain anything—[but who] is, nevertheless, faithful.”

And in this respect, [namely, loyalty], he places no one ahead of himself; and he stands in the market place (i.e., where those who offer themselves for voluntary labor are found and await patiently) so that he may be called and may obey the instructions of the Lord with respect to whatever the Lord wills. The Lord is the First. And because Christ was the Last-of-all-the-last as being a worm and not a man,⁷¹ He was for this reason First of all. Those who are last [but] who bear His form will for this reason be where He is.

[41] The text says that few are chosen.⁷² Those last-ones-who-were-first were chosen before the establishing of the world. And so, although they seem to be last, nevertheless they are first because they are chosen ones. And their reward—which is also called a mansion⁷³ prepared for them from the origin of the world—will not be occupied by those who depart from this world sooner [than do they].

[42] You might ask: “Why is it said in the text that an agreement was made for a denarius a day?” It is said to be daily and to apply to each [worker]; and afterwards there is added that each [worker] received a denarius. The word “daily” is used because the remunera-

tion is for the day, i.e., for the work that is done during the day. The shining and bright and daily-[paid] denarius is the Word of God, who is the light and life of the intellect, or of the inner man, as [is read] in John, Chapter 1. And in bright light the truth about the denarius is known: [namely], whether it is of true silver or true gold, whether it is of the silver of systematic knowledge [*scientia*] or of the heavenly gold of [intellectually] appetizing wisdom. Now, each [worker] is a recipient when the distribution of the one daily denarius is made, just as each receives one [loaf of] intellectual bread, i.e., one word, when it is distributed and preached.

[43] You might say: “Because one word is distributed to men by the Son of man, there will be one life for all who receive the one Word, who is also Life.”

I admit that all receive the same life, just as several receive the same art or science. For we say, when it is stated that someone knows a certain art, that another also knows the same [art], although perhaps less perfectly. Thus, one art is present in several persons, but differently. In like manner, one enlivening wisdom [is present] in several persons—but differently, in accordance with its differing receptions.

[44] You might still ask: “Why does [the Head of the household] say to one [worker], ‘Take what is yours and go’?”⁷⁴ It is because that one was wrong [to murmur]. But for his labors he received his reward in this world, just as those who are vain seek their glory in the world on the basis of good work. But that which such a person has is his desire for the particular, temporal thing that he receives as remuneration. And so, the Head of the household said that he should go. For given that he was wrongfully dissatisfied and was not at all an heir who would remain in the house forever, [the Head of the household] ordered him to go.

[45] Moreover, consider also that several persons murmured because of the prompting of that one wrongfully dissatisfied [worker]. Yet, only the dissatisfied one was ordered to leave. For the agitated murmuring of the others resulted from inducement, not from their own malice or envy. Rather, that one [worker], moved by envy that the others earned so much, murmured. But these [others] were upset not because of envy but because they would gladly have had more. This desiring [of more] did not pass over into a turning away from God on the presumed ground that He acted unjustly. And so, the paymaster, [i.e., the Head of the household], wanting to free them from the bad

influence of the one [worker], produced the agreement, which, because he kept to it, they could not complain as if about an unjust paymaster. Rather, the murmuring stopped—[the murmuring] of them all, down to [and including] the one who was wrongfully dissatisfied.

[46] You might ask: “What is the reason that [those who are] the last obtained so much favor from a small amount of work?” I reply: [The reason is] that faith works by means of love.⁷⁵ Those who were faithful and were trusting in [the Master’s] goodness did with great love that which they did for a short period of time. And so, this intensity of the warmth of love [*caritas*] was weightier than the others’ longer period [of labor]—just as gold weighs more than copper and just as a small amount of gold [weighs] more than a large amount of straw. For those who work for the sake of the established reward or the promise [of a reward], work not out of love for the Lord but for the sake of the established reward, setting their goal on it. But the faithful do until death all things for the sake of their Master, who is Goodness itself and *Caritas* [itself].⁷⁶ From Him they receive a reward such as those receive who love *Caritas* that is only *Caritas*. For he who loves *Caritas* expects no other remuneration. For in [his] love *Caritas* is the remuneration. And the one who loves is faithful thereto—i.e., [faithful] to *Caritas*, whom he serves. And whatever he does, he does out of love.

[47] “Why does [the Lord] say, ‘I choose to give to him who is last [the same amount] as to you’ ”? [The reason is] that He can give what is His own to one out of justice and can give to another out of love [*dilectio*] that which he wills to [give]. To those who love *Caritas* He gives Himself because He wills to be loved and nothing else; and so, He gives Himself to those who love [Him].

[48] You might perhaps ask further: “Why does [the Lord] say ‘Thus, the first shall be last and the last first’ ”?⁷⁷ I reply: Exaltation coincides with humility, as in Christ. For He humbled Himself to the point of a very shameful death; and for this reason He was exalted above all [others]. In humility [there is] exaltation; in death [there is] resurrection. And this [inter-linking] will be so because *Caritas* runs ahead and has received the prize. Although many began the race earlier, nevertheless *caritas* has a vital, faithful, and persevering movement that does not wane but that is continually increased.

Let the foregoing points now have been made in the foregoing way.

[49] Aldobrandinus interprets the vineyard as penitence, which although outwardly seeming to be harsh, inwardly has pleasing fruit. The denarius bespeaks the Kingdom of Heaven. On the denarius is the imprint of majesty; similarly, the imprint of the Creator is on the saints. Just as there appears in ignited coals only fire and in dyed garments only color, so in the saints there is only God. Secondly, within [the realm of] the denarius is the potential inclusion of all things necessary for life, because it has the value of all things, and all things are purchased by means of it. The case is similar with respect to God. As Tobias said, “All things are in You alone.”⁷⁸ Likewise, by means of the denarius there is a presignifying of eternity. According to Augustine the denarius is eternal life, in which the saints will gleam in different degrees. Even though they all have the same denarius because of the endlessness of the life, [nonetheless], because of a difference of merits [they gleam] in different degrees. This difference results from love, because he who loves more, will have more. *There* there will be circularity: [A saint] will taste of love; and from the taste he will become more fervent with love: “Those who partake of me will still hunger [for more].”⁷⁹

[50] Likewise, [Augustine] knew of [God’s] caring desire that [human beings] might acquire the Kingdom, because in every period of the world and of man [God] goes out to hire laborers. Our Heavenly Father has this concern for us because we are His creature[s], His work, [and] are made in His likeness. Love makes one solicitous, because it is like a fire, which does not go out. God loves us as a father, and Christ [loves us] as a brother; Christ took on the nature necessary [for becoming our brother].

Moreover, [Augustine] interprets *day* as indicating this present life, in which we can earn a denarius; [and he interprets] *night* as indicating death, when meritorious work ceases. In another sermon he considers that only those are called who labor. Likewise, [he considers] that in God’s works more mercy appears than justice, because everything that acts acts in accordance with a form. Just as a knife that has iron for its material [and] sharpness for its form and acts in accordance with its sharpness, so too God acts according to His mercy, because it is proper to Him to be merciful. Therefore, mercy is something form-like in God because He does His own action through it. Thus, He shows, in remunerating, that He is [both] just and merciful. But He is more merciful [than just].

NOTES TO *Sic Currite ut Comprehendatis**

*Sermon CCLXVIII.

1. I Corinthians 9:24.
2. I Corinthians 9:24: "Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize. So run that you may obtain." (Douay version). That is, "Run in such a way that you may obtain [the prize]."
3. I Corinthians 9:19-27.
4. I Corinthians 9:23.
5. I Corinthians 9:24.
6. I Corinthians 9:19-22.
7. I Corinthians 9:22.
8. A pace was approximately five Herculean foot-lengths. (Hercules is said to have paced-off the length of the Olympic foot-race, which was a dash.) 120 paces was, therefore, approximately 600 such feet, or about 192 meters, or 200 yards.
9. II Machabees 4:19-20 refers to the sacrifice of Hercules.
10. Galatians 3:27.
11. Ephesians 3:18.
12. Sermon CCXLIV (20 - 28).
13. Nicholas borrows from Cicero, who speaks of justice as giving to each his own.
14. II Corinthians 12:2-4. See also Hebrews 9:2-5 and Exodus 26:31-34.
15. Isaias (Isaiah) 45:3. Colossians 2:3.
16. Romans 11:33.
17. In this sermon Nicholas uses the Latin verb "comprehendere" in two strikingly different senses: "to obtain" and "to comprehend". Each sense corresponds to a verse in Scripture: I Corinthians 9:24 and Ephesians 3:18.
18. See Nicholas's dialogue *Idiota de Mente* 9.
19. "... through the Holy one of holy ones" That is, through Christ.
20. Luke 10:22.
21. E.g., in the treatise *De Filiatione Dei*.
22. Ephesians 3:16-17.
23. Ephesians 3:18.
24. Galatians 5:6. Formed faith is faith in-formed by love.
25. Romans 8:29.
26. Ephesians 3:19. Throughout his sermons and other writings Nicholas sometimes refers to God's love as *caritas*, sometimes as *dilectio*, and sometimes as *amor*. His use of terminology is very fluid.
27. See n. 26 above.
28. Note Aristotle's *Metaphysics* I, 2 (982^b).
29. That is, let the foregoing points suffice on this topic.
30. I Corinthians 9:25: "And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things. And they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible one." (Douay version).
31. Nicholas alludes to the story of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac

as recorded in Genesis 22, and also to his belief that God would raise up Isaac from the dead, as recorded in Hebrews 11:19.

32. Hebrews 11:1.

33. John 5:39 and 6:69 (6:68).

34. Philippians 3:8.

35. Ephesians 6:16.

36. I Corinthians 9:26.

37. II Timothy 1:14 and 4:8.

38. Romans 5:5.

39. I Corinthians 9:26.

40. Our word for this is “shadow-boxing”: ‘not as one who tires himself shadow-boxing.’

41. I Corinthians 9:27.

42. Here I am reading with Mss. *L* and *U*₁ “obtemperetur” in place of “imperetur”.

43. Sunday, February 13, 1457 was the third Sunday before the beginning of Lent. It is called *Dominica Septuagesima*, for reasons not assuredly known.

44. I Corinthians 9:27.

45. I Corinthians 10:1-6.

46. Here I take “figurantis” as going with “de petra”—making “de petra” equivalent to “petrae”. The Latin sentence, as written, is grammatically problematical. I take “quamvis” at **3 0**:1 and “licet” at **3 0**:8 to go with “tamen” at **3 0**:12. The entire passage is badly constructed by Nicholas.

47. “...for that reason”: namely, because they were baptized in the cloud and fed with manna.

48. I Corinthians 10:5.

49. I Corinthians 10:6-10.

50. Isaias (Isaiah) 59:2.

51. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 6 (1072^a10-15).

52. Philippians 3:13-14.

53. Matthew 20:7.

54. For a ten-year period Nicholas was a papal envoy to Germany and the Netherlands. See Erich Meuthen, *Nicholas of Cusa: A Sketch for a Biography*, translated from the 7th German Edition by David Crouner and Gerald Christianson. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 2010.

55. Matthew 19:30 and 20:16.

56. A denarius was a Roman coin. Nicholas says that it may be made of copper, of silver, or of gold—thus having different values. In the New Testament parable all the workers, hired at different times during the day, received the same pay at the end of the day.

57. Matthew 13:27.

58. Matthew 4:4.

59. John 15:1.

60. Matthew 20:8.

61. Wisdom 11:21.

62. Colossians 1:15. II Corinthians 4:4.

63. Ephesians 1:18. Hebrews 1:4.
64. Genesis 15:1.
65. Isaias (Isaiah) 55:1.
66. The allusion is to the parable in Matthew 20:1-16.
67. Cf. Matthew 20:16.
68. Exodus 13:5. Leviticus 20:24.
69. Psalms 118:112 (119:112).
70. See n. 66 above.
71. Psalms 21:7 (22:6).
72. Matthew 20:16.
73. John 14:2.
74. Matthew 20:14.
75. Galatians 5:6.
76. I John 4:8 & 16.
77. Matthew 20:16.
78. Tobias 10:5.
79. Ecclesiasticus 24:29.

Sufficit Tibi Gratia Mea*

(“My Grace Is Sufficient for You.”)¹

[February 20, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “My grace is sufficient for you” [is read] in [today’s] epistle.

The Apostle, who asked to be freed from a “thorn,” received the foregoing answer from the Lord. And he adds the reason for the answer: viz., that “power is made perfect in infirmity.” The Apostle concludes: “Therefore, I shall gladly glory in my infirmities so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.” By means of these [words] he instructs [us] that the power of Christ dwells in him who, in order to give to Christ the honor of power, glories that he is infirm.

Let us note, then, this epistle, in which the Apostle declares of the power of Christ that it dwells in him. He spoke of pseudo-apostles—ministers of Satan—who transfigure themselves into true apostles, even as Satan [transfigures himself] into an angel of light.² And [the Apostle] renders the Corinthians attentive to not being deceived by those whose end is in accordance with their works.³ And since many of them were glorying “according to the flesh” (as if [glory] ought to be duly accorded them because they were descendants of the prophets and the patriarchs): lest they be deceived because of this fact [of descendancy, the Apostle], like one who is foolish, lists about himself those things that are greater than are the things whereof *they* can glory.⁴

[2] Consider, then, that the apostles are ministers of justice. Therefore, Christ, whose apostles they are, is Justice. Some who feign being just—who under the guise of justice (i.e., by means of observing formalities and legalities) feign being apostles—aim at worldly gain and profit [and] seek their own advantage.⁵ Accordingly, Christ is viewed in the shape and outward appearance of sheep, but their disposition is that of wolf-like greediness. [3] Hence, in order to take away from the pseudo-apostles their pretext [for glorying], the Apostle abstained from a permissible receiving of things needful for living. Moreover, lest they would highly esteem themselves because of the fact that they prided themselves on being Jews and Israelites, he did some things (viz., he cited his condition and glory) that were commonly accustomed to be done not in accordance with God or with wisdom but rather in accordance with foolishness. For in Proverbs 24 praising oneself is forbidden.⁶ For commonly it is not permitted; but [it

is] rightly [permitted] in the case of the Church's edification.⁷ Therefore, [Paul] set aside that which is [commonly] permitted and did what is [commonly] forbidden—[did it] so as to take away from false apostles their rationale for believing [themselves to be superior] and so as to edify the Church. It is as if the Apostle were saying: "Set before your eyes the fact that I have walked in the plain view of the Church, and consider what kind of person I am in comparison to them and to all the things regarding which they vaunt themselves. Consider the story of my life, and you will find that I am to be believed rather [than they]."

[4] But we ought to take cognizance of the Apostle's wondrous practical wisdom: no matter whether [what he said] would be reckoned to him for wisdom or for foolishness, no matter whether it would be construed as vanity or as glory, he did not for this reason remain silent, but he promoted the truth. Likewise, let us carefully consider what kind of man Paul was and consider that he suffered hardships very patiently and underwent perils of body in order to preach Christ, with whom he was acquainted in the rapture unto the Third Heaven, i.e., unto Paradise, at the time (as is believed) when he was blind for three days.⁸ Christ introduced Paul to a vision of immortal riches, which He promised to give him as remuneration if he would serve as a servant faithful in preaching the gospel. And Paul believed the promise; and he bore witness to that which he saw; and he caused believers to hasten with him⁹ unto an apprehension of that treasure.

[5] In this regard, note that the place of delights is the palace of God's glory, i.e., is that loftiness of ascent that is called the Third Heaven.¹⁰ Kings have quite private places where they appear to their friends and show themselves to them in glory and majesty. Hence, in the less private places (e.g., the place of assembly where the domestics remain) they make an appearance augustly; and, secondly, they make an appearance more augustly in the Council, where the wisemen and the courtiers come together decorated with royal gifts. Nevertheless, [a king appears] still more [augustly] in his own private quarters, where he manifests himself to his friends in majesty and glory [and] with open treasures. To this third place of all royal delights there are admitted only the very trustworthy and very beloved, to whom it is granted to see the face of the king and to see him in majesty there where he manifests unbecloaked his most private and most hidden things—[manifests them] as to his only son. There [in the Third Heaven] Paul heard secret words that it is not granted to man to utter.¹¹

[6] Earlier the Apostle said: “I will come to visions and revelations.”¹² Here he says that he heard secret words. It is necessary that seeing and hearing coincide. For example, he who reads a book hears the author of the book speaking. But he does not hear with his bodily ear; rather, he hears within, where he hears however much he sees. For he hears as much as he sees with an inner vision, i.e., with the intellect. Therefore, when he is caught up unto the word and conception of the writer—[caught up] by means of perceptible letters and human knowledge (i.e., by means of human reasoning and human logic and by means of a knowledge of [the meaning of] words)—he ascends unto the conception, or intent, of the author. And [the author’s] conception, or word, is incorporated within the word, or conception, of the reader; and with this conception [the reader] descends to seeing, i.e., to understanding, the book; and by means of the book the reader ascends again unto the word and sees the author’s wisdom. In an analogous way, the Word is the Father-Creator’s Wisdom, who causes the intellectual nature that apprehends the Word to be conformed to itself.

[7] Let us say, then, that Paul was raptured and that in the rapture he saw, in the Paradise of delights for the spirit, the Word of God. And [let us say] that, by seeing, he heard secret words—viz., heard in what way Wisdom speaks secret words through which it infuses itself into the intellect, where it remains as the light of the intellect’s life. For he who when thus rapt has received within himself the Word¹³ through which the Creator described this book (viz., the book of the creation): he understands (by means of that Word, who is the Form of things) all the things contained in the book [of creation]; and within himself, where he has received¹⁴ the Word, he comprehends all things. And whether he ascends or descends, whether he enters in or goes out: because he has the Word, or the Door,¹⁵ or the Way,¹⁶ he will find Paradise’s pastures,¹⁷ which are the food of immortal life.

[8] Augustine, in the sermon in which he expounds this epistle, says that Paul was raptured from corporeal things unto immaterial things that are likenesses of corporeal things (even as the imagination is related to the senses in the absence of what is perceivable).¹⁸ And from something thus immaterial [Paul was raptured] unto an intellectual utterance, unto the Paradise-of-delights of all paradises-of-delights—i.e., unto a vision of the Trinity. [Augustine] says: “If a good soul has joy in the good things amid the whole creation, what is more excellent than the joy that is [obtainable] in God’s Word, through

whom all things were made?”¹⁹

And although Paul says that he does not know whether at that time [of rapture] he was in the body or out of the body,²⁰ nevertheless he thereby makes manifest to us great secrets. For our intellectual nature, which is called the inner man, is capable of light and of the intellectual word of God. For the Word of God is a Spirit and is heard only in the intellectual spirit and speaks within and from within. For it does not come from without as does a perceptible voice, which is formed from forced air. And so, when the inner man is caught up unto the Word of God, it withdraws from the outer, perceptible world. And this separation is seen to be a [partial] withdrawing from the body and from every corporeal nature. But, nevertheless, since the soul does not on this account [altogether] depart from the body, which it animates, the withdrawing from the body is not observed. Accordingly, the rapture unto the vision of the Word of God does not appear to be a separation; for [the rapture] is [the place] where outside and inside coincide, because *there* ‘to withdraw from’ is ‘to enter into’. [9] For the Word of God is the Logos, or the Absolute Form, which grants to every intellect intellectual-being. Thus, [the Word of God] is the Center of intellectual being. Hence, one’s being raptured unto the Word is an *entering in by withdrawing from*, as in a case where one proceeds from the circumference to the center, [or] proceeds from the composite to the simple, [or] from the body to the spirit. Yet, this [proceeding] occurs in a coinciding, so that (1) withdrawing is entering-into or approaching and (2) outside is inside. But how it is that outside coincides with inside is known by God alone, who is outside of all things in such a way that He is within all things. And, hence, the Apostle [Paul] states that he does not know [how] this [coinciding occurs], but he declares that God knows it.

[10] Subsequently, we are taught here [in today’s text] that the inner-man, which is immaterial, has a name as regards the outer-man. Paul was raptured unto the Third Heaven, although the same Paul was in Damascus. For in accordance with the carnal outer-man, with respect to which he was in time and place, he was a living and true man present in Damascus. But in accordance with the immaterial inner-man, with respect to which he was not in time and place, he was raptured unto the Word-of-God, who is not bound to space or time, both of which exist [ontologically] subsequent to Him and because of Him.

[11] Paul says that he heard secret words that it is not granted to

a man to utter.²¹ He says “to a man” (namely, to one who is in time) because those corruptible ears could not grasp God’s incorruptible secrets. Therefore, it is not granted to a carnal man to speak, and to unveil, the secrets of the Spirit of God. That Spirit who is the Word of God utters these secrets within the spirit of a man. In this [human] spirit the Word is received, and this speaking occurs in silence and in secret, because the words are secret [words].²² What is secret is hidden. Speaking in hiddenness is a revealing in spirit. As we commonly say: “My conscience tells me this.” That’s when secret matters are revealed to conscience. For conscience says that God is to be loved because God is Goodness itself, which is loved in whatever things are loved. [12] The Word, or Logos, that is present in the desiring spirit reveals this basis for loving God. And this is the word that speaks in conscience. About this [word] the prophet said: “I will hear what the Lord will speak in me.”²³ For it is reason that persuades [us] concerning [what things are] best—e.g., concerning justice, truth, graciousness, and the virtues. And so, to this Word, thus speaking in us, let us give a name that accords with the name we hear. For example, if [the Word] persuades us that justice is to be cherished, we call the Word *Justice*; if graciousness, *Graciousness*; if truth, *Truth*; and so on, with respect to all the excellences. Hence, we say that that Word is the Excellence of excellences, the Wisdom of holy wisemen, the Immortal Life of all who are living immortally—and whatever such things.

[13] [Let us note] next: this speaking-of-the-word that occurs in the hiddenness of our spirit—where conscience is the locus of hearing—is heard by seeing. When we wish to correct, in a brotherly manner, someone who errs: we commonly ask that he look to his conscience, which reproves him if he sins. This looking is his hearing the reproving [conscience]. Therefore, when the inner-man is caught up unto the Word of God (i.e., unto the locus of hearing, where the Word is heard to set forth hidden words in the secret-place, namely, of conscience: then the [inner-man], by seeing, hears those things of which it is not granted to speak. [14] The prophet said: “my secret to myself.”²⁴ For to every rational faculty Absolute Reason speaks—secretly and in hiddenness—its own word, as it were, sent from the secrets of God to each rational spirit. And in this school of Christ, who is the Word of God, each one can apprehend and study the evangelical teaching that is vital and that is suitable to himself and that offers immortality.

As regards this topic, let the foregoing things be said in the fore-

going way for the time-being.

[15] Next, let us reflect upon our theme that grace is a sufficiency. For to a faithful servant who has as his Master Him who is Graciousness itself, it is enough to have his Master's favor, [or grace]. For in that case, [the servant's] weakness does not diminish the favor but rather increases the Master's mercy toward the servant. For the Lord is quite gracious to him because the quite weak man is a quite faithful [servant]. Such a faithful [servant] glories in his weakness because, [as a result of it], the power of the Lord's grace abounds in him. "Power is made perfect in weakness."²⁵ Accordingly, there follows [in the text]: "Gladly will I glory in my infirmities in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me." Elsewhere²⁶ [Paul] says: "When I am weak, then I am quite strong." Power is strength and stamina. Therefore, strength coincides with weakness. [16] When Paul thrice asked of Christ to be freed from that weakness-of-flesh, (viz., from the thorn [of the flesh]), he obtained not liberation but rather Christ's strength and power. This is the power that does not permit Satan to prevail with his temptings; but it does permit him to tempt. And when temptation reaches the point that because of the weakness of the flesh one despairs of his power to resist, then Christ, who has been invoked, is present and is the Victor over the Tempter. At His command Satan withdraws. Therefore, he who battles under Christ's [command] and who is in Christ's grace cannot be overcome; for, at the right moment, Christ's power is present. By "at the right moment" I mean the moment when human resources cease and no hope of further resisting remains. And so, Paul elsewhere states that he is not permitted to be tempted beyond that which he is able to bear but that [God] gives, together with temptation, a way of escape.²⁷

[17] The Tempter is not overcome except by the power of Christ. Temptation is permitted for a time in order to show Christ's power—for the sake of progress on the part of the one who is tempted. But, at the right moment, our Helper is present. When He is asked, He delivers the one who is experiencing trials. And not only does He deliver him, but he also glorifies him, as if the one in and through whom the power of Christ wrought the victory had himself wrought the victory. [Christ] gives the reward of victory to him in and through whom He conquers. For the one in and through whom He conquers is His faithful [servant]. And so, [Christ] dwells in him through grace. The faithfulness of the servant is the abode of the Lord's grace. The Lord

ascribes to the faithfulness of the servant the triumph that He brings about by means of His own power and might. And so, faithfulness obtains the reward, because faithfulness is what attracts the strength-giving grace.

[18] Let us also reflect upon the phrase “is sufficient,” where Christ said “My grace is sufficient for you.” For nature does not suffice; only grace is sufficiency; it contains that which is lacking. To the servant of a king there is lacking nobility of birth, mighty strength, practical wisdom in deeds; and there are lacking to him many other things that are required in a royal minister. However, because of his faithfulness, he is in the king’s favor, [or grace]. The king’s favor suffices; it supplies all [that is lacking]. For it makes the servant noble, strong, and practically wise in the king’s eyes. And his being—by grace—without defect in the eyes of the king is sufficient for him. [19] Grace makes a man worthy to be the adopted son of God, so that he is supremely happy as being an heir to the Kingdom of God. The grace of God is the form that perfects an infirm nature. Christ is the fullness of perfecting-grace, meant to be imparted to all. All [who receive grace] receive [it] from Christ’s fullness, and from Christ’s fullness they are perfected. Therefore, this grace is sufficient for all, even as [it was sufficient] for Paul. Christ is Absolute Grace, without which no one can be pleasing to God and through which all who are pleasing to God are made pleasing [to Him]—as in the case of the true Son of God, whose Sonship enfolds all grace.

[20] Let us, therefore, together with Paul, be faithful. And let us show faithfulness amid all hardship—[faithfulness] even unto death—just as did Paul. And [then] we will have a sufficient amount of Christ’s grace, through which we will be like Him²⁸ in the glory of God the Father, who is forever blessed.

NOTES TO *Sufficit Tibi Gratia Mea*

- * Sermon CCLXIX.
- 1. II Corinthians 12:9.
- 2. II Corinthians 11:13-14.
- 3. II Corinthians 11:15.
- 4. II Corinthians 11:18 - 12:18.
- 5. Re “seek their own advantage” (“*quae sua sunt quaerunt*”), note I Corinthians 13:5.
- 6. Proverbs 27:2 (not Proverbs 24, as Nicholas misremembers).
- 7. Thus, Paul is permitted to boast of his sufferings for Christ, inasmuch as these boastings edify the Church.
- 8. Acts 9:8-9.
- 9. Here (at 4:16) I am reading, with ms. *L*, “*secum*” in place of “*sensum*”.
- 10. II Corinthians 12:2.
- 11. II Corinthians 12:4.
- 12. II Corinthians 12:1.
- 13. John 1:12.
- 14. Here (at 7:11) I am understanding “*concepit*” to have the same meaning as “*recepit*” at 7:6.
- 15. John 10:9.
- 16. John 14:6.
- 17. John 10:9.
- 18. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, XII, 34 (PL 34:483).
- 19. Colossians 1:16.
- 20. II Corinthians 12:3.
- 21. II Corinthians 12:4.
- 22. Throughout this sermon Nicholas uses “*verbum*” sometimes to refer to God the Son, who is the Word of God, and sometimes to refer to what Paul “heard” from the Son of God in the rapture. Moreover, the Word of God is eternally spoken, or begotten, by God the Father. Furthermore, the risen Christ is He who speaks, through the Holy Spirit, to believers. And so on. In developing his homiletical theme, Nicholas trades upon this manifold use of “*verbum*”. It is sometimes difficult to know whether or not to capitalize the English term that translates “*verbum*”.
- 23. Psalms 84:9 (85:8).
- 24. Isaias (Isaiah) 24:16.
- 25. II Corinthians 12:9.
- 26. II Corinthians 12:10. Nicholas is here alluding—not quoting exactly. (He seems not to remember that this passage is one that immediately succeeds his theme-verse.
- 27. I Corinthians 10:13.
- 28. I John 3:2.

Ecce Ascendimus Hierosolymam*
("Behold, We Go Up to Jerusalem.")¹
[February 27, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." Luke 18 and Matthew 20.

First of all, we may note (as does Tuscanellus, in a sermon for this day, [a sermon that concerns Christ's] summoning of His apostles),² that God does some things by Himself—for example, creating, healing, and judging. For He wills to be loved, to be desired, and to be feared—to be loved because He is the Giver of being, to be desired as Physician of the soul, to be feared as Judge. [God does] other things by intermediaries because, on account of orderliness, it is fitting that one creature depend on another. Thus, God governs corporeal creatures by means of immaterial creatures. We experience in our own case an example of this fact. For by itself (i.e., by its nature) the soul enlivens and informs the body; however, it imparts to [various] powers the moving of the body-parts. For example, by means of the visual power [the soul] moves the eye to seeing; and by means of the power to advance, it moves the feet to walking. Similarly, the pope does by himself some things that he reserves for himself [to do]. He does other things by means of envoys and ministers (1) so that the order of dependence is preserved and (2) for the sake of the union of different things and a sharing among different things. Likewise, Christ, as Head of the Church, took twelve apostles into a portion of His concerns; and through them, to whom He revealed secret matters, He visited the world.

[2] Secondly, according to this same Aldobrandinus of Tuscania,³ we may note that Jesus foreknew whatever things were going to befall Him. Jesus foreknew all things because He had God's knowledge. Now, God [foreknows all things] because He is present in the universe analogously to the way the soul is present in the body (and the sensitive soul⁴ senses all things, including even whether a hair is plucked out). And so, God, who is purest Intellect, knows all the things that are in the universe, since they are present in Him. Therefore, all things are open to His eyes.⁵ [3] But God's seeing is His existing, with which living and understanding coincide. Therefore, whatever things either exist or live or understand are present in God's seeing, even as an animal's living members are present in its vital being. If whiteness were an intellect, would it not see and understand all white things,

which are present in it and which have from it their being white? The case is similar with Absolute Being, which is Intellect.⁶ Since it is the Form of forms, which gives being to all forms: that which it gives by means of Intellect, it also understands; for Absolute Being's understanding is its giving being. For the Creator is like Sight that creates by seeing. Therefore, He sees all things, because His seeing is the creature's existing.⁷

[4] As Artisan of all things, God knows the species and forms of these things, even as a writer [knows] the letters formed by himself, of which he is the cause. God is the Life of all existing forms, since the forms of all existing things are alive in God; for the perfections of effects are present in their cause in a more noble way [than they exist in the effects]. Just as from God there proceed sensing, living, understanding, and reasoning (which are creatures' perfections), so in God there are present, altogether perfectly, every act of understanding of an angel or act of reasoning of a man [and] all sensing and being of a creature. Therefore, God knows, in a more perfect way, all that angels or men know or can know. He works all in all.⁸ And so, He not only knows generally but also knows each thing individually; for otherwise His knowledge would not be perfect. Hence, in God's knowledge—from which proceed all general knowledge and all special knowledge—are enfolded all the modes of knowing.

[5] Hence, necessarily, God knows at once all things universally and each thing individually. For in God all perfections of knowing are *united*, even as in a human being the particular powers of sense, which are united in the communal sense, are *separated*. And if by a unique act the communal sense were—through itself and without a sense-organ—to reach to all the perceptible objects of the particular senses, then at one and the same time it would touch, see, hear, and taste all things. Similarly, God views all things by an incomposite viewing. He sees in the point-of-eternity all the things that are future to us. For all temporal things are enfolded in that [point], just as each number [is enfolded] in the simple power of oneness. The point-of-eternity is like a seed that enfolds in its own power all time. Hence, he who sees the [seed-of-eternity's] power sees in the seed each and every thing that can be temporally unfolded from it—just as he who views the power of a grain of mustard sees in that [power] all the things that can be temporally unfolded from [that] grain. Regarding this topic, enough is found elsewhere, including in the book concerning the Icon of God's vision.⁹

[6] You might assert: “Admittedly, God knows good things because He is good [and] because from Him come all good things. But since evil is nothing, and since oftentimes not to know evil is better than to know evil, it seems that God does not know things evil. For example, that Christ foreknew the bitterness of His death rendered Him heavy-hearted. But it seems that it would have been better that He would not have [fore-]known.”

I reply that the Glorious God knows [both] good things and evil things, because otherwise He would not know perfectly. Analogously, an eye knows [both] light and darkness; for it would not know light unless it also knew darkness. A painter recognizes his own painting; and if someone were to mar it with an ugly color, he would also recognize [this condition]. God, by the Hand of His Omnipotence, painted [into existence] all creatures; and on them all He impressed His likeness, as if [impressing] very beautiful colors. But the Devil marred [the paintings]. God knows of this [marring]. Just as He knew that after a man [sowed] good seed, the enemy oversowed tares,¹⁰ so too [He knows of] sin and evil. Even though according to fact¹¹ [evil] is not anything, nevertheless it is known.

[7] Now, God knows future evils. I call [them] *future* with respect to us, for God’s knowledge, which is beyond time, is neither past nor future. We see that a skilled physician and a skilled astronomer make predictions about death and about eclipses—foreseeing future things by means of sure inferences. How is it that these things could be unknown to God, with whom the Form of all things is present?

Now, there might enter into someone’s mind the thought that God created man infirm in order, on account of the defect, to be desired as Physician—as was spoken of in the initial topic [of our sermon]. I respond that God did not create defect or infirmity or death but that—should these come about as a result of man’s freedom—He reserved unto Himself a remedy, so that man would not on account [of that defect] always languish as infirm, through his own fault. In a similar way, the father gave to the prodigal son the portion [of his inheritance].¹² And because without the father the son might possibly waste his portion and become destitute, the father reserved unto himself [resources] from which he could once again support the son if the son returned. The son, [having become] impoverished and famished, desired to be fed, and he did not know where [he could be fed] except in his father’s house. He returned and was received with joy. This

Gospel-story satisfactorily answers the objection.

[8] From the foregoing [considerations] and from our theme-text we can infer that Christ foreknew all the things that were going to befall Him (as John the Evangelist says¹³). Thus, Christ's suffering and death were so consummate that (1) they would enfold in themselves, intensely, the full bitterness of death and, consequently, (2) His merit would be consummate and would make satisfaction for all (as elsewhere I recall my having extensively discussed);¹⁴ for the reward of death's bitterness is life. Now, there was consummate bitterness present in the death of Christ, who saw that the bitterness of death would come upon Him in the way it was going to come. (No one else can foresee the [distress of his death].) And so, [Christ's death] enfolds all the pain of all who die. Therefore, Christ's death is a reward for all those to whom merit is imparted. Therefore, take note of the mystery that the Savior was, for this reason, necessarily God and man. [He was] God in order that nothing of the future would be hidden from Him with respect to His suffering of a most horrible death;¹⁵ [He was] a human being in order that He would be able to die. And, thus, Christ's death would be a meriting-of-life that would be sufficient for all who through His death could merit from God eternal life.

[9] Hence, the question (which is commonly raised) of whether God could have saved man by another means can be answered as follows: Since that thing is possessed more joyously which is acquired as one's due because of merit: eternal life, which ought to be obtained on the basis of merit so that nothing pertaining to happiness should be lacking to it, could have been obtained only as God ordained. And because He ordained in such a way that Christ would die, it was necessary that Christ die and in that way enter into glory—as Christ Himself informed two disciples (Matthew 16) before His death and on the day of the Resurrection on the Road to Emmaus.¹⁶ For in such a way He was made to be our justification, so that the imparting of [His] merit through grace is our righteousness. And we can request of God our Father that He give us the Kingdom-of-life because of the merit-of-our-Christ that is reckoned as ours. And I regard this [transfer of merit] as the supreme mystery of the Cross and of [Christ's] death. For I believe that Christ has the Kingdom on the basis of merit. And those to whom Christ, out of grace, imparts merit [also have the Kingdom]—[having it] both because of the grace of association¹⁷ and because of the merit of Christ's suffering. Therefore, in everyone who is to be

saved grace concurs with justice. Analogously, when the pope confers a benefice on someone, he does this out of the fullness of grace, because he can confer it or not confer it; however, the one on whom he confers it has the benefice by entitlement. (About this matter you have elsewhere heard more extensively.)¹⁸

[10] Nevertheless, note one [more] thing: [namely,] that only the death of Christ was able to merit eternal life, because [only] a consummate death merits immortal life. No other martyrs merit by their death eternal life; for each death of each [of the martyrs] falls short of the maximum and is infinitely distant from being a consummate death, which alone merits maximal life, namely, eternal life. However, the death of martyrs attests (1) that they are Christ-like and (2) that they exist in the grace that makes one pleasing [to God] and (3) that therefore they are justified and sanctified by the merit of Christ's death—[merit] imparted to them by way of grace.

[11] You might ask, in addition: “Given that Christ's death explains all things, how does it show that Jesus, who is Son of man, is the Son of God?”

I reply that a certain very eminent ancient teacher, an expounder of Paul's letters ([but] whose name I still have not been able to discover),¹⁹ has taught me that Christ's death thereupon showed Christ to be the Son of God. For Christ died for His enemies and in order to strengthen in us, by the witness of His blood, the words of life. And since God is Absolute Goodness itself, then He who is so good that He dies for the salvation of His enemies is rightly called—since a better man cannot be posited—the Son of *Goodness*, which is God. [12] Christ Himself said that no one has greater love than does he who lays down his life for his friends.²⁰ And so, he who [dies] for his *enemies* exceeds all [others in love], so that there cannot be a greater [love]. Now, love than which there cannot be a greater is unqualifiedly maximal and, hence, is divine. Thus, Christ's works, which issue from maximal love, show which spirit—because it is divine—is of Christ. Therefore, since the spirit of a Christian is of the Spirit of Christ, it does not render evil for evil but renders good for evil [and] love for hatred. Christ rightly reproved His disciples who wanted to requite, with fire, an affront.²¹ He asked: “Do you not know of whose spirit you are?”²² And so, keep in mind that Christ's death on behalf of His enemies is an attestation that Christ is the Son of God.²³

NOTES TO *Ecce Ascendimus Hierosolymam*

*Sermon CCLXX.

1. Luke 18:31. Matthew 20:18.
2. Nicholas here refers to the sermons of the Dominican lector Aldobrandinus de Toscanella (Aldobrandino of Tuscania, Italy), who flourished during the second half of the thirteenth century and whose monastery is presumed to have been in Viterbo. He is also sometimes referred to as Aldobrandinus Lombardus. See Tommaso Käppeli, "La tradizione manoscritta delle opere di Aldobrandino da Toscanella," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 8 (1938), 163-192. Josef Koch, pp. 55-67 of his *Cusanus-Texte. I. Predigten. 2./5. Vier Predigten im Geiste Eckharts* [Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1936/37. 2. Abhandlung]. Heinrich Pauli, "Die Aldobrandinuszitate in den Predigten des Nikolaus von Kues und die Brixener Aldobrandinushandschrift," *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, 19 (1991), 163-182.
3. See n. 2 above.
4. Nicholas here alludes to the Aristotelian-Thomistic distinction between vegetative, sensitive, and rational souls.
5. Hebrews 4:13.
6. Here the allusion is to God, the Supreme Intellect and Divine Mind.
7. Cusanus, *De Visione Dei* 12.
8. I Corinthians 12:6.
9. Cusanus, *De Visione Dei* 7 and 12.
10. Matthew 13:24-30.
11. Nicholas here seems to be distinguishing with Anselm (*De Casu Diaboli* 11) what is said *secundum rem* and what is said *secundum formam*.
12. Luke 15:11-32.
13. John 18:4.
14. The printed edition of the Latin texts here cites Sermons XXVII, XXVIII (3-4), and CLXXXV (4-8).
15. Although here (as also in other sermons) Nicholas is influenced by Anselm of Canterbury, he here takes an importantly different tack. See also the text marked by n. 23 below. As regards, more generally, the relationship between Nicholas and Anselm, see my "Nicholas of Cusa's Intellectual Relationship to Anselm of Canterbury," Chapter 3 of Peter Casarella, editor, *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2005).
16. Matthew 16:21, John 12:23-33, Luke 24:13-27.
17. Cf. John 15:15. James 2:23.
18. The printed edition of the Latin text here cites Sermon CLXIX (3).
19. The printed edition of the Latin text here cites Origen, *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos*, IV, 10. For an English translation by Thomas P. Scheck, see Vol. 103 in the series *The Fathers of the Church*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001.
20. John 15:13.
21. Luke 9:52-54.
22. Luke 9:55.
23. This argument is interesting because it is very uncommon.

Haec Omnia Dabo Tibi*

(“All These Things I Will Give You”)¹
[March 6, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “All these things I will give You if, falling down, You will worship me.” (from the Gospel).²

After the kingdoms of the world and their glory had been shown, Satan said the foregoing words to Jesus.

Now, three old women with a sash have been brought here, two of whom have admitted that they are of the society of Diana, whom they call a good governess. And through agreements they have gone from renouncing Christ to associating with that Diana. And my purpose is to teach you, to some extent, how it is that the simple are led astray in these matters. For the foregoing reasons I have taken up a theme in which complete deception is manifested.

[2] Let us first very briefly examine the Gospel-passage. By means of a resemblance it is made known to us how it is that Christ is made a renewal of Adam.³ Adam fell; Christ conquered. When Adam was placed in a Paradise of super-abundance, he was tempted [by being told] that he would be like God—i.e., be like a Prince of Paradise—and that he would attain this knowledge by believing the Tempter [and] by belittling God. By contrast, when Christ was in the desert—i.e., in a place lacking all comfort—He was tempted [by being told] that He would be King and would be like a Prince of the world; and this [status would come about] likewise by His believing the Tempter. Adam, believing that [he] would ascend, fell; Christ, not believing Satan, stood fast. Adam, having been conquered, was expelled from the place of super-abundance into the world of beasts. Christ, the Victor, is Prince of the world of angels, who ministered to Him after His victory, as the Gospel states.⁴

[3] Let us see how it is that the spirit of faith that is given to the Christian in baptism—[given] as a spirit of divine strength and power and [given] as a spirit teachable by the Word of God—is perfected. After Christ was baptized in the Jordan [River], a visible spirit that was in the form of a dove descended upon Him,⁵ showing that the Holy Spirit was in Him. Likewise, in every [instance of] regeneration—i.e., [of] true baptism—the Holy Spirit descends invisibly into the soul of the believer, even as in Christ the visible dove manifested

[the Holy Spirit]. The spirit-of-faith, by its power, impregnates the soul, so that the soul conceives the Word of God, through which it is made to be like God.⁶ For the Word of God is the Image of God. For God is Intellect, which, when it thinks itself, begets a Word which is the Image and Splendor and Form of God's substance.⁷

[4] Now, man's soul has God's image. This soul, as being a human soul from Adam, is subject to its own natural, specific perfections and movements. It cannot perfect itself by any rational thinking. For no human knowledge can attain to understanding, or seeing, the Exemplar from which the intellect emanated. For it is impossible for [the intellect], after its exile from Paradise, to understand its own Beginning. And it is not unfitting that this [exile] be called original sin, i.e., ignorance-of-origin. But in the Paradise [of Eden], where God was seen by man—[seen] walking in bright light, but in the afternoon or at sunset⁸—a life [consisting] of knowledge of the Ever-enlivening Father could have been had eternally (as Moses discloses by means of a simple description [in Genesis]), but not outside [Paradise] after the expulsion. By analogy, if an infant after birth were expelled from the region of his birth to a land not inhabited by human beings, he could not of himself ever through any reasoning understand the origin of his birth. For his association would be with beasts—i.e., [with those] of another species. Indeed, he could not know himself—[know] of what species he was—without revelation. Similarly, the [human] intellect (which is an image of God)—placed in this perceptible world outside of God's Paradise from the time of its origin—can never attain to its Father or to the Exemplar from which it proceeded, because by means of the senses it associates with brutes. Therefore, it [can] not know itself unless it is revealed to itself.

[5] But an intellect that does not know itself is without intellectual life, for an intellect's understanding is its living. Hence, if the intellect is to attain to life in order, indeed, to understand itself and to be alive with an intellectual life, then it is necessary that its origin be revealed to it. But who can reveal its origin to it except Him who (1) knows the Father and (2) knows the Intellect which is Creator and (3) is the Exemplar of the Father's creating⁹—namely, the Son and Word of the Father? For no one knows the Father qua Father-who-is-Fatherhood except the Son qua Son-who-is-Sonship.¹⁰ Therefore, it is evident that there can be made no revelation of the truth to the [human] intellect qua image of God except by the Exemplar—i.e., by the Word

through which the intellect was created. But if a revelation is to be made to the created intellect, it is necessary that the [created] intellect be capable of faith; i.e., [it is necessary] that it be able to believe. For unless it could believe the one who reveals, how could there be revelation to it? Hence, the power of believing is present in the intellect. Through this free power [the intellect both] can believe the one who reveals and can learn. And if the one who reveals at that time is the Word of God and if [the intellect] believes Him: then, without doubt, [the intellect] can by faith attain life, namely, the vision of the Father—[a vision] that brings happiness, as stated previously.

Therefore, nothing remained in the human intellectual nature that was cast out of Paradise except the power to believe. Through this power [the intellectual nature] can be enlightened and regenerated unto living hope.¹¹ Hence, [the intellect]—regenerated in baptism once the Word of God (namely, Christ) has been received through faith—has within itself the seed of divine knowledge and teachability, so that by the power of the Word [of God] it can advance toward the attainment of happiness. And note that the ignorance that is in the intellect from its origin is death, because [the intellect's] knowing its origin is life. Therefore, that knowing is understanding and is seeing and is eternal life—as Christ said: ‘This is life eternal: to see the Father and the Son.’¹²

[6] Therefore, after the seed of the word has been received, very great care must be taken that the seed, or word, not be removed by the birds of the sky,¹³ i.e., by the spirit of Satan, but that it be firmly implanted for bearing fruit. Now, [the seed] is made firm through separation from the lust of the world, i.e., by leaving the world behind and by entering mystically into the desert. Hence, when [the Christian] is in the desert and by means of fasting and vigils has now overcome the flesh, then a stronger Tempter (namely, Satan) is present. He tempts not with food and drink but with vainglory, as we are taught here [in the Gospel]. By the spirit that each Christian receives in regeneration, he is aroused to abandon the old life, which he has given up, and to make the old [man] obedient to, and subjected to, the new inner man. For in the old man the outer [man] (namely, the sensory [man], which is mortal) dominated, and the inner [man] lost strength. In the new, Christlike [man] it is necessary that conversion be made, i.e., that the inner [man], having recovered strength through faith and trust in the Word of God, vanquish the outer [man]. Hence, it is necessary, first of

all, that the brute wildness be overcome, so that it becomes tame; and this [taming] is accomplished by means of vigils and abstinence, as a hawk is brought under control. Next, greediness is brought under control through works of mercy—and likewise with every other evil state of the bestial life. These [states] are removed by a medicinal-[like] art, with the evil states having been changed into their opposites by means of continued habituation, so that now no rebellion remains in the outer man.

[7] Then after the passions (which did not allow the inner man to contemplate in peace) have been pacified, [and after] the intellectual nature is made freer from its earlier state of being overwhelmed and [after it] has been restored to its own state of freedom, the Tempter approaches, as in the Gospel-text. For Satan knows that no one—unless he is the Son of God—can be freed from subjection to him. And when [Satan] experiences that he cannot by means of the old man turn a man away from worship of God, he wonders whether [that man] might be the Son of God. For that the sons of men would have nothing of the disposition that has come down to their nature from Adam: this fact cannot be due to anything else than that the men who are thus elevated unto [such] a spiritual life are led by a holier spirit. [8] [Satan] tries to know this¹⁴ directly and indirectly, so that he may find it out. Thus, with regard to Christ—in whom Satan saw many signs that He was the Messiah promised in the Scriptures (of which he was not ignorant)—Satan attempted to know whether He was the Son of God. [He attempted to ascertain this] directly by means of the first temptation: [namely, the temptation] to turn stones into bread.¹⁵ And [he attempted] a second time [by means of the temptation] to remove weight from a heavy object by [Christ's] hurling Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple.¹⁶ And because Satan did not succeed in these [temptations], he had recourse to worldly glory—as if to say:

There is no one among the men of this world who would not worship me in order to obtain rulership over this world and [to receive] the glory of this world. If Christ is a man belonging to this world, he desires to be king of the world; and he will worship me in order to obtain his desire. If he will not care to have this world's glory, it is a sign that he is from another region, namely, from Heaven.

By way of illustration: A lion among lions wills to be in control. And so, suppose that someone said to a lion that had a rational spirit that he would make the lion to be king of the lions if the lion would obey him. And [suppose that] the lion had no interest in this [offer]. [Then this

lack of interest] would be a sign that the lion had, beneath the shape of a lion, a different spirit that was of a different region and of a different species (namely, of the human species). In a similar way Satan learned that Christ is the Son of God and is not of this world.¹⁷

“Then the Devil left Him.”¹⁸

I recall that elsewhere I have spoken extensively enough about how it is that he who is situated as a new convert to the Christian religion makes progress by means of temptations, just as in the schools those who aspire to mastery [of a subject-matter] prepare themselves through diligent study in order in a test-situation not to be defeated by sophistical arguments but to be found able and armed. So, too, [it happens] in the Christian army.

Let enough have been now said about this [topic].

[9] But note that it is not [always] from an object that someone is tempted—as Satan tempted Christ—who presumes to think that he has been made holy in the desert of penitence so that he works miracles and does so of his own power. This [presumptiveness] is assuredly a great temptation; for Satan, in order to seduce people, sometimes invisibly causes the [situations] into which they are led, so that they think that they have worked miracles and are holy and in this way are glorified—but they are deceived. For example, Pharaoh's magicians made serpents and frogs.¹⁹ Not they themselves but Satan [did this], so that they would think that they were of no less holiness than was Moses. And this [kind of] temptation is especially dangerous and is hard to recognize. Therefore, we are taught in this Gospel-passage that the Christian religion is as follows: that we are never to deem ourselves holy and to presume that some [feat] that exceeds nature is an attestation of our holiness. However, if for God's glory, not our own, something unusual and above the course of nature is demanded to be done for the edification of the Church, then we are to recur to God with the devout prayer that He manifest His will to us. Moreover, we ought always to fear that the Tempter is present, who asks that stone be turned into bread, and [that] it is not God [who asks]. Moreover, as we are taught here [in Scripture], we ought always to fear not only *that we be tempted* but also *that we tempt God*. For Satan tempts [us] to be led to tempting God.

[10] And so, commonly-performed purifications by means of which God is tempted are forbidden. And take note: Satan has prompted the belief that these purifications, [done] with prior exorcisms, are

for finding the truth with regard to dubious matters. In these purifications, too, the same Devil is cursed and God is invoked. Thus, by means of such subtlety [Satan] introduced a way that Christians would tempt God and would be deceived. [They would be deceived] not with regard to the reality that they were seeking where they would experience truth, but with regard to their souls, which were provoking God by tempting [Him].

[11] And perhaps that temptation of which it is spoken in the Lord's Prayer²⁰ can be called a dangerous temptation. For God, who is not a tempter,²¹ seems to lead us into temptation. For [instances thereof occur] through the prayers and sacrifices that we offer to God in order that He make known to us, through [the ordeal of] cold water, an adulteress when she warms the water—or [in order that He make known to us] innocence by means of a glowing hot piece of iron that does not burn the one who is carrying it, and by means of a duel in which not the stronger but the more just wins—and [other things] of this sort. We experience that such things do in fact happen. [And] we judge that we have been heard by God, whom we have offended by tempting Him.²²

[12] Many speak as follows: "I saw the result; I heard the good and holy words: Why was I not the cause [of the wondrous result]?" If God is tempted, do not you [be the one to] do it. He is tempted at the time when you wish to experience (by the foregoing means) whether on account of these even good and irreproachable words such a result occurs. God ought not to be tempted [simply] in order that you may experience His power or wisdom or truth. As we say in the vernacular: "*Wir wollen versuchen, ob es war sey*": "We want to experience whether it is true." This [putting God to the test] is not permitted. Rather, God must be asked to help in case of necessity—[to help] even miraculously when nature fails and recourse cannot be had to human aid. Nevertheless, we must always add—as did Christ on the Mount of Olives—"Thy will be done."²³ And [God's will ought] to be received as grace, whether God grants [our request] or not.

And you know that God ought not to be 'constrained' through temptation but through prayer. And this ['constraining'] seems to be a certain coincidence of opposites—namely, [the coincidence] that prayer is 'constraint'. God is 'constrained' by the importunate insistence of the one who prays, just as the importunate woman procured vindication from the judge.²⁴ Christ taught through [the example of]

this woman how greatly efficacious is the persistence of prayer on the part of a true believer. And James the Apostle teaches us by the example of Elijah.²⁵

[13] Then, thirdly, we ought to know that the Prince of [this] world²⁶ promises earthly things and that he gives only to one who worships him. Lo, since Christ the Savior does not give to believers-in-Him who ask for those things that are harmful to the salvation of the soul, then Satan is immediately present and offers these things to them. But just as no one is made a follower of Christ except him who renounces the Devil, so the Devil does not deem a Christian to be a follower of himself unless [the Christian] goes against the faith given to Christ. Therefore, necessarily, every evil-doer—once God has been renounced—binds himself to the Devil through open or secret agreements. And we have many experiences of this fact.

[14] But because of those old women with a sash who are held captive [by Satan], it must be known that before Christ's advent the Devil—the Prince of darkness²⁷ and of deceptions—had various religions of Satanic deception, just as under Christ, who is Light, there are today various religions and orders. But there have remained remnants of many evil sects—[remnants] that have not yet been fully weeded out. And for this reason—as says a certain commentator in the gloss on the word of the Apostle Paul to the Romans (“Do not judge beforehand”):²⁸ Judgment is deferred until the end-time because the inventors of the magical arts and of idolatry and of other vices have left behind certain seeds, i.e., [certain] men imitating their contrivances. These men do not cease imitating those men as long as the world lasts. And so, the judgments of God cannot be finished before the end of the world.

[15] Therefore, I understand that such contrivers, if they were judged before the end of the world, would be judged before the time of their completed wickedness. Among these diabolical contrivances is the deception on the part of Diana, who, as is read in the Acts of the Apostles,²⁹ had a very lavish temple in Ephesus. There are [today] still secret observers—men and women—of Diana. They propose ... to make merry on certain nights together with Diana, whom they worship as the goddess of fortune. Moreover, her faithful worshippers are called, in the vernacular, “*holden*” because of *Huldam*, i.e., homage (*homagium*), offered to her. And regarding the ways and the foolishness of this sect it is better to be silent.

As concerns the evil-deeds that are done by women and men in the work of Satan, see the tractate published from a report by Peter, Judge in Bern, [Switzerland]. Moreover, hold it for certain (1) that all these secret sects are contrary to the faith of Christ and (2) that the ‘Magistrellum’—thus they call Satan—does all things at their insistence in accordance with [his] agreements [with them]. [And hold it for certain that Satan] cannot cause harm unless God permits it. For when invoked, Satan tried to bring about storms or sickness or hatreds and loves but could not succeed when these persons were [Christian] believers and true members of Christ, because against Christ and His members the power of Satan cannot at all avail.

[16] At the beginning of [the Book of] Job we read that the Devil has as much power over all things—in particular, over the wind, men, cattle, bodies, and other things—as God permits.³⁰ But why does God permit it? Surely, it is because Christ says “He who is not with me is against me.”³¹ There are so many wretched unbelievers—very great sinners—being not only turned away from Christ but being also His defiant adversaries, who are not under God's protection. And they abound especially in these regions where Christ is worshiped not as the Savior of souls but only as Giver and Conserver of temporal things. [And] this is idolatry and blasphemy, since Christ's Kingdom is not of this world.³² Hence, these insane deceptions hold sway. You know to what end Christ and all the saints and the feast-days (and whatever [other] such things) are commonly honored in these mountains. Is it not especially so that there may be had those things which are of the life of this world as regards agricultural produce and beasts? Next, note that where men believe that these evil practices are done efficaciously, *there* there are found many evil-doers; and the latter cannot be eliminated by fire and sword, because the more diligently persecution of this kind is made, the more the false belief spreads. For persecution shows that the Devil is more feared than is God and that by means of bad men he can inflict bad things. And, at length, the Devil, who is so feared, is appeased; and thus he obtains what he intended to.

[17] Hence, although [such worship of Diana] ought to be altogether eradicated in accordance with divine and human ordinances, nevertheless [it must be done] cautiously and with great prudence lest something worse happen, as Augustine writes to Count Bonifacius asking that there be cessation from persecution of the Donatists.³³

Moreover, it sometimes happens amid persecution that some innocent person is killed because of the hatred for those who are persecuting the evil-doers. And in this way the Devil brings to death so many who are concurring [with the persecution]; and thus he deceives and guides some foolish old woman, so that she is taken for an evil-doer and is slain. And God permits it because of these sins; and thereafter there follow very great ills because of the death of innocent blood. And so, one must be especially careful, lest by willing to get rid of evil, evil is accumulated.

[18] I have examined two of the [three] old women and have found them to be half-demented, who did not know perfectly the creed of faith. They say that the good governess, [namely, Diana], came at night and has a chariot in which she is driven and that she is well-dressed in the manner of a woman. They did not see her face, because she hides it so that it cannot be seen from the side because of certain protrusions of a certain semi-circular ornament applied to the ears. They say that she has rough hands, because she touched the women on the jaw, and they felt [her hand] to be rough. And they had to go in front of her³⁴ chariot when they were touched; and they promised obedience to her and [promised] that they would keep away from Christianity. And thus they came to a place where they found a large group of jubilant and singing people, where there were rough men who devoured some men and boys who were not rightly baptized. And [the old women say] that at all four seasons they assembled in this way for some years. But most recently when they correctly made the sign of the Cross, [these visitors] did not come.

[19] I sensed that these decrepit and demented women were deceived because of greed. For they made some vows to that Diana, whom they say to be *Fortuna*, giving her the name “Ricchella” in their Italian language. This [name] signifies, perhaps, so much as ‘Mother of riches’ or ‘Happiness’. And [the old women] say that [Diana] has a rough hand because commonly by means of a vigorous hand-[shake] an agreement is struck, or a contract concluded, for the purchase of a worthwhile thing; [and] therewith [there is] a prayer for a happy outcome. [And I sensed] that the Devil in this way deceived these greedy old women, to whom he suggested in their sleep these things which they think actually to have happened, as is read in the Life of St. Germanus.

Hence, I recalled the women from error; and they will make

public penance and will be sequestered until we see what is expedient to be done for the correcting of other similar [misguided women].

NOTES TO *Haec Omnia Dabo Tibi**

*Sermon CCLXXI.

1. Matthew 4:9.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. I Corinthians 15:45-47.
4. Matthew 4:11.
5. Matthew 3:16.
6. Nicholas follows Eckhart in speaking of the birth of Christ in the believer's soul.
7. Hebrews 1:3.
8. Genesis 3:8.
9. Colossians 1:16.
10. Matthew 11:27.
11. I Peter 1:3.
12. Cf. John 17:3: "Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (Douay version).
13. Mark 4:4.
14. I.e., Satan tries to discover whether one can resist temptation or not, so as to ascertain whether that one is the Son of God.
15. Matthew 4:3.
16. Matthew 4:6.
17. John 8:23.
18. Matthew 4:11.
19. Exodus 7:9-12 and 8:1-7.
20. Matthew 6:13.
21. James 1:13.
22. Matthew 4:7.
23. Matthew 26:42.
24. Luke 18:2-8.
25. James 5:17-18.
26. The Prince of this world is Satan. John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11. When Nicholas says "thirdly" (in the passage above), it is not clear what specific points he means to designate as first and second.
27. Note Ephesians 6:12 and Colossians 1:13.
28. I Corinthians 4:5 (not Romans).
29. Acts 19:23-29.
30. Job 1:9-12.
31. Matthew 12:30.
32. John 18:36.
33. Augustine, *Epistola* 189, n. 4-6 (*PL* 33:855-856).
34. Here at **18**:11 I am correcting, grammatically, "suum" to "eius", as does the Paris printed edition.

Domine, Adiuva Me*
("Lord, Help Me")¹
[March 13, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Lord, help me."²

A Canaanite woman, saying the following theme-words, had recourse to the Savior: "Lord, help me." The Lord is Christ Himself, who is truly the Lord of nature and the Giver of grace. He is the One who helps believers. The one who wants to obtain His help must approach Him. And note that when situated in front of Him, she says: "Help me." She seeks aid—[she] who does what she can and knows that she cannot finish [the task]. She approaches to that Lord whom, indeed, she believes can give the strength for finishing. To begin [to do] the good is [the role] of the human will or human spirit; but to perfect [the good] is [the role] of the Spirit of Christ.

[2] Today we take up the Epistle of Paul written by him to the Thessalonians, to whom he had preached. He asks and beseeches them that just as they received from him [instructions on] how they are to walk³ in order to please God—that so they would walk. And even if they were walking rightly, nevertheless he desired that they abound the more.⁴ This [Pauline] exhortation befits me with regard to you. For you have received from me as concerns how you ought to walk not [an admonition] through the instruction of *one* sermon or of *a few* [sermons] (as [had] the Thessalonians) but [an admonition] through *many* sermons. And certain of you have thus begun to walk; I ask that you abound the more.

[3] And if you have doubts about what God's intent is or about what pleases Him, I answer with Paul that the precepts that I have given you through Jesus show this [about God]. For the will of God is this: your sanctification, that you abstain from fornication and that each [of you] know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of desire, as [is true of] the Gentiles who do not know God.⁵ Take note of one thing! Let no one defraud his brother in any transaction. For the Lord is the Avenger of all these [affairs], as I have told you aforetime and have attested. For God has not called us to impurity but to sanctification. He who despises this [counsel] does not despise [just] man but also God, who has given His Spirit to us. These [precepts are] from Paul.⁶

[4] You know how it is necessary that you correct failings with respect to impurity and deceitfulness. And [you know] how great is the abuse stemming from your impurity. You abuse even your wives in accordance with your passionate desires, as do the Gentiles. For I fear to pollute my mouth and the [very] air if I were to speak of things that I know. I am utterly amazed that God allows to keep living us [human beings], who are worse than brute animals. And since we are [now] touching upon [the subject] that precepts of sanctification are given by Jesus, I will mention some things in regard thereto. That is, [I will mention] how it is that in Christ we are sanctified and that only through Jesus is there justification for the soul.

[5] Next, the Gospel instructs us that spiritual understanding is to be sought. Jesus said to the Apostles that He was sent only to the sheep that were perishing from the House of Israel.⁷ But, nevertheless, He hearkened to the Canaanite woman, whom He found to have faith [in Him]. Accordingly, the House of Israel is the Church of believers, where one lives in obedience to the one God. This religion promises immortality; for *there*, [i.e., in the Church], are safeguarded the precepts of the one God, who is the Rewarder of those who worship Him.⁸ And the reward is exceedingly great. Indeed, it cannot be greater; for [it is], namely, an infinite and immortal and eternal [reward]. And [the Church] is called the House of Israel because it is the congregation of those who see and fear God. For [the congregants] have eyes directed toward Him,⁹ as a handmaiden [has] eyes directed toward her master. [6] This [Christian] religion was instituted in a holy way. It was not written on tablets [of stone] or on pieces of parchment; rather, [it was] imprinted on the rational mind, as the Prophet said: “The light of Your Countenance, O Lord, is imprinted on us.”¹⁰ This is the light that enlightens the mind as to how to obey God and as to what it ought to do to please God. And only the lucid word of God enlightens and gives understanding. The word of God infuses (*loquitur*) into the mind the light of God’s Countenance and speaks (*loquitur*) the word by means of which God’s Face, i.e., a knowledge of Him, is made manifest. But the man who is deceived by the spirit of error, as will be said, has departed and veered away through disobedience.

[7] In the end, God sent His Son (namely, the Word and Light of His Countenance), in the assumed human nature, for visiting and reforming those who were perishing.¹¹ And although this religion prevailed in Jerusalem and among the special people of God, nevertheless

Christ the Visitor admitted to [the presence of] God all who from the Gentiles came to the profession [of Christ] that is made by faith. And lest the statutes of a certain simple visitor and precursor of Christ (the true Legate), namely, Moses, be a hindrance that all would come to the religion, Christ Himself bore all those [requirements] which seemed unbearable. And He was unwilling that they be obligatory but [willed] that there be only obligation in the substantial matters of the religion—even as [the religion] was instituted from the beginning and was imprinted on the rational spirit, or mind, with regard to faith and to love of God and neighbor.¹² And this was the perfect reforming on the part of that Legate, because He reduced [the requirements] to the first form of the law-of-nature,¹³ which is [the law] of the mind or spirit. [He did this] so that both faith and obedience would be spiritual, i.e., would be alive with the spirit of love. Hence, we are taught that some [members] of the House of God, or religion of God (which Christ the Visitor presides over with fullness of power as Legate of God the Father), perish and die. Nevertheless, Christ comes to their aid, since He restores them. For He would not have been sent to those who were perishing unless He were able to heal [them] and to restore [them].

[8] Next, we know that by faith without merit salvation is obtained.¹⁴ The Canaanite woman, who did not have the Mosaic Law and who did not perform its works, obtained the fulfillment of her desire through great faith. Moreover, we know that the bread of the sons of God is the power of Christ, the only begotten Son of God; for they are fed from that power. And Christ's power transports souls unto itself in order that they may be alive by the life of Him who is the Son of God—even as bread, being by nature without life, is transformed into the living animal and even as the bread at the altar is transformed supernaturally into the living Body of Christ. I propose to say some things, briefly and summarizingly, about all these matters, in order that I may preach Christ more devoutly.

[9] Now, first, we must consider that the rational soul of the Christian can have many curable infirmities that have not yet corrupted the faith (which is the substance of the life of the believer) but which have well weakened and diminished the soul by means of distraction to things worldly. Hence, the believing soul can be infirm; and as long as it recognizes that it is infirm, there still lives in it the spirit of knowing. [The believing soul] approaches the word of life that is hidden in Sacred Scripture, and it receives the word as a salutary med-

ication from a physician or healer who is Christ's representative. Thereupon the word of truth that has been received frees the soul, even as a teacher's word of truth frees an infirm intellect from the ignorance that beclouds it and that imprisons it in darkness. Hence, just as a herb does not cure a physical illness except by means of an invisible power which lies hidden beneath the visible color and shape, so Scripture does not free the infirm soul through its outward appearance or visible letters or shapes but through the invisible power that lies hidden beneath the letter[s]. The intellect sees this power by means of faith in Christ, just as a physician sees the power of a herb by means of faith in Hippocrates; for¹⁵ he believes Hippocrates, who has revealed to him the herb's power.

[10] Moreover, note that the following difference is seen between the Gospel and other sacred writings: [namely], that they all attempt to reveal the power of God's wisdom and God's word but in the Gospel the word of God reveals itself. When in a book of medicine mention is made that a preparation cures and when the preparation is offered to you, you believe that the power that lies hidden beneath the visible preparation is that which cures you. So, too, understand [a similar thing] about Christ. For Sacred Scripture, which speaks about the medicine for the soul, says that Christ is the Medicine for the soul.¹⁶ Understand this only as regards the power that lies hidden beneath the visible object. For the invisible and incorruptible remedy of the soul is of an incorruptible and eternal nature. And that power of Christ is divine, freeing souls from ignorance and blindness (as when it made of laymen evangelists) and straightening and justifying bent souls and calming delirious souls, and so on.

[11] And because I have spoken elsewhere on [this same] text of the Gospel and on [this same] text of the Epistle, I wish now to preach about the Lord Christ more deeply. In order [for me to] do so, it must be noted that a Christian's soul that is held in mortal sin [is] like a depicted icon of Christ or a statue of Christ. For that statue of Christ has Christ's name; but it has eyes and does not see, has ears and does not hear, has feet and does not walk. Likewise, the soul amid all its mortal sins is deprived of its senses. It lacks sight, because it cannot see God, whom only those who have a pure heart are accustomed to contemplate, as it is written: "Blessed [are those] with a pure heart, for they shall see God."¹⁷ It does not hear, because it spurns hearing the word of God. It has no sense of smell, because it is indifferent to the

good fragrance of Christ. It is deprived of taste, refusing to taste of the pleasantness of the word [of God]. It lacks touch, because it does not want to make contact with the word of life. [12] Our Redeemer, coming into the world, found the human race to be such, i.e., to be in mortal sins and to be, with respect to all [five] senses, like unsensing statues. As the Psalmist says: “The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold.”¹⁸ And he said the remainder [of the words] with respect to all the senses’ being nullified: “Let those who make these [idols] become like them.”¹⁹ Accordingly, I say that those who in name [but] not in spirit are Christians, [and] who do not worship God in spirit and in truth,²⁰ are rightly likened to those statues of Christ which outwardly bear a certain image of the bodily form of Christ but lack life and spirit.

[13] Hence, in order that you may understand me, I am speaking about the spirit and about the inner man, in accordance with which we are supposed to be Christians. For that inner man, which does not age but always remains beyond time during all ages of the outer man, can be like Christ. I mean “like [Christ]” not with an exact likeness, which cannot be attained, but with a certain sequel that is other in each individual—as all human beings partake of the incorruptible form of humanity, although one human being [partakes] otherwise than does another. Therefore, this transformation by means of which a man is transformed in spirit, i.e., in the inner man, can always occur, other things being equal, as long as a human being is a human being. For just as the Lord who is Son of God put on the form of a servant,²¹ so too the servants who are descendants of Adam put on the form of the Lord in their baptism (where they are anointed with chrism of lotus), so that they are Christlike.

[14] But not all [Christians] preserve that [Christ-]likeness in spirit. For they are defunct in spirit (though the name [Christian] is maintained), but they are alive in the flesh.²² And this [defunct state] occurs because they do not know those things that are of the Spirit of God,²³ in accordance with which Spirit they are supposed to be Christians; but their conformity [to Christ] remains in a certain perceivable manner—just as is set forth about the image of the icon or statue, where there is the appearance of the outward form and a lack of an inner spirit. And if we view [the matter] rightly, the entire Christian religion, with a few exceptions, has deteriorated in appearance, just as we see to be the case with many religions where with many [of the adherents] only the outward garment has remained but nothing of the

spirit of the founder of the order.

[15] Among these idols we see some that are golden, some that are silver, some copper, some of tin, some of lead, some of iron, some of stone, some of wood, some of earth. For there are nine orders in this church-of-the-wicked (just as there are nine orders in the Church of those who are truly fighting for God). There are Christians in name, who bear an earthen image of Christ, i.e., a fleshly and sensual image. Their god is their belly.²⁴ And although they are called Christians, they are idolaters. For to the extent that Christ serves [a man's] belly, to that extent they love Him. Therefore, as says the Apostle, their belly is their god; and Christ is their Mediator.²⁵ For example, there are those who feign that they are humble and Christlike in order by this means to fulfill the desires of the flesh—as the do-gooder woman of whom Solomon says “Better is the iniquity of a man than is a do-gooder woman.”²⁶ For [the man] knows that virtue is loved; [but] the woman puts on a semblance of the virtue which Christ is, [doing so] in order to be loved and to be delighted with pleasures.

[16] Thus, there are Christians who bear a wooden image of Christ [and] who are centered on money and who give themselves over to greed. There are also Christians of stone, [who are] hard and unbending, without any mercy, having a hard heart. Likewise, [there are Christians] of iron, [who are] miserly; so too, [Christians] of lead, [who are] slothful; so too, of tin, [who are] lustful; of copper, [who are] flagrantly haughty; of silver, [who are] pedantic; of gold, [who are] vain. Hence, all these are lovers of themselves, and they make themselves the goal of their religion; and they use the form of Christ as a means for more readily obtaining the objects of their desires. By all of them Christ is worn as an image which deceivers wear. They are collectors of alms who display the cross and relics because of monetary gain. Against them Christ declares: “Woe unto you, Hypocrites!”²⁷ And He warns that they are to be avoided. They come in sheep's clothing but are ravenous wolves.²⁸ Hence, the [respective] inner man in all of them is without the divine Spirit; for their spirit is wolfish, i.e., bestial or animal [and] is of this perceptible world.

[17] But how are all these pseudo-Christians recognized? Jesus says: “by their fruits.”²⁹ For words and works show the spirit that is in a man. For no one can speak or work except through movement. But every movement arises from a moving spirit. Thus, things outer show the inner spirit. For example, the eye is the messenger of

the heart; lewd gestures, filthy words, an immodest eye display the fact that pleasures dominate the spirit. [18] Thus, we apprehend Christ to be in us if the movement of [our] spirit is so virtuous that [our spirit] regards vice with hatred, so that immoral movement is altogether abominable to it. Paul lists the fruits of the spirit: they are love, peace, and so on.³⁰ For Christ is Life that is Virtue.³¹ For justice, peace, truth, love, and every virtue is enfolded in that Virtue which is called the spirit of the life of Christ. Therefore, in whom Christ is present, in him is the Spirit of God, which moves only toward things eternal, incorruptible, and celestial. And this [life in which Christ is present] is true life. For truth remains forever. Hence the Virtue of the Spirit that moves toward the virtues, which are eternal, is a Fount of immortal life.

[19] Note, then, that the Word of God has in itself that Spirit—i.e., [that] Fount of life. And [the Word of God] separates our intellectual spirit, or rational spirit, by which faith is grasped [and] which is the image of [the Word of God]—separates it from the carnal desires of this mortal body. And [the Word of God] draws [the rational spirit] unto its own light so that it is freed from that servitude where it was serving death, i.e., corruptible desires. And it is made alive with divine life. For just as the body is enlivened by the life of the soul, so the soul [is enlivened] when it receives into itself the Spirit of the Word of God. Hence, the soul by means of adherence to the Spirit of Christ is made Christlike. For it passes into union with Virtue, to which it clings. For it is made one with justice by clinging to justice. The case is similar with respect to godliness. Likewise, with the Good: [the soul] that clings to the Good is made one with the Good. And so on, with regard to all the virtues. Hence, a just soul is one with the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of Justice.

[20] Someone might ask: “Since Christ is Virtue, is everyone who is *just* made *just* through Christ?” I reply that everyone just is made just in Christ through Justice, which Christ is. Likewise, someone can speak the truth but not *in Christ*,³² for example, the unclean spirit in those who were deranged spoke the truth that Jesus is the Christ but did not speak [the truth] in Christ,³³ because [the unclean spirit] did not have Christ’s form, which is the Virtue of virtues—i.e., did not have justice, peace, love, and the other virtues of Christ. A similar thing can be said about acting justly but not *in Christ*; similarly about peace-making but not in Christ.

[21] Hence, one who is to be made just through Justice, which is Christ, must be Christlike, so that he sets before himself Christ in all His virtues and does all things in imitation of Him, in order to become Christlike. He believes that in this way he can attain unto sonship with God if he imitates Christ, whom he does not doubt to be both the Goal of virtues and the Son of God. In his every virtuous work he worships Christ, whom alone he strives to imitate as true just-making Justice and life-giving Life. But he who does the works of a just man but not to the end that was mentioned but in order to seem just or to be just—such a one is not made just so that he merits to be a co-heir with Christ,³⁴ namely, to be a son of God. And his is not true justice because it is not justice in Christ, who is Truth.

[22] Moreover, someone might ask: “Was not Adam situated on the pathway of true justice?” I answer that it is so. For by the very fact that he was created and had received a rational spirit, he found in that spirit a natural law, i.e., a pathway of justice. This is the law to the effect that the known God be worshiped. Moreover, this [natural] law shows that good practices differ from bad ones and that good ones are to be chosen—i.e., not to do to another what one does not want done to himself. And [the natural law] is teachable. Because of the fact that [the natural law] is understood by his companions, he knows that it had to be revealed. And this law of rational nature is the pathway of justice and so is the Word of God, or is Christ, who says that He is the Way.³⁵ For He is the Way of Peace and of Justice. Hence, this law is written in the rational spirit³⁶ and is the image of the Word of God, even as the law written on a tablet imitates the concept or word of a law-giver. But the Devil, cast out by the Word of God, envied the Word for ruling over the rational human creature. For the Word ruled over [man] when He governed and man complied with this governance. Likewise, [the Devil] also envied the well-being of men because obedience to that [divine] mandate was the life of the spirit. Hence, [the Devil] tried to subjugate to himself the first man, in whom was the source of human propagation. And through the first man’s subjugation [the Devil sought to subjugate] all of man’s posterity. And [he attempted] this by turning man aside from a consideration of that law of nature and by turning him toward close attention to those things that are of this world, in which man is physically situated.

[23] And so, [the Devil] has seduced man, whom he has kept busy with continued allurements with regard to worldly desires until he

has removed from [man's] memory the teaching of God, or word of God, or that natural law. And so, [man], having neglected the command of God, lost the way of Justice. Therefore, the whole human race was corrupted in Adam, so that human desire is infected, so that those things which it sees and which are temporal it loves more eagerly than things invisible and eternal. And this [outcome] is a certain general idolatry [that man became] persuaded of by the Devil; for [the Devil] was obeyed rather than was God.

[24] Thereafter, divine godliness—wanting to renew this abolished natural law (namely, the law of justice) by a written law lest [the natural law] vanish through inattention on the part of sinners—promulgated through Moses a written law as an aid to that natural law. But the Devil, when the opportunity arose, made that written law also to be transgressed. And so, the law, because of transgression, was the occasion for more sinning.³⁷ For men who had already contracted an evil disposition were rendered slower to observe the written law; and there was not so much power in the legal precepts that [the written law] could remove sin and make just.

[25] Hence, in the end, there remained only that the Law of the Spirit, i.e., the Word of God, would come, who, [coming] with a human nature, would free man from the governance of the Adversary of truth. For as long as this [freeing] was not accomplished, man was held under the Adversary's jurisdiction and was not able to free himself from servitude to him and to return to the pathway of justice. And so, there came this very Word of God which speaks the law of nature within the rational spirit. And He assumed a human nature, in which [form] He conquered the Prince of this world. For the Son of man, in whom there was the virtue of God,³⁸ came into existence not by way of propagation from Adam. For He was so virtuous that he was not able to be more virtuous, so that He was Virtue itself [and] Victor over the Evil One, beyond all nature and grace. But how He conquered, You have heard at a previous time.

[26] But you will note one thing in particular: Christ—who either is this Word of God or is He in whom this word of God is present, i.e., [in whom is present] the law of life and law of nature, or the law of the rational spirit—was without any stain or sin. In His purity and ultimate perfection, than which there could not be a greater perfection, He came in the likeness of other men, who were sinners. Hence, the Prince of [this] world, since he is Sin, which reigns over

every sinner, claimed a certain subjection to himself in the case of all descendants from Adam, who sinned similarly as did Adam. Thus, man—who is not condemned unjustly by the justice of God (because he willingly sinned, freely constituting himself a servant of sin, of death, and of the Devil)—was not unjustly possessed by Satan.

[27] But when the Devil extended his authority over Christ (who was subject to the Devil by no law) and brought about His being killed (as if He who was Justice itself were unjust and were one of the Devil's own), then he committed this sin by abusing his authority. For this reason he justly lost authority over all those who are Christ's.³⁹ Now, those are Christ's in whom the will of Christ is alive—namely, those who have received Him as the Son of God⁴⁰ and who faithfully obey [Him] as such [i.e., as Son of God]. And they have been made partakers in the merit of His death, which was of benefit to no one who did not understand the law in a spiritual sense.

[28] And the following is the judgment of the Apostle, saying in Romans, Chapter 8: “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh [and] for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”⁴¹ According to a splendid short expository work by an unknown author and according to Augustine (as is recorded in the text of [Peter Lombard's] *Sentences*, Book 3, Distinction 3): Because of the sin committed against Him, [Christ] condemned Sin, i.e., condemned the Adversary of salvation, so that the justification of the law of nature (which is connected to the spiritual law) might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.⁴²

[29] Someone might perhaps say: “From the foregoing [statements] it seems that the law of Moses is a law that renews the law of nature.” I answer in accordance with the understanding of the already-mentioned brief expository work: The law of Moses is threefold because in it are contained three laws: namely, a spiritual law, a law of renewal, and a law of the sabbath and of things ceremonial. Regarding the spiritual law there is written: “Hear, O Israel, your God is one God.”⁴³ This pertains only to the divinity. The law of renewal is [a law] that renews and reforms the law of nature [and] which also causes to be known as sin with punishment that which was not thought to be sin. For because of a contrary custom that was introduced, [the sin] was regarded as not being sin—as if God were unconcerned because God did not punish transgressors. For sin is thus known through the law, which declares that if perchance someone would have escaped present

punishment, he could not escape future punishment.

[30] But God's justice, which by another name is called mercy, is manifested not apart from the spiritual law but apart from the law of retribution (i.e., the law of renewal) and the law of the sabbath. [God's justice] has no communication with the latter [two laws], because those whom the law of retribution ordered to condemn, these God's justice ordered to set free. But, nevertheless, [God's justice] was manifested by the law, because the law and the prophets foretold that Christ would come.⁴⁴ And so, Christ came, having been sent by the Father (1) so that God the Father would be seen to be just, keeping the promises that He made, and (2) so that Christ would redeem those whom the Father mercifully tolerated as sinners. [31] For God had determined to send Christ as Propitiator, i.e., so that through Christ there would be propitiation for the human race by [Christ's] blood, i.e., by [His] suffering. And this [rescuing would be] by faith, because salvation would be hoped for by those having faith, as is evident in the case of the thief on the cross⁴⁵ and of Mary the sinner⁴⁶ and of others who were justified. For we do not read that they were justified by works that preceded [their justification] but only by faith [in-]formed [by love].⁴⁷

[32] You might ask: "Who, then, are the believers that are justified?" I reply that they are those who are in Christ, namely, those who do not follow carnal desires. No condemnation can happen to them. And to be in Christ is to persist in all the virtues. Christ *is* Virtue; Satan is vice and sin. Christ is Humility; when this virtue comes, pride must yield and give way to it. If pride is present, it occupies the place of humility. Where hatred reigns, love has no place. Where envy remains, mercy lacks room. Therefore, the vices must be gotten rid of so that the virtues can have room. The vices are the Canaanites who could not easily be dislodged from the land of Israel. God was able to dispel them in a moment, but He did not will to, because of His testing and proving the children of Israel.

[33] And, hence, according to the teaching of Paul⁴⁸ and according to the aforementioned short expository work, there is a spirit of life (i.e., of truth) and a spirit of death (i.e., of error). The spirit of life seeks a place for itself in the intellectual soul by expelling the spirit of death, which occupies those places and vigorously defends its possession, strengthening itself in long-standing habit. But Christ, the Victor over death, says: "If you heed my words, you will know the

truth, and the truth shall make you free.”⁴⁹ And the Apostle states that the spirit of life sets free;⁵⁰ [and he] shows that there is a single setting-free on the part of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the word of God is apprehended by faith; and if it is adhered to, truth will be known. Truth is what frees the intellect from sin and from death due to sin, i.e., from error and ignorance. For the spirit of life, which is the spirit of truth, descends unto that intellectual soul, where truth is known.

[34] Lastly, I will touch very briefly upon how it is that the soul in which Christ only is present is justified and enlivened as if it were [previously] an icon without life. The Apostle states that Christ arose for the sake of our justification.⁵¹ For when Christ is present in us (as bread that outwardly has the form of Christ) and Christ arises (i.e., because the bread is transsubstantiated so that it becomes the living Christ), then justification, life, peace, and every virtue arise in us. For Christ arises in us because of our justification—we who are justified by His resurrection. [35] See! The believer, in whom Christ arises, arises from the dead. The sacrament of the Eucharist has Christ’s form; for *there* there is enlivening spiritual life that is attained by faith. Therefore, in a soul that was dead: faith, holding onto Christ, is resurrected unto life apart from living works, so that it becomes living faith. And this resurrection occurs by means of the resurrection of Christ, who is made alive in us. But it occurs in the manner in which a priest transforms bread into Christ. For the priest, through confession, is cleansed from mortal sin and obtains God’s mercy—as is explained at length in the office of the mass.

[36] In this respect the Christian is a priest⁵² [and] proceeds in the foregoing way. For he will obtain by means of mystical prayers the result that Christ transforms his soul (which has lacked rational and divine life) into the life of the spirit of Christ, just as the priest at the altar obtains by faith and mystical prayers that the material bread is transformed into the living Body of Christ. And after this has been done—namely, that the Christian has passed (in accordance with the inner man) into the life of the spirit of Christ—then that immaculate Lamb gives peace and rest. For Christ, who is blessed forever,⁵³ is Peace⁵⁴ and vital Rest, making us eternally happy.

NOTES TO *Domine, Aduva Me**

*Sermon CCLXXII.

1. Matthew 15:25.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. That is, they are to act in order to please God.
4. I Thessalonians 4:1.
5. I Thessalonians 4:3-5.
6. I Thessalonians 4:6-8.
7. Matthew 15:24. At 5:4 in the text above I am reading, with mss. *L* and *D* “perierunt” in place of “perierant”.
8. Hebrews 11:6.
9. Psalms 24:15 (25:15).
10. Psalms 4:7, Douay translation.
11. Here at 7:26-27 I am reading “perierunt” in place of “perierant”. See Matthew 15:24.
12. Matthew 22:36-40.
13. Luke 6:31. Romans 2:14.
14. Galatians 2:16.
15. Here at 9:23 I am reading, with ms. *L*, “enim” in place of “tamen”.
16. No explicit text in Scripture is identifiable. But see Matthew 8:17 and John 6:51-59.
17. Matthew 5:8.
18. Psalms 113:[b]4 (115:4).
19. Psalms 113:[b]8 (115:8).
20. John 4:24.
21. Philippians 2:7.
22. Romans 8:12-13.
23. I Corinthians 2:14.
24. Philippians 3:19.
25. That is, they regard Christ as their Mediator insofar as Christ serves their purpose.
26. Ecclesiasticus 42:14.
27. Matthew 23:13.
28. Matthew 7:15.
29. Matthew 7:16.
30. Galatians 5:22.
31. John 14:6.
32. Romans 9:1.
33. Mark 3:11-12.
34. Romans 8:17. Nicholas seems to be saying that one who seeks to be just simply in order to be just and not in order to be Christlike does not merit to be a co-heir with Christ. Like the Pharisees, he is focused on self-righteousness.
35. John 14:6.
36. Romans 2:14-15.
37. Romans 7:7-10.

38. Because He was not propagated by the power of the Adamic nature, He was free of original sin, teaches Nicholas (as does also Anselm). See my article "Nicholas of Cusa's Intellectual Relationship to Anselm of Canterbury," pp. 54–73 in Peter J. Casarella, editor, *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance*. Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006.

39. Nicholas here repeats the gist of Augustine's Devil-Ransom theory. See also Sermon CCLXXVIII (3 7).

40. John 1:12.

41. Romans 8:3.

42. Romans 8:4.

43. Deuteronomy 6:4.

44. Acts 28:23.

45. Luke 23:39-43.

46. Luke 7:37-50.

47. Galatians 5:6.

48. Romans 8:2.

49. John 8:31-32.

50. See n. 48 above.

51. Romans 4:25.

52. Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:6.

53. Romans 9:5.

54. Ephesians 2:14.

Ut Filii Lucis Ambulate*
("Walk as Children of the Light")¹
[March 20, 1457; preached in Brixen]

PART ONE

[1] "Walk as children of the Light." Ephesians 5.

The Apostle stated: Inasmuch as the Ephesians received the spirit of God whereby they were sealed when they received faith in Christ (and [the Apostle] calls that day the Day of Redemption), then [the following is true]: In them there ought not to be the emotions of bitterness, anger, indignation, clamor, and blasphemy with any malice. Rather, [the Ephesians] ought to be kind, merciful, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven us.² For these [latter] dispositions arise from a good Spirit, which is the Spirit of God, who is Goodness itself.

Next comes: "Be, then, followers of God as very beloved children"³—i.e., [followers] of God in Christ. Very beloved children follow their most excellent Father.

[2] Now, Christ is the Beloved Son, in whom the Father takes utmost delight.⁴ Therefore, in and through the Son of God we who desire to be very beloved children ought to take steps to please the Father. For if we are followers of Christ, we do the will of the Father. Christ is the Image of God the Father, namely, is that Perfect Image (as Origen says with regard to Roman 8, where it is stated that those who are predestined are made conformable to the Image of Christ)⁵ which receives God as a whole and entirely and has formed Him within itself. [That Image] must be called Jesus's soul, which has adapted itself in all respects to the Word and Wisdom of God, so that in no respect at all does it differ from Likeness to God. Thus, each [believer, in his image of God,] tends toward the Supreme Image and Likeness of that Perfection and Beauty that, in first place and above all other [individuals], the Image of the Son of God is, so that He is the Firstborn among many brethren.⁶ These things [says] Origen.

[3] But is Christ two images: namely, created and uncreated? It ought to be said that He is not; rather, the [so-called] created image is uncreated. Therefore, to imitate Christ is to be conformed to Him and to be directed toward His perfection in all the respects in which He

is [perfect]—He who is Justice, Sanctification, and the other virtues, as [spoken of] in the same place.⁷ For [Christ] says: “Learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”⁸ He says “in heart” in order that we may understand the spirit of a man’s life, i.e., the rational soul. The spirit is the impulse of life. Therefore, when in accordance with the rational spirit (which can learn and can obtain perfection) we receive the likeness of Christ (namely, meekness and humility), then we find rest there where the reception of virtue [occurs], namely, in our souls.

[4] Elsewhere [Jesus] says: “I have given you an example that as I have done, so you do also.”⁹ If, then, we wish to learn the doctrine that gives rest (i.e., happiness) to our souls, we ought to act according to the example handed down to us by the Teacher of this doctrine. For this doctrine consists not in words but in imitation. For if someone knew all the Gospel-passages by heart, he would not for that reason be perfect. Rather, there is required that he put on, through imitating, the form of the Son of God. But he who follows Christ as [Christ’s] minister in whom the will of the Lord lives—he shall be where Christ is.¹⁰ Hence, the ministering is a *following* or an *imitating*. And so, [Jesus] says: “He who ministers to me, let him follow me.”¹¹ By means of this declaration it is evident that no one who does not know Christ is made perfectly virtuous. For whom one does not know he cannot follow. Now, Christ is the Exemplar-form which only perfects and makes happy by means of that happiness by which one comes to sonship and to possession of the King’s heritage and of the immortal Kingdom.

[5] Note that the Apostle speaks of *followers*¹² of God. And thus he names Christ *God*. For since Christ is God and a man we ought to follow Him in every manner possible to us. Christ says: “Be merciful because your Father is merciful. Therefore, the respect in which we are to follow Christ is the respect in which Christ is the same thing as the Father. The Father is merciful; so, too, Christ is merciful—not by means of a different mercy but by means of the very same mercy. Therefore, if we wish to be children of God the Father, who is merciful—and who is so merciful that He is Mercy—then we must be merciful. For only the merciful can be children of Mercy. A similar point holds true regarding all the other virtues: namely, justice, sanctity, truth, and each of the others.

[6] But in and through Christ, the Son of God, we know how it is that we are to follow God. [For] Christ has revealed this teaching

to us in word and in deed. He says *imitators*, [or *followers*], because we cannot by means of [Christ's] teaching increase to the point that we are equal to God. For supreme equality that cannot be more equal is consubstantiality. And so, [consubstantiality] is not attained from acquired-perfection but from begottenness. Therefore, only the Son, who is consubstantial with the Father, is in all respects equal to the Father. And because equality befits the Son, He is the Exemplar.¹³ As concerns perfection, the exemplification aims at equality with the teacher, or exemplar, because *there*, [i.e., in the exemplar], there is [found] the perfecting form or sufficing form. For it is sufficient for every student that he become like his teacher; i.e., [he is satisfied] if he attains equality-of-likeness with the exemplar. Therefore, God in Christ is set before us in order that we may imitate Him who is King of glory¹⁴ and Lord of hosts,¹⁵ so that with respect to the immortal virtues we may imitate the immortality that God is.

[7] [The text] says: "... as very beloved children." If children of Mercy are very beloved and are not degenerate, they are merciful. And the more merciful [they are], the more they show themselves to be children of the Father. God is Love (*caritas*).¹⁶ The children of Love can be beloved, *more* beloved, and *very* beloved—i.e., [can be] beginners, those making progress, and those who are perfected. The Gospel of Matthew urges us to be perfect,¹⁷ i.e., very beloved. For our Father is perfect—indeed, is Perfection itself. And so, we who are supposed to be children of Perfection must be perfect.

[8] There follows [in the text] how it is evident whether or not we are very beloved: "Walk in love [*dilectio*] as Christ also has loved us and has delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice pleasing [to God] for an odor of sweetness."¹⁸ Understand that Christ, who is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God,¹⁹ is also the Mercy of God, by which God through Christ had pity on the human race. For Christ is the Sacrifice who offered Himself as an odor of sweetness for pleasing the Father. But if we walk in love of God and of neighbor by imitating Christ [and] delivering ourselves as a sacrifice to God for Christ's sake (just as He [sacrificed Himself] for us), then we rightly follow the very beloved Son of God, and we merit in this respect to be called followers of God as very beloved children.

[9] Hence, it is necessary that one who wishes to be found to be a very beloved son of God act in such a way as we have the form of Christ—namely, that out of love he make himself a sacrifice and offer

himself to God as an odor of sweetness. Now, he in whom love is strong as death²⁰—i.e., he in whom nothing of himself lives but Christ alone [lives]—walks in perfect love. He in whom only Christ lives, in him lives the love of God and of neighbor. Christ is God and Neighbor. He in whom only Christ lives, in him lives every virtue. In him the body is dead,²¹ as says the Apostle in Romans 8—dead, that is, to sin, because the desires of the flesh do not live in him. (These [desires] are the life of the body and are an offense to the spirit and are sin.) For that which is against the rational spirit and against the law of nature that is sealed on him as a rational spirit is said to be death and Satan and sin.

[10] Hence, a true Christian makes of his sensual nature²² a sacrifice, placing on it the hands of the spirit's power, as on the sin (as Moses calls the sacrifice *sin*).²³ And [the true Christian] slays the desires and joys which are called the bestial life, so that there lives in him only Christ. And this oblation, which in this way is made to God because of the sweetness of the odor that ascends and pleases God, is peace-making—i.e., restores peace, as the oblation of Christ made peace.²⁴

[11] But you might say: “In the Law [of Moses] a variety of sacrifices, in accordance with the gravity of the sins, is commanded to be made. How is this [commandment] fulfilled in a spiritual sense?” I answer—in accordance with the Golden Gloss on the phrase “living sacrifice” in Romans²⁵—that whoever immolates within himself pride kills a calf. And one who stills anger [within himself] slays a ram; [and] he who puts to death lust [within himself] kills a lecherous he-goat. But he who mortifies idle thoughts sacrifices birds. In this way, whatever object is slain is a living sacrifice. And with the Apostle one can say: “We always bear about in our body the mortification of Jesus so that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in us.”²⁶ And, again, [the Apostle says]: “I live; yet, not I, but Christ lives in me.”²⁷ For after the vices have been removed by means of a living sacrifice, the soul, which is [now] holy and pleasing to God, is the mansion of the Holy Spirit.²⁸

[12] The Apostle calls this [living] sacrifice a reasonable service,²⁹ because reason can be rendered perfect by means of it. Now, the killing of brute animals has no bearing on reason. Hence, since Christians are made holy by means of such a sacrifice [i.e., by means of a living sacrifice], there follows [in the text]: “Let not fornication and all uncleanness or greed be named among you, as befits those who

are holy.”³⁰ For these [features] follow those who are holy, in whom Christ alone lives: namely, that they not only not be carnal in their works (as fornicators, the unclean, and the greedy [are carnal]) but that also such vices not be named [by them]. For as long as they are mentioned with a certain desire, Christ alone does not yet live [in the Christian], nor is [that] one holy who mentions them with a spirit of desire.

[13] And in order to express³¹ other conditions of the bestial man, [the Apostle] adds: “or shamelessness” (which those who are carnal exercise in touching and embracing); “or foolish talking” (i.e., with respect to inducing to licentiousness; for example, flattery in cajoling to this end [of licentiousness]).³² Those are foolish who endeavor with foolish words to chase after women. And [the Apostle’s admonitions] are understood with regard to other foolish chatterings, as his subsequent remarks show. [He says]: “or scurrility”³³ — i.e., jesting in words in order to evoke laughter that is not appropriate. For these things are useless to the Christian for the purpose that is sought by him.³⁴ Sometimes jocular words entertain (for *eutrapelia* is called a moral virtue in Book 4 of the *Ethics*).³⁵ When, once spoken or expressed, they are directed toward decent relaxation. Nevertheless, the seriousness of a true Christian who follows Christ (who is not read to have laughed) ought to embrace only edification and things that pertain to the purpose of being a Christian. These things indeed follow [from being a Christian]; but their implementation is rather [the result] of grace. Lo, although *eutrapelia* is not condemned, since it is a moral virtue, nevertheless a Christian ought rather to be unagitatedly open to the implementation of [divine] grace.

[14] There follows [in the text]: “But know this and understand: that no fornicator and no unclean person or greedy person ([whose practice] is a serving of idols) has inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.”³⁶ [The Apostle here] says: “Know and understand (namely, [from] the Scriptures) that no simple fornicator or no unclean person (as regards other kinds of licentiousness [than fornication]) or greedy person” He calls greediness a serving of idols because the greedy serve mammon as an idol which they worship. Other sins do not concern something visible as does greediness. For a coin has an image, which can be called an idol; and the greedy person serves the monetarily depicted idol more than he does the Living God. For he does not keep money in order to use it. He worships and hoards

it as a religious object. And he thinks it a sin to spend it—as if it were a religious object that he is not permitted to exchange or trade. And about these matters there is said: “Where your treasure is, there is your heart.”³⁷ Such ones, [namely, the greedy], have no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God, because they reap the corruption that they have sown.³⁸

[15] Now, the Kingdom of Christ and of God consists of incorruptible and eternal goods. To these [goods] sinners prefer the perishing and temporal objects-of-their-desire that they pursue. But why should that which is promised to believers be called a Kingdom? Perhaps, among the many other reasons, also [the following one, namely]: because the Israelite people accepted the worshipping of God because of the fact that God promised to them the kingdom of that very good land in the midst of this world. Hence, in order that each one [of them] would obtain an inheritance in that kingdom promised to them, they promised to obey the God in whom they believed, and they promised to worship Him as God. And from thence the promise was transferred to the spiritual, heavenly Kingdom of Christ and of God. That is, just as to the ancient worshippers (worshipping with visible and ceremonial objects) a visible kingdom was promised, full of material delights, so to the new [worshippers] (worshipping in spirit) a Kingdom of life was promised that is full of immaterial and invisible delights. [16] *There* [i.e., in the Kingdom of life] each [believer] has an inheritance by possessing that Kingdom’s unspeakable delights belonging to a life that is, to be sure, divine and immortal. *There* the God of gods in Sion reigns and Christ His Son reigns as the Immortal Joy of which all partake as much as they desire to. And this Immortal Joy, which is God, is present in all who rejoice there. First of all *Christ* will rejoice [and] then those who *are Christ’s*.

By way of illustration: In a joyous assembly at a marriage where a great king has prepared a wedding for his son: there is one joy of them all; and in them all there is one human gladness which proceeds from the king and is present, first, in the bridegroom and, through him, in all those who are gathered at the marriage. The gladness of the king and of his son reign there in all who come to the marriage.

[17] Imagine, then, that the foregoing king were Eternal Gladness and that his son were the Reflected Brightness of that Gladness and that the invited guests who are present at the marriage

were living mirrors capturing within themselves a ray of gladness, each person partaking [of gladness] in proportion to his capturing. Moreover, know that the Son of God, in order to have many companions sharing in His joy and inheritance, came to this world and preached this Kingdom—i.e., [preached] true Joy, unknown to all. And He has invited many to that Kingdom; and He will not cease inviting until the door is closed—[closed] by means of the ceasing of this temporal life.

[18] He who while alive did not hear Him who was calling (as is the case with unbelievers, who do not hear, so as to believe with formed faith.³⁹)—to him the door of hearing is closed when he dies. For he will no longer be able to hear the voice of life since, being enshrouded in death, he has no ears-of-the-heart that are alive. For the soul that clung to the sensory life and did not want to understand (in order to live rightly): because it had life amid sensory objects, which are not-living, it does not have the means by which to hear. For it has lost its faculty of sensing, through which alone it was living and hoped to be living.

[19] But what delights there are, and what joy the intellectual spirit has, from the apprehension and enjoyment of truth: the investigators of truth in this world could surmise. Certain individuals are devoted to knowing mathematics; others to knowing arithmetic; others, astronomy; others, music; others, philosophy; others, theology—and so on as regards all the arts and sciences. Surely, an investigator of grammar would have great joy in finding a single very brief rule by means of which he would know in an instant all grammar—not in the way in which Priscian [knows grammar] but infinitely better. A similar thing would be true regarding one studying rhetoric, if there were handed to him an abbreviated set of rules, so that he would be an infinitely more perfect [rhetorician] than Cicero. And a similar thing would be true of all the language-studies, so that one would know them completely in an instant. The case would be similar regarding mathematics, philosophy, logic, the mechanical arts. And, in the end, what relishing there would be in that meal that transient truth ministers [and] in which is tasted the truth of every true thing and in which is attained everything desirable—as was prefigured in the manna.⁴⁰

[20] Moreover, the foregoing meal is the life-food of the spirit which [by participation] attains, as it were, the art of omnipotence, where *will* coincides with *power*, so that it can do all that which it wills

to, and it wills [to do] nothing which it cannot do. God's knowledge is *knowledge* that is convertible with *will* (so that God knows that which He wills) and convertible with *power* (so that [His knowledge] is *actually* that which is *possible* to be). To partake of this knowledge is immortal delight. And this [partaking] is having wisdom, i.e., [having] tasty and living knowledge that furnishes immortality. For he who has this knowledge, so that he knows that which he wills to know and so that there exists that which he both knows and wills to exist and [whose] understanding is being (i.e., where he understands what he wills and where what he wills is the case)—*there* there is happiness and blessed rest. Therefore, the intellectual spirit obtains all these things in and through the Word of God, or Truth, which it apprehends in the manner of its capacity and in the manner of its [power of] apprehension.

[21] You might ask: "What if the [intellectual] spirit desired some things of this world?" I answer that the appetite is directed toward the good. The intellect cannot desire as if it were one of the senses, in which there is ignorance and darkness. The Prophet said: "I shall be satisfied when Your glory shall appear."⁴¹ For nothing else can be desired when there appears that which is desired in every desire.

You might ask: "Cannot a human spirit desire that it be an angelic spirit, or cannot one spirit (e.g., Peter's) desire that it be the spirit of John the Baptist?" I answer: No, because a spirit cannot desire not to exist. And so, since it cannot be another spirit unless it cease being that which it was, its desire is enclosed within its own being. Indeed, not only does it not desire to be something else but it is very much delighted because of the fact that it cannot be anything else. For its being derives from participation in the Divine Being; for, properly speaking, being befits God. And so, since [the intellectual spirit] has from that Being that-which-it-is, it rejoices and delights in that Being as in its own kingdom.

Let the foregoing things now have been said in the foregoing way about this topic. These [statements] can always be differently and better expressed—but never adequately.

[22] There follows [in the text]: "Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of this [deceiving] the wrath of God comes upon the children of unbelief."⁴² Some [interpreters] say that the Apostle is warning those Ephesians not to be deceived by believing empty words that persuade [them to believe] that God is not concerned with us and that there is no hope of immortality. For the wrath of God

comes upon unbelievers. For who ought to distrust the Best, most Veracious, and most Powerful with respect to His promises? It exceedingly disturbs the noble if someone says that they are liars and that they have dishonorably failed to keep their promises. Whence would noble reason have this [state of being noble] except from Him who has inscribed reason with His own image? Therefore, to ascribe to God those [traits] that man judges to be dishonorable is to call forth God's wrath upon oneself. But the cessation of [God's] mildness and grace—because the unbeliever veers away from grace—is called by sinners the wrath of God. It is not that God is angry; but thus judges the sinner who has withdrawn himself from [God's] kindness and mildness [and] has subjected himself willingly to mercilessness and malice.

[23] Moreover, note that since God is Mildness itself, an ungodly person offends against Him. Nevertheless, [God] does not punish [him], because [God is] Mildness, Goodness, Joy, etc. He permits those who are evil to be what they will to be. And because they withdraw from the good, He permits [them] to be situated in evil; and they are tormented by evil because they have departed from the Savior. By way of illustration, a healthy man who through his own excess incurs an illness and who does not have confidence in a doctor but distrusts him: such a man is tormented by the spirit of illness. The case is similar regarding illness of the soul. God does not punish out of wrath—but justly allows to be tormented—him who does not trust Him. God gives good things to those who are good. For example, He gives to the living that they live more abundantly.⁴³

[24] Unbelief is like evil servants who depart from their master and do not trust him. Likewise, sinners are aligned with the rite of the Almanni, who by [use of] weapons determine what is right.⁴⁴ Unbelievers are enemies of God; and under [the leadership of] the Devil they war against Christ, who is Virtue. Therefore, they are tormented by the Devil. And so, the Apostle admonishes: “Be not therefore partakers with them,” lest the same thing happen to you.⁴⁵ For those who *do* a thing and those who *consent to* it are punished with equal punishment. For “you were once darkness” (when you did not know Christ, who is the true Light), “but now [you are] light in the Lord.”⁴⁶

[25] And so, [the Apostle] adds: “Walk as children of the Light.” Light is knowledge. Christians are enlightened by Christ in order that they may know that God is the Resurrecter of the dead and

the Giver of life to believers and to those who trust [Him]. The darkness of the ignorance of God and of eternal life has brought it about that men have shown concern only for the flesh, situating beauty there. They were unable to look more highly, because light was lacking to them, as was intellect, which has an eye [with vision] that passes through the perceptible world all the way to God. But those who have accepted the teaching of Christ are saints [and] are light in the Lord.⁴⁷ They are not in this world; thus, they [do not] know the things that are of this world, as do those who devote themselves to mundane investigations of the elements of this world. Rather, they are light in the Lord, so that they know that Jesus is the Word of God and the Way and that He bestows true life on those who receive Him.

[26] Christ says that He is Light. The children of the Light, who are His children, ought to walk as such [i.e., as His children]. The spirit is said to walk; it follows the affections. The Christian's affection that is of the Light is [affection] for those things which display light within themselves—as do the virtues, which are Christ and Light. For example, justice is full of light, as is also the rational life and, likewise, truth and the other virtues. These [virtues] manifest their praiseworthiness and brightness by themselves; for they are from the Light. For [the virtues] are the fruit of the Light. That is, walking in all goodness and justice and truth [is the fruit of the Light].⁴⁸ For he who is in the light walks in Christ by bearing fruit. He proves,⁴⁹ and attests to, the fruit of the immortal and lucid (i.e., intellectual) spirit with respect to goodness, justice, and truth—which things are pleasing to God. He does not communicate with the fruitless works of darkness but, rather, reproveth them—as follows in the letter [to the Ephesians].⁵⁰

PART TWO

[27] If we wish to have encouragement from the Scriptures and to elicit hope therefrom—hope that does not mislead—then we must understand Scripture in a spiritual sense.

We walk with our feet. The feet of the soul are the strength by which [the soul] is led to God. Children of the Light have feet—i.e. have strength of soul. And they walk in the light, i.e., in daylight; and they see where they are going. From the Introit of the mass, and from the succeeding readings, we have mention of the eyes. Let us say, then, that because the children of the Light have their eyes always on the Lord,⁵¹ [these children] do not wander. For they are moved by the gov-

ernance of the Lord. The eyes of good servants are in the hands of their masters. And the eyes of a handmaiden are in the hands of her mistress;⁵² i.e., [they are] in the power of the mistress when the handmaiden does not have eyes that have the liberty of wandering but [has eyes that] are under the power of the mistress. Similarly, our eyes ought to be in the Hand of God.⁵³ Assuredly, [the Psalmist] transfers himself [in thought] from fleshly eyes to spiritual eyes and eyes of the mind. For he is a man having from God (in whose image he is) a spirit of understanding; and he is under God's governance only. {For he has no other Master than God, who said that the soul of a man (whether of a father or of a son) is His own. That is, Eternal Wisdom has that soul for its own; on it Eternal Wisdom has impressed His image, which is [the faculty of] understanding.} Therefore, the rational soul, which is imprinted with the light of reason, ought to look unto God and to walk according to that Light, from whom it has its creation and its sonship.

[28] Now, when a man walks, then in order to walk rightly, he [looks to] see whether the pathway is good, just, and true. And he can discern this fact only in the light, because if he walks at night, he does not know where he is going. Therefore, it is necessary that light guide and enlighten his knowledge.

Now, to what does a man look who wants to read a book? Doesn't he look into his memory before he reads the page? For on the page he reads that which he previously saw within himself in a concept, which flows from memory. For memory begets, in an inner concept, a knowledge of the letters and the words. And one *sees* in memory before one *reads* on the page. If one does not know writing, then even if he sees the written letters, it is not the case that for this reason he can read them. Therefore, from a knowledge of the letters one comes to [the skill of] reading. When I see the perceptible letters, I recur to memory and I represent [to myself] what is similar. But if I do not have that form in my memory, I cannot make a concept for myself and cannot read.

[29] If, then, the spirit that is from God—[the spirit] that is called intellect—is to walk, and to progress, in all goodness, justice, and truth, then it is necessary that the eyes of the intellect look inwardly into the intellectual memory, which is not acquired from perceptible objects but is concreated and is the intellect's essence, because it is the image of God. And there [in its intellectual memory this spirit] will

find the light of goodness, justice, and truth. This [light] is the brightly shining law of nature that enlightens the eyes so that [the spirit] makes a concept of [goodness, justice, and truth]—[a concept] which it follows while walking. And this light is nothing but the word of God, which enlightens so that you may know how to discern good from evil, the just from the unjust, the true from the false. Hence, from this internal seeing, the [intellectual] spirit transfers itself to the sacred letters; and *there* in the spirit beneath the letter it sees the spiritual meaning that it saw within itself by means of the word's light that is impressed on it. Accordingly, [the spirit] has the name *reason* or *intellect*. For that reason is intellectual reason only because it is the reflected brightness of the Divine Light, which is Absolute Reason, or Absolute Light. To walk in that Light is to submit oneself in all respects to the governance of reason and to be directed by reason. Thus, you see that the internal word enlightens, i.e., teaches, the way of justice as regards the apprehension of true life, which consists in a knowledge of Him who is Life *per se*. Therefore, the one whom this [internal] word teaches—whether he enters into the word or goes out with it to the sacred letters—will find pastures.⁵⁴

[30] In the [words] immediately following the reading for Sunday, the Apostle cautions that one is to be aroused from sleeping and to be raised from the dead in order that Christ may enlighten.⁵⁵ Therefore, the spirit is to rise up from sleep and sleepiness and to arise from the dead. For the things that dull the spirit are [the following]: earthly thoughts and concerns for things temporal that take possession of the whole man. Indeed, they paralyze and mortify the spirit by obscuring its light. Therefore, he who approaches things inner—in order to hear the word of God that rises up and arises when he frees himself from overshadowing carnal lusts and from his [worldly] concerns—must be made to be a book that is free from the bindings of an unclean spirit. And then he will be drawn by God and will come to things inner, where he will find Christ and the word of God. And [Christ] will enlighten the spirit with the light of understanding.

[31] Therefore, most Beloved, let us shake off sleep and death so that we may be suited for attracting our Heavenly Father and so that we can hear Him calling. Therefore, let us now at this most suitable time remove these remnants-of-carnal-lusts that paralyze the spirit—[remove them] by means of contrition, penitence, abstinence, mortification, prayer, and other suitable mitigations and remediations. And let

us make our spirit as clean as parchment that is perfectly readied [for use]—[doing so] through peelings, thinnings, polishings in order that nothing remain except pure, unsmudged [parchment], with all roughness scraped away. And when it will be thus readied, the living law will be inscribed on it by the Finger of God; and it will be a book in which the inscribed word of life enlivens and saves eternally. Thus, life will be inscribed on our spirit. And through Christ, who dwells within us, we shall live in the everlasting glory-of-God, which the Father of glory, who is forever blessed, grants [to us].

NOTES TO *Ut Filii Lucis Ambulate**

*Sermon CCLXXIII.

1. Ephesians 5:8.
2. Ephesians 4:30-32.
3. Ephesians 5:1.
4. Matthew 3:17.
5. Romans 8:29.
6. Romans 8:29. Each believer is an imitator and a follower of Christ and bears a likeness to the Likeness-of-God that Christ is.
7. I Corinthians 1:30.
8. Matthew 11:29.
9. John 13:15.
10. John 12:26.
11. *Loc. cit.*
12. Ephesians 5:1. The Latin words translated in the Douay version as “followers of God” are “imitatores Dei,” which can also be translated as “imitators of God.” Both notions are operative in Nicholas’s sermon.
13. Philippians 2:6. Hebrews 1:3.
14. Psalms 23:10 (24:10).
15. *Loc. cit.*
16. I John 4:8.
17. Matthew 5:48.
18. Ephesians 5:2.
19. I Corinthians 1:24.
20. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 8:6.
21. Romans 8:10.
22. I Corinthians 2:14.
23. It is unclear what Scriptural passage Nicholas means to indicate. He may be alluding, misleadingly, to Deuteronomy 9:21.
24. Ephesians 2:13-14.
25. Romans 12:1.
26. II Corinthians 4:10.
27. Galatians 2:20.
28. I Corinthians 3:16.
29. Romans 12:1.
30. Ephesians 5:3.
31. Here at 1 3:2 I am reading with ms. *L* “*exprimat*” in place of “*exprimit*”.
32. Ephesians 5:4.
33. *Loc. cit.*
34. *Loc. cit.*
35. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, 8 (1128^a). The Greek word *eutrapelia* (εὐτραπείλια) means *jesting*, *wittiness*, and the likes. See Ephesians 5:4.
36. Ephesians 5:5.

37. Matthew 6:21.

38. Galatians 6:8.

39. The words “formed faith” have to do with faith in-formed by love.

Galatians 5:6.

40. Exodus 16.

41. Psalms 16:15 (17:15).

42. Ephesians 5:6.

43. John 10:10.

44. That is, the Germanic tribes hold the view that “might makes right.”

45. Ephesians 5:7.

46. Ephesians 5:8. John 1:9.

47. Ephesians 5:8.

48. Ephesians 5:9.

49. Ephesians 5:10.

50. Ephesians 5:11.

51. Psalms 24:15 (25:15).

52. Psalms 122:2 (123:2).

53. *Loc cit.*

54. John 10:9.

55. Ephesians 5:14.

Loquimini ad Petram coram Eis*
 (“Speak to the Rock in Their Presence”)¹
 [March 25, 1457; preached in Brixen]

PART ONE

[1] “Speak to the rock in their presence, and it will give you water.”²
 (Numbers 20 and in the office of today’s mass.)

I will say something about this miracle. However, [I will say something] first about the Gospel-reading [for today]. For the Rock was Christ,³ who is Savior of the world. How it is that He gave water is contained in our Gospel-reading [for today]. About Christ, the Samaritans said: “We ourselves have heard [Him], and we know that He is truly the Savior of the world” (John 4 and in the Gospel-reading of this weekday).⁴

[2] It is commonly maintained (1) that Christ died on the Cross on the day on which He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin and (2) that this day is the day of the world’s creation. We know that Christ died on the sixth day of the week [i.e., on Friday], after the equinox, even as today is the sixth day of the week, on which [is] the feast of the Annunciation. Hence, certain [Christians] show very great devotion today because of the presumed fact that [today] is the true day of Christ’s death and of our redemption. And it is fitting that we follow them [in this regard].

[3] I have taken up the Gospel-passage⁵ for this day because you have often heard [it] in regard to the feast-day. For this Gospel-passage is full of very precious revelations that are to be fittingly spoken of at [this] very important celebration. And that which is chiefly to be considered in the Gospel-passage is that Christ’s teaching is spiritual—which meaning the world does not grasp.

Certain individuals are accustomed to murmur on the ground that at times I preach to you simple [folks] of matters that are exceedingly deep (even as the disciples here [in the Gospel-passage] marveled that Christ spoke to the woman of such deep matters). [These individuals] would have spared me [this criticism] if they had paid attention to the fact that Christ revealed, usefully, very deep and very hidden things to the sinful little Samaritan woman, who alone heard Him. For I am [now] speaking to many among whom (it is to be hoped)

some are found to be more capable-of-understanding than [was] that little woman.

[4] Let us look at the text: Christ left Judea for the reason that the Gospel-writer cites. And He went into Galilee. But He had to pass through Samaria.⁶

I understand [the following]: Although the route required this direction, nevertheless the Son had to be about His Father's business,⁷ and so He went through Samaria so that there would be done the things that are contained in the Gospel-passage.

"Jesus comes therefore into a city of Samaria that is called Sichar."⁸ "Samaria" [means] *God's protection*; "Sichar" [means] *penitence*; for one who is penitent is protected against losing God.

"... near the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now, Jacob's well was there."⁹ All things were preordained by God to the events that follow [in the text]: in particular, "Jesus, wearied from the journey, sat thus on the well."¹⁰ The fact, namely, that Jesus was wearied from the journey shows that He was a real human being who carried around a burdensome body as do other human beings. [It was] not [merely] an apparent [body], as certain heretics have alleged.¹¹ He sat on Jacob's well, seeking rest there. For wisdom, which seeks rest in all things, indwells Jacob,¹² the faithful supplanter¹³ of vices. [Jesus] sat on the well, expecting that, to one asking for elemental water, [the well] would give water salutary for the soul.

[5] "Now, it was about the sixth hour," i.e., around noon, when the air grows hot. The sixth hour is interpreted by St. Augustine as if a day were the complete time of this world from its origin to its end. He distinguishes the hours of the day in terms of the more noteworthy transformations made in the world. [But] someone could make a different surmise, namely, that Christ appeared in the middle of that day in the heat of the sun. And since in the Sacred Scriptures the sun is also called a spirit, we can fittingly understand a difference of spirit from the [difference of] hours—so that one spirit is, as it were, infant-like; another, child-like; another, adolescent-like; another, juvenile-like; another, like [the spirit] of a young adult; another, like [the spirit] of a full-grown and manly individual. By way of comparison, Paul is seen to make [such a] distinction.¹⁴ He says that he was a child because he understood as a child but later [was] a man, when he understood as a man. [He says, that is,] that what is imperfect *precedes* and that when perfection comes, imperfection is gotten rid of.

Now, it was about the sixth hour of the day of the world (when the sun reaches its maximum height) with respect to Christ Jesus, who as Sun of Justice,¹⁵ was Fullness of the Spirit of Light, enlightening every man. Therefore, this [sixth] hour always befits Christ. But here [in the text the sixth hour] is said because there is posited that Christ was wearied from the journey. In order to state the reason [for the fatigue, the Gospel-writer] says that Christ had journeyed until the sixth hour.

[6] “A woman from Samaria comes to draw water.”¹⁶ The woman is carnality, which in all five of the senses seeks its delights, walking not in the law of reason but in its lust. She came *from* Samaria, even though she remained *in* Samaria, for the well was in Samaria. But because she came to the Fount of living water, who was not from Samaria, she came *from* Samaria.

“To draw water.” There is water in the well, and there is the water of wisdom on the well.¹⁷ When a man has great thirst, he desires something cold and moist. For when the spirit of the outer man is inflamed, it desires something refreshing. Thus, Paul gave thanks to those who refreshed his spirit.¹⁸ When a man has great thirst with respect to the spirit of the inner man, then he desires wisdom. For from the love which the intellect has for eternal truth, [the intellect] is kindled and inflamed with a wondrous zeal, and it desires something refreshing to assuage this spiritual thirst.

[7] In Jacob’s well there is water, which was sought and found by human intelligence. And with respect to this [seeking and finding] there can be signified human philosophy, which is investigated by means of arduous examination of perceptible objects. But in the word of God that is in the depth of *the Living Well*, i.e., of *the humanity of Christ*, there is a Fount that refreshes the [human] spirit. And so, let us take note of (a) the material well of Jacob, (b) the rational well, and (c) the well of wisdom.

Regarding the first well, which is of the animal nature and is deep: a father, [his] children, and [his] cattle drink. Regarding the second [well], which is deeper with respect to the horizon of nature: only the children of men drink—specifically, those who flourish in reasoning and who are called philosophers. Regarding the third [well], which is the deepest: the children of the Most High drink, who are called gods and who are true theologians.¹⁹ Christ, in accordance with His humanity, can be called the Deepest Well, as we sing: “You alone are the Most

High, O Jesus Christ.”²⁰ In that Deepest Well is the Fount of Wisdom, which bestows happiness and immortality. This Well is journeyed-to because it is a Living [Well]. And [the Well] grows weary when it does not find the one who is seeking the water of life. The Living Well conveys the Fount of its life to those who thirst. It calls those who are thirsting unto the salutary waters so that they may be restored by the water of salutary Wisdom. And because no one knows this water, the Well conducts the water to the place where material water is sought, in order that when material water is sought, the water [of Wisdom] that is not sought may also be found. The Living Well sits upon the dead well; and when perceptible water is sought, the spiritual water manifests itself.

The Well conveyed its [spiritual] water to a second well, i.e., to the synagogue, so that when teachers would gather in the synagogue and would draw from the Book of the Law a literal understanding of the Law, the spiritual meaning that was not being sought would be present and would manifest itself. O inexpressible Loving-Kindness! The Living Fount seeks out those who are thirsting and makes itself known in order that grace may be purchased without silver and gold. “It is purchased.” I mean that [the grace] passes into the possession of the buyer.

[8] Jesus says to the Samaritan woman “Give me [water] to drink.” Jesus asks daily, in the case of a poor man who is [a follower] of Him, for a drink of water in order that He may give the water of life [in exchange]. These [details] must be noted, because the poor and needy are always with us²¹ in order that we can always exchange things temporal for things eternal. The poor are needed by us for [our] eternal life, just as we are needed by the poor for this temporal life. Christ asks in order to motivate-to-receiving. It is as if someone were to ask that something be given to him from some large, closed bag in which there was something, although [there was also] a moderate amount of air [i.e., empty space]. So when he opens the bag in order to *give*, the one-who-is-asking fills the bag with gold. He *asks* in order to *give* rather than to *receive*. But he asks in order that the closed container be opened. The Prophet says, in the person of God: “Open your mouth [wide], and I shall fill it.”²²

[9] The Gospel-writer adds: “His disciples were gone into the city to buy meat.”²³

To depart from Christ, even for buying the necessities of the

corporeal life, is to be away. [The disciples] bought meat from the Samaritans around mid-day. Therefore, they had the wherewithal to buy. This fact goes against those heretics who are called the Apostolici, about whom Augustine [speaks] in his catalogue of heretics.²⁴ Hence, to have money does not go against the Gospel-teaching. But those who have [money] are to be as if they did not have [it]; i.e., [they are to be] without an affixing of their heart [on money],²⁵ so that they are not possessed [by it] rather than their possessing [it]. In this latter case they have—because of necessity, not because of greed—the wherewithal to live.

[10] But the Samaritan woman said to Jesus, who asked for a drink: “How is it that You, since You are a Jew, ask me, who am a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.²⁶ The Jews treated the Samaritans as excommunicated, because they were schismatics, i.e., were cut off from them in many respects. For example, [the Samaritans] did not accept the Old Testament except for the five Books of Moses. And so, not only did [Jews and Samaritans] not eat and drink together but they even did not drink from the same vessel—and so on. The woman knew—from some outward sign that distinguished Jew from Samaritan—that Christ was a Jew. She was amazed at His transgression—as if Christ, a Jew, had transgressed the practices of the Jews by His request. The disciples bought meat, and Christ asked for a drink, from the Samaritans. By these occurrences we are taught that the Law was not imposed on us pilgrims so that we could not [permissibly] communicate with the excommunicated on account of unavoidable necessity.

[11] “Jesus answered and said to her: ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you “Give me to drink,” you would perhaps have asked Him, and He would have given to you living water.’”²⁷ It is as if He were to say: “It is permitted to me for the sake of your salvation to communicate with you.” And let us take note of the words “If you knew the gift of God.” Jesus is given to us as the Supreme Gift of God. And elsewhere the Spirit of Jesus, which is also the Spirit of the Father,²⁸ is called a Gift;²⁹ and men who are spiritual are said to partake of this Gift. Jesus as Gift of God is called the Grace [of God]. Hence, those who partake of the spiritual grace of Jesus (namely, those who receive from His Fullness), are virtuous by means of spiritual grace because, indeed, they receive faith, wisdom, knowledge, and the other virtues³⁰ which are Christ. To know Him who is [Virtue] is to

know the Source of the merciful gift of living water. Therefore, one who knows [this Source] asks for, and receives, [mercy]. Therefore, He who is of such great virtue is not subject to the religious practices of the Jews.

[12] “The woman says to Him: ‘Sir, you have nothing with which to draw [water], and the well is deep.’”³¹ The Holy Spirit ordained these events in this way so that the woman would be led successively from material water to the spiritual [water] about which Jesus was speaking. Note that drawing any water is done, necessarily, with effort and with a device, because for every man the well is deep. The woman thought that Jesus could not have water except by the means by which others [have it], just as no one is made knowledgeable unless he laboriously draws from a deep well (i.e., from the Scriptures) in which liquid is hidden. And so, she asks: “Whence, then, do You have living water?” And if You mean to say that You excel ordinary men, who do not have water unless they draw it, “Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself and his children and his cattle?”³² [It is] as if she were to say: “He who gave us the well—and drank from it himself and his children and his cattle—was not able to give [it to us] in any other way than as it is; and he had no water unless it was drawn.”

[13] Jesus answered and said to her: “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again. But he who drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. Rather, the water that I shall give him will become in him a fount of water springing up into eternal life.”³³ He did not say from where He had [this water]. For He does not have His beginning from something else that is [His] beginning. Rather, Christ Himself is the Beginning. He who spoke as Wisdom-that-is-also-a-Fount is the Beginning of wisdom. Note that no hope of salvation is to be placed in visible things. For visible things, because they are temporal, cannot confer immortal happiness. To drink water that is seen is to quench bodily thirst for a time. But after that time has elapsed, one will be thirsty again because of a lack—just as if he had not previously had something to drink.

[14] Temporal things are divided in terms of [temporal] parts and can never be totally possessed because they are in flux. And so, part after part is desired, because the part satisfies only partially and temporarily. But immaterial things [which are] indivisible, are possessed only totally and perfectly. For example, justice is present as a

whole in any just person; it is not distributed among just individuals. Hence, the justice of just Peter is also the justice of just Paul, who both are just by one Justice, which is Christ. And so, just Peter does not desire the justice of Paul. For to one who is just nothing of justice is lacking.

Spiritual water does not satisfy [only] temporarily, because it is not temporal or visible but is eternal and invisible. It becomes a fount springing up into eternal life.³⁴ The fount that springs up is a living [fount] that is always infused into the one who thirsts [for it]. He will not thirst in the sense that that water is lacking to him; but he will still truly thirst in the sense that he can never get enough of so pleasant a refreshment. And so, that springing up is eternal life because it is [the springing up] of an unfailing Fount.

[15] If someone conceives of the drawn water as converted in the stomach into a fount that springs up, he conceives of a likeness of the spiritual fount. And because you have elsewhere heard me on this [topic], I will pass over [it here]. Pay attention only to the following (for [Jesus] spoke of the Spirit, which believers receive): the Spirit is as a Fount. Hence, [the Spirit] is not possessed as water from a fount but as the fount itself. He who drinks perceptible water does not drink the fount. If he could drink the fount, he would never thirst, because in him would be a living fount. He who drinks the Spirit drinks-in a Fount that gushes up. For the Spirit is like a spark of the fire of God, who is called a Consuming Fire.³⁵ When [this Fire] is sent to the earth, it becomes a Fount emitting fire, because [the fire] burns with an inexhaustible Spirit. Analogously, any spark of fire, if it falls on combustible material, becomes a living fire that grows continuously by its own power, if the [combustible] material is not lacking to it. The situation is similar in the case of water. For living water, with respect to the fact that it is living, is also like a spark of fire. For it becomes a fount that supplies itself unfailingly.

[16] Note the difference between temporal begetting and eternal begetting. For a father by begetting temporally imparts to a son the temporal power of begetting. For the power-of-the-father's-seed that is given becomes a fount of begetting in the son, just as in the father. Similarly, the power of Christ's Spirit forming, or begetting, a spiritual son becomes in the son a fount in accordance with the nature of the Spirit. That is, it becomes a fount which is moved eternally [and] vitally of itself. Hence, it is a divine seed, i.e., a spiritual [seed]. For God is

a Spirit.³⁶ And note that this begetting is called regeneration, because it is necessary that our spiritual nature be born anew. Similarly, a rational spirit in one who is knowledgeable is born anew, because the man who was unknowing, according to nature, was made in this respect another man, namely, one who is knowledgeable. It is not the case that something visible or imaginable entered the inner man from what is outward—even as it is not the case that our spirit, in which there is the seed of God and of the knowledge of life, is born anew through the in-putting of something visible or understandable. Rather, [the rational spirit is born anew] by the power of the Most High overshadowing it and transforming it and turning it toward [the Most High] Himself—just as a pleasing³⁷ object transforms a sad soul into gladness and turns it to [that object] itself. Hence, just as the Son of God, born anew, was made the Son of man by the power of the Most High, so a son of man, born anew by the power of the Most High, is made a son of God.

[17] Moreover, note that the intellect is given to us together with the power of the intellectual seed. Hence, [the intellect] has within itself a fount principle by means of which it begets within itself the water of understanding. And that fount can produce only water of its own nature, namely, [water] of human understanding, just as an understanding of the Beginning—[as to] whatever it is or is not—produces metaphysical waters from which other rivers of knowledge flow unceasingly. But if a higher divine principle from God—[a principle] which *excels* that intellectual nature [and] which *excellence* is called faith—were infused into the [rational] spirit, then that divine fount [of faith] would yield living, true, and eternal waters. Thus, Christ said³⁸ that the rivers which flow out of the believer’s belly from the Spirit that has been received are rivers that (in the belly, or spirit, of the man who has received the Spirit of God by faith) flow from within eternally.

[18] “The woman says to Him: ‘Sir, give me this [living] water so that I may not thirst nor [have to] come here to draw [water].’”³⁹ Yet, the woman did not come to the Spirit, even as nowadays very many Christians, as also Jews and Muslims jointly, derive their understanding—of the future things promised—from those things that they desire with respect to their senses. And so, lest the woman think Christ’s statement to be foolishness (as the Apostle says, namely, that those who are carnal do not understand the things that are of the Spirit but regard [them] as foolishness),⁴⁰ it was necessary that Christ would

work a miracle, so that by marveling at [Him] as a Prophet, she would apply His words to the Spirit. [19] Jesus says to her: “Go, call your husband.”⁴¹ The woman answered and said: “I do not have a husband.” Jesus says to her: “You have well said ‘I do not have a husband’; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband. You have said this truly.”⁴² Perhaps, as Nicholas of Lyra proposes,⁴³ she had five lawful [husbands], and he whom she then had was thought also to be her lawful [husband] but was not. And so, Jesus said “Call your husband” in order in the end to show that He knew her secrets.

“The woman says to Him: ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet’.”⁴⁴ She calls [Him] a prophet because He saw hidden things. Hence, she began to inquire of Him about something doubtful; for the Jews said that one is to pray in the Temple [but] the Samaritans [said that one is to pray] right there on the mount by the name Gazarum. And she said: “Our fathers worshiped on this mount, but you [Jews] say that Jerusalem is the place where one must worship.”⁴⁵ The patriarchs and fathers of the Old Testament she calls the fathers who worshiped on the mountains. But why [they worshiped] on *that* mountain [Nicholas of] Lyra expounds by an allusion to Joseph.⁴⁶

[20] Jesus says to her: “Woman, believe me that the hour will come when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father.”⁴⁷ That is, when God will be known not to admit of spatial location, then each person will enter into his inner chamber and will pray in secret. “You [Samaritans] worship that which you do not know; we [Jews] worship that which we do know, because salvation is of the Jews.”⁴⁸ I have read that the ancients reproached those worshipping one invisible God for this: namely, that they worshiped God, whom they did not know. Assuredly, God is unknown to all.⁴⁹ But [Jesus] means, perhaps: You worship, i.e., you seek, that which you do not know; but we, indeed, who are true Jews and who have a spiritual understanding of the future life, worship that which we do know. For we seek salvation; and salvation is of the Jews.⁵⁰ For of the Jews is the disclosure and manifestation of salvation.

[21] “But the hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”⁵¹ Behold how it is that [Jesus] explains Himself when, that is, He said above, “We worship that which we know”—we, that is, who understand the Scriptures in a spiritual sense. “The hour is coming and now is”—i.e.,

now at the time of Christ when He and His true worshippers, and those after them, will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. This [worshipping in spirit and in truth] is having an understanding of the Old Testament in a spiritual sense. For the Father, too, seeks [those] who [will] worship Him.⁵² He seeks, that is, through me His Son [those] who [will] worship Him. But this [worshipping] can be done only in spirit and in truth, because God is a Spirit. [Jesus] says that God is a Spirit; and He calls God [His] Father; and it is necessary that those who worship Him worship in spirit and in truth.

Note that God is worshiped not with the mouth but with the spirit, because spirit is worshiped with spirit. Spirit addresses spirit imperceptibly, not perceptibly. For it is necessary that the Creator be worshiped in truth. Therefore, God, who is Spirit and is Truth, can be worshiped [only] in spirit, which alone can perceive truth.

[22] “The woman says to Him: ‘I know that the Messiah is coming who is called the Christ’ ”⁵³ The woman said that she knows that the Messiah is coming. The Gospel-writer interprets “Messiah” as “He who is called the Christ.” “He is coming”: at present He is in the process of coming, and [His coming] is soon. She was able to know this because the Samaritans, who accept the five Books of Moses, believed that [the Messiah] would come when the scepter of Judah would be removed,⁵⁴ as at that time was done. Thus, she had discerned that the time had elapsed,⁵⁵ and so she did not doubt that He was coming [soon]. She adds [a statement about] who the Messiah was to be, when she says: “Therefore, when He comes, He will tell us all things.”⁵⁶ That is, He will resolve the uncertainties that there are and will declare the truth in all respects. Behold the Samaritan woman’s faith in Christ, the Proclaimer of truth!— Christ the Word of Truth; Christ, in whom is Fullness of truth; Christ, who knows and declares all things; Christ, who is Peace pacifying all things;⁵⁷ Christ, the Harmonizer harmonizing all things; Christ, the Revealer of hidden things; and [Christ], the Wisdom of God.⁵⁸

Moreover, note that Christ was expected as the Judge of all men and under whose judgment all men are to stand. And because the woman had such faith in Christ, so that she believed what Christ said to her, Jesus says to her: “I am He who am speaking with you.”⁵⁹ Jesus manifested Himself to that woman by means of this name [“Christ”] in order that through her others who were expecting the Christ would come to faith. But why did He say “I am He who am speaking with

you”? God said to Moses “I am I-Who-Am.”⁶⁰ Christ said “I who am speaking with you am He.” For He was a Legate making known all things. [It is] as if He were to say: “In and through my word know me to be the Christ.”

[23] Therefore, after the conversation had come to this point, His disciples came immediately; and they were amazed that He was speaking with the woman about deep mysteries.⁶¹ “Yet, no man said: ‘What do You seek?’ or: ‘Why are You speaking with her?’ ” They knew that He who did nothing without a reason knew of their amazement and, if He wanted to, would respond to their thoughts as well as to their questions.

“Therefore, the woman left her waterpot and went into the city and said to the men [there]: ‘Come and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever that I have done. Is not He the Christ?’ ”⁶² Because of this, Christ spoke to the woman so that she did the following, to wit: The woman left her waterpot so that she would not be slowed down on her way to summoning [the others]. All who proclaim good news (among whom were the first evangelists) ought to act similarly. They ought to leave behind all things in order to preach Christ. For in this case *to leave behind* is *to acquire*. The more someone leaves behind, the greater the reward that he will receive from Him, the coming of whom or knowledge of whom (i.e., whose glory or love) he is faithfully proclaiming.

The woman said that Jesus had told her all the things that she had done. In that He told her a main thing, He seemed [to her] to have said all things because it was as easy for Him to speak of the other things as [to speak] of that thing. Thereby Christ showed Himself to her as a Knower of things hidden. And so, believing that He must be the Christ, she invited [the men] to come and see the Christ whom all were expecting to see. Note that Christ is a man [who is] a Knower of all things hidden, even of past things. But this knowledge in a man indicates that he is both a man and God, because it is only God from whom nothing is hidden. For God is the one who searches the heart.⁶³

“And they went out from the city and came to Him.”⁶⁴ Jesus was attentive to those things that the woman did in the city, and in His Spirit He saw the Samaritans coming; and thinking of the fruit of their salvation, He did not eat.⁶⁵

[24] Meanwhile His disciples asked Him, saying: “Rabbi, eat!” But He said to them: “I have meat to eat which you know not of.”

Therefore, the Disciples, then, said to one another: “Has someone brought Him [food] to eat?” Jesus says to them: “My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me, so that I may accomplish His work.”⁶⁶ See how the Disciples are led from one thing to another—namely, from visible meat to spiritual [meat]. To do the will of the sender—in particular, to accomplish by [one’s] work the sender’s will—is the food of the one who is sent qua one-who-is-sent. For a legate qua legate has no other meat to eat than to do the will of his master, who sent him. Thus, because all the Apostles were sent by Christ, as Christ [was sent] by God the Father, they did only Christ’s will. So too, we who carry the burden of authoritativeness, following in the Apostles’ places, are to take care to accomplish Christ’s will. So too, you servants of Christ are to accomplish His will, which is that you be holy. The work of a bishop is supposed to be that he sanctify and cleanse you by the word of God; your work [is supposed to be] that you be obedient and be intent upon receiving the cleansing.

[25] “Do you not say that there are still four months and then the harvest comes?”⁶⁷ (And so, this Gospel-passage is read at a suitable time since there are four months until th harvest.)⁶⁸ “Behold, I say to you: lift up your eyes and see the fields, because they are white for harvesting.”⁶⁹ The Samaritans who showed up in the field near the well where Christ was present with His disciples—[who showed up] in order to receive Christ and to invite Him—were like a white field ready for harvesting.

There follows [in the text]: “And he who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit unto life everlasting.”⁷⁰ About these matters: He who reaps gathers fruit unto life everlasting. And so, he receives wages, since he performs useful work. Note that in this present world human beings are sown [as seed]; and after the harvest they are gathered as fruit unto life everlasting. The man who produces spiritual fruit because his spirit, created by God, is planted in the earth—that fruit is separated from the earth and gathered into the Kingdom of Heaven. Note that man, when in a better state—i.e., when he is more ripened as grains of corn—is removed from the world so that as ripened grain, well cooked by the Sun of Justice,⁷¹ he can be united with the saints in God’s Storehouse. Behold, the fruit of our spirit [is] especially pleasing to God. Elsewhere, where [Jesus] speaks about the ultimate separation of those who are good from the those who are evil, He says that the angels are the reapers.⁷² Here, where He speaks about believers

who are separated from unbelievers, He says that the reapers are the Apostles [and that] the planters [are] the Prophets.

[26] [Jesus] says: "... that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true: that it is one man who sows and another who reaps. I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."⁷³ [It is] as if the potter were to say to the hands: "Others, namely, the feet, have labored and have made the clay suitable by treading [on it] and making the earth capable of [receiving a new] form. But you have entered into their labor—namely, by continuing it and by adding form and completion—so that both the feet and the hands may rejoice over the fruit that has come from it." There is one mystical body of Christ, and all its members do all things through it: the feet [act] through the body, and the body [acts] through the feet. (A man says that he is walking when he goes by means of his feet.) Likewise, Christ prays in us, and we pray in Him; and when we speak in Him, He speaks in us.

Augustine says: "Do not say anything without Him, and He will say nothing without you."⁷⁴ The same person [viz., Augustine]: "Those who are members of Christ's body and say that they are not holy do injury to the Head, whose members they have become."⁷⁵ And note that each Christian rejoices in Christ over the good of every [other Christian], because we all are one body in Christ, as says the Apostle.⁷⁶

[27] Therefore, just as the work of the eye is done by the man, because the man sees with the eye that sees, so by means of the man all the members function. Therefore, over the good of one member the entire body of Christ rejoices, and by means of the body all the members of the body [rejoice]. Thus, one person enters into the labors of the other, and there is a common good of each. This fact results from the oneness of the body, whose Head [is] Christ,⁷⁷ who is not different yesterday and today but is always the same.⁷⁸ And he who approaches in order to become a member of the body partakes of the joy also of the others, because the works of the others are common to him and to them. The situation is similar as regards the members of a [religious] chapter or a [religious] assembly. Although a person is admitted into the body today, nonetheless he rejoices, along with the others, over those who have been admitted [to the group]. And before his [formal] admittance he is included in the assembly and in its activities, because of the oneness of the chapter or of the chapter's body. Or more accu-

rately: [The situation is the same] as regards the humanity of Christ. For because [Christ] entered into a oneness of person [with God the Son], we say that this man Christ created the world, even though His humanity came after the creation.

[28] A certain [writer] furnishes also the example of a nutriment that today is converted into the nature of the one who is nourished. After the conversion there is predicated of the nutriment that which the man did previously before he consumed the food which now has passed over into the nature of that man and, after the converting, is made to be the man. And so, note that every Christian, because of the oneness of the body of Christ, in which he is a member, can say with the Psalmist: “I am a partaker with all those who fear You and who keep [Your commandments],”⁷⁹ because all activities and undergoings are common. Thus, Paul said to the Corinthians: “All things are yours, whether it be Paul or Apollo or Cephas or this world or life or death or things present or things to come. All are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”⁸⁰ And this is the communion of the saints.

[29] Meister Eckhart, [in his *Commentary*] on *John* said [the following], in the following passage: “If I were to love my neighbor as intensely as myself, surely his every glory, honor, merit, and good would be mine as well as his. And, likewise, there would be feelings for me in him, just as for me in myself.”⁸¹ And all his things would be mine without any difference of distinguishing. For this reason, perhaps, one is called a neighbor: that he is to be loved as an equal, not more and not less. Similarly, if I love God as I ought to—namely, with my whole heart, whole soul, whole mind, and with all my strength⁸²—then surely I love nothing (1) which I do not love in and through God and (2) in and through which I do not love God.”⁸³ And the other commandment ([namely, that] of love-of-neighbor) is like this one, as Christ says.⁸⁴ But each person, nonetheless, holds a place in his own order, even as there is one life of the entire body and each member rejoices over the life of the other (and suffers over the infirmity [of the other]). Nevertheless, the foot rejoices as a foot; and the eye, as an eye.

[30] And this is the communion of the saints, because each person is content with [what is] his own (as is read regarding the gathering of manna),⁸⁵ even as each member [of the body] is content with its place and ordering within the body. A just man is divine; and so, that pleases him which pleases God. Therefore, he rejoices more over the good that a more just man obtains than if he himself were to obtain it.

For example, he loves the glory of God more in Paul than in himself. But by loving [the good], that [good] is made his own by means of loving. For he has within himself the good that he loves. For even as what is visible is present, by means of seeing, in the one who sees, so what is lovable is present, by means of loving, in the one who loves. But to the degree that someone loves the good more intensely, to that degree he possesses it the more truly and enjoys it the more pleasantly.

And note that although fire strives to be present immediately at the sphere of the moon, nevertheless the lowest part and the middle part of fire do not strive beyond [their own respective spheres] because they have the same being as does the highest part of fire. For the being of the whole of fire is present equally and immediately in the whole fire and throughout the whole fire. Hence it is that the lowest part of the sphere of fire is joined, through the form of the whole, immediately to the sphere of the moon, just as is the middle part or the highest part. The situation is similar as regards each saint, who is a part of the Church triumphant.⁸⁶ Thus, the joy of all the elect is equal amid their unequal splendor, as Augustine said.⁸⁷

[31] Ponder well [the passage] where Jesus says: “I have sent you to reap. Others have labored, and you have entered into [their] labor.”⁸⁸ From the fact that someone is sent to this [task] by Christ, he enters into the labors of the saints who also were sent by Christ. For the Word of God has sent all; and so, there is one sending of all, just as there is one who sends but many who are sent [and] who succeed one another and who receive the wages of the one sending. The Christian, who is a member of Christ, is also a member of the saints. And so, he is sent in order to reap. Nevertheless, a preacher who is sent by Christ for reaping: because he is sent [in the footsteps] of other preachers, he enters into [their] labors, etc.

[32] There follows in the text: “Now, from that city many believed [in Him] because of the word of the woman giving testimony: ‘For He told me all things whatsoever I have done.’”⁸⁹ Note that a miracle naturally, in a certain way, generates faith. And it is now clearly evident that Christ worked that miracle for this reason, [namely, in order to beget faith]. “Therefore, when the Samaritans had come to Him, they asked that He remain there. And He remained there for two days. And many more [people] believed in Him because of His own word[s]. Lo, He remained for two days in order to preach and to convert-to-faith and in order that they would be saved.

[33] “And they said to the woman: ‘Now we believe [but] not on account of your word’ ”⁹⁰—lest on the basis of the weak testimony of the woman they would have been said to have received faith. “For we ourselves have heard [Him], and we know that He is truly the Savior of the world.”⁹¹ He who is not yet virtuous can by the testimony of another know, through hearing, virtue; and through faith and through a “glass darkly”⁹² he sees from a distance (Job 36).⁹³ But having virtue, he knows from himself; i.e., by means of the existence of virtue and the virtuous he knows face to face.⁹⁴ Accordingly, [those Samaritans] say: “We ourselves have heard, and we know . . .,” etc.

Faith enters through hearing,⁹⁵ and from faith there arises knowledge. Knowledge is face-to-face seeing (Genesis 32): “I have seen the Lord face to Face, and my soul has been saved.”⁹⁶ The following is true knowledge: When actualities are known through their existing [and] when effects [are known] through their cause, then there is no need of any other witness but [the knower] has the witness within himself.⁹⁷ It can be said that one who has formed-faith⁹⁸ (because such a one is Christlike with respect to the virtues, which are Christ) has within himself the witness of Christ, who is the Virtue of virtues. But one who has unformed faith has a witness from outside [himself].

For the present, let the foregoing things have been said in the foregoing way about the Gospel-passage and as regards the first part of the sermon. The second [part], which will be brief, follows.

PART TWO

[34] Our theme-verse says: “Speak to the rock in their presence, and it will yield water.”⁹⁹ The earth of the sacred Virgin has given us a Rock; if we speak to it, it will give us water. The Rock is that Living Well of which we have spoken in regard to the Gospel-passage. It is a Cornerstone that conjoins two walls: (1) There were the Gentiles, whom the Jews abhorred because of their idolatry; (2) there were the Jews, whom the Gentiles cursed because of their grievous ceremonies. That Stone *conjoined* by making peace [and] by removing those things that were the cause of hatred. (You have heard me [speak] about this matter more deeply elsewhere, on a certain feast-day of the Apostles.) Now, here [with regard to the theme-text] Christ is called the Rock in an area of the desert ([namely], the Wilderness of Sin)¹⁰⁰ in which nothing grew—neither fig-tree nor vineyard nor pomegranates. This

Rock was born from the earth, in an uncultivated Virginal land. A rock is originated from the soil without a seed, without cultivating, by the sole power of the sun. Christ was, in a similar way, born from the Virgin. In the dry rock not only is water found but [also there is found] the Living Fount which comes from God's Treasury. And [the following people] experience there to be a Fount there: [namely], those who believe and who approach by faith and who with an outpouring of prayer speak, in and through the Word of God, to the Rock as did Moses and Aaron.

[35] And pay attention to the story: Gainsaying and murmuring beset the people on the supposed basis that they had been misled because they lacked water in the wilderness. They were panting for the Land of Promise, as if they were saying: "What kind of God is this who promises such a good land and [then] leads us into death, because we will perish on account of thirst." Hence, in order that they would experience God working powerfully with regard to His promises, He showed the power of His word, instructing Moses and Aaron that they speak to the rock and it would yield water. And this was done. The word of God, not the rock, gave water; but the word was God's treasury that was opened in the rock for giving live-saving water. That water which flowed so generously had its source in the word or governance of the Omnipotent one. For every fount has from the water of the sea that from which its living stream is nourished. For all waters flow from the sea and reflow into the sea. Such was not the case with this stone; rather, its stream of water issued forth vitally from the Creator.

[36] Let us praise the Virgin, who has given to us the Rock, [namely, Christ]. Bowed down, let us pray in the desert of penitence for restoration. And let us speak to the Rock in complete faith, so that God may grant there to flow from it to us grace and consolation. If we believe, we shall receive spiritual water from the spiritual Rock. In this Rock, as He appeared visibly from the Virgin, is the Treasury (of the grace of the invisible Fount-of-life) that eternally vitalizes all [believers].

NOTES TO *Loquimini ad Petram coram Eis**

*Sermon CCLXXIV.

1. Numbers 20:8.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. I Corinthians 10:4.
4. John 4:42. March 25, 1457, was a Friday. It was the feast-day of the Annunciation.
5. The Gospel-passage for the day was the one from John 4.
6. John 4:1-4.
7. Luke 2:49.
8. John 4:5.
9. John 4:5-6.
10. John 4:6.
11. E.g., the Docetists.
12. Ecclesiasticus 24:11-13.
13. Genesis 27:36. The Hebrew name “Jacob” means *supplanter*.
14. I Corinthians 13:11.
15. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
16. John 4:7.
17. Jesus, the Water of life and of wisdom, was sitting on the well.
18. Romans 15:32. II Timothy 1:16.
19. Psalms 81:6 (82:6).
20. Nicholas trades upon the meaning of the Latin adjective “altus,” which can mean either *high* or *deep*, depending upon the context.
21. Matthew 26:11.
22. Psalms 80:11 (81:10).
23. John 4:7 (4:8).
24. Augustine, *De Haeresibus*, XL (*PL* 42:32). These heretics taught that Christians are to own nothing, as Christ and His disciples are thought by them to have owned nothing. See *The Catholic Encyclopedia* under “Apostolici”.
25. Psalms 61:11 (62:10).
26. John 4:9.
27. John 4:10.
28. The Nicene-Constantinople Creed (381) states that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is the Spirit of both equally.
29. Note John 3:16.
30. Aristotle distinguished the moral virtues (e.g., courage) from the non-moral virtues (e.g., practical wisdom). Christian Churchmen later introduced the theological virtues (faith, hope, love).
31. John 4:11.
32. John 4:12.
33. John 4:13-14.
34. John 4:14.
35. Deuteronomy 4:24. Hebrews 12:29.
36. John 4:24.

37. Here at 1 6:22 Nicholas uses “placidum” in the sense of “placitum”.
38. John 7:38-39.
39. John 4:15.
40. I Corinthians 2:14.
41. John 4:16.
42. John 4:17-18.
43. Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super Iohannem* 4:22.
44. John 4:19.
45. John 4:20.
46. Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super Iohannem* 4:19.
47. John 4:21.
48. John 4:22.
49. According to Nicholas, none of us can know *what* God is or is like in and of Himself. We can, however, know that He exists and is to be symbolized in terms of compatible perfections.
50. John 4:22.
51. John 4:23.
52. *Loc. cit.*
53. John 4:25.
54. Genesis 49:10.
55. That is, from the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding the scepter, she knew that the remainder of the prophecy would be fulfilled.
56. John 4:25.
57. II Thessalonians 3:16.
58. I Corinthians 1:24.
59. John 4:26.
60. Exodus 3:14.
61. John 4:27.
62. John 4:28-29.
63. Psalms 7:10 (7:9).
64. John 4:30.
65. John 4:31-32.
66. John 4:31-34.
67. John 4:35.
68. That is, in Brixen there are still four months until the harvest. And so, the reading of this Gospel-passage is timely.
69. John 4:35.
70. John 4:36.
71. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
72. Matthew 13:39.
73. John 4:36-38.
74. Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmum LXXXV*, n. 1 (*PL* 37:1082).
75. *Ibid.*, n. 4 (*PL* 37:1084).
76. Romans 12:5. I Corinthians 12:12.
77. Ephesians 4:15.
78. Hebrews 13:8.
79. Psalms 118:63 (119:63).

80. I Corinthians 3:22-23.
 81. Ephesians 5:29.
 82. Deuteronomy 6:5.
 83. That is, whatever I love I love in and through God; and I love God in and through whatever I love.
 84. Mark 12:31.
 85. Exodus 16:18.
 86. Nicholas borrows from Meister Eckhart. See Eckhart's *Expositio Sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem* [in Meister Eckhart. Die lateinischen Werke, Vol. III, edited by Karl Christ and Joseph Koch (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936-1940)]. Vol. III, margin number 399.
 Note also *Cusanus-Texte. I. Predigten. 2.15. Vier Predigten im Geiste Eckharts*, edited by Joseph Koch [Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. 2. Abhandlung, 1937].
 87. Koch cites Prosper Aquitanus, *Sententiae Delibatae ex Augustino*, n. 362 (PL 45:1892).
 88. John 4:38.
 89. John 4:39.
 90. John 4:42.
 91. *Loc. cit.*
 92. I Corinthians 13:12.
 93. Job 36:25.
 94. I Corinthians 13:12.
 95. Romans 10:17.
 96. Genesis 32:30.
 97. Borrowed from Eckhart, *op. cit.*, margin number 405.
 98. See my n. 39 of the sermon "*Ut Filii Lucis Ambulate*".
 99. Numbers 20:8.
 100. Exodus 16:1.

Non Sumus Ancillae Filii*

(“We Are Not Children of the Bondwoman ...”)¹
[March 27, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “We are not children of the bondwoman but of the free [woman], by the freedom by which Christ has made us free.”

The feast today is one of a certain gladness and is called *Laetare Sunday*. It is [also] called *Rose Sunday* [and] *Loaves of bread Sunday*. You know the reasons [for these epithets].

I

[2] We can rightly name [this] Sunday from “*laetitia*” because in the Epistle for [today’s] mass the Apostle expresses for us those things that are joyous. For he says: “Rejoice, O barren” [Galatians 4:27], for our mother is she in whom barrenness is fecundity—just as in Mary virginity was fecundity, because she brought forth a blessing for all nations. For the faith which in the case of Mary brought about these things is barren. [3] In the intellect there is a certain fountain-like fecundity; for [the intellect] begets streams of reasons by means of which it imparts an intellectual likeness of itself. For its fecundity shines forth in its reasons, which are lovely and good to the extent that the intellect shines forth in and through them. However, faith is barren, for it has no children, i.e., no reasons; and the more reasons it would have, the more diminished it would be.

[4] So faith is barren; but when we rightly consider it, [we see that] that barrenness is fecundity. This fact is evident in the case of Abraham and Sarah, where by faith in the promise, there was born by natural means Isaac, who otherwise [than by faith] could not have been born. And in that seed was present a fount of blessing; and later it was present in Jacob. For the Apostle declares [in the Epistle] to the Romans that not only the children of Sarah but also the children of Rebecca were children of the promise.² Likewise, it is also evident [that this blessing was present] in the case of Zachary and Elizabeth³—and, at length, last of all and most perfectly, in the case of the Virgin Mary, where faith gave to us Christ. [5] And take note of the reason that Scripture says that Christ came in the end-time and in the fullness of time.⁴ For in the Virgin Mary this fecundity of faith reached its highest and final level, beyond which there is no other level. This [level] is of such great perfection that it enfolds within itself the entire fecundi-

ty of faith; for it is the form and exemplar whereby faith regenerates a son of man and elevates him in proportion to his ability to believe— [elevates him] even unto the form of God.

[6] In the case of Abraham faith culminated in a begetting on the part of one who was barren, who begat a child promised to her by God, whom she believed. In the case of the Virgin Mary faith culminated in the begetting of the Son of God—[God] whom Mary believed. Behold, how fecund is that barren mother-of-faith, [Sarah], from whose fecundity all the children of Israel have proceeded and continue to proceed!⁵ These [descendants] see God [both] here and in the future—here in a dark way,⁶ there face-to-Face. [7] Now, note well that in the barrenness of faith there is very great fecundity. For example, as say those physicians who are called empiricists: at times certain herbs produce wondrous cures. Indeed, we experience this [fact about herbs] to be true; for instance, [we experience] that scammony purges cholera. However, no reason for this can be given, since the effect proceeds from a hidden and special property; but he who trusts the authority of him-who-is-experienced discovers this fact to be true, even though no rational consideration is persuasive thereof. And from these medicines we experience greater-effects, and more assuredly reliable⁷ effects, than we do in cases where the physiologists, through exploratory reasoning, concoct a remedy.

[8] Therefore, faith (1) that the Incarnate Word of God cures all lassitude of soul and (2) that causes the soul to renew its youth, i.e., its innocence, and (3) that always keeps the soul in [a state of] innocence is like a proven remedy that has this [set of effects] from a special property. And if someone believes this [claim] to be true, then he will find, by experience, that he is happy. This finding is a *seeing*, which is a more reliable state than is *reasoning*. [9] And so, it is evident that in the barrenness of faith, from which seeing follows, there is greater fecundity than is present in that which, on the basis of many rational considerations, is asserted to be fecund. And, indeed, in the case of the children-of-promise experience has taught that faith has brought about the outcome. Note very carefully that the promise is the word of God. God is truthful and faithful. Hence, he who has the word of His promise rests assured. This word saves him who believes in Christ, who is the Promise⁸ and the Word. The [one who believes] will obtain God's sonship, because sonship is promised to believers,⁹ and sonship *is* the promise.

[10] Pay attention to the difference between Sarah's faith and Mary's faith. For the fact that an elderly woman believes that by the grace of God she still can conceive from an elderly man in accordance with the pleasure of the flesh has no comparison with the faith of the Virgin, who believed that apart from a male seed she could conceive a son by the gift of the Holy Spirit of the Most High. Of what great fecundity was that promised seed—in barren Sarah—is evident. For, as said the Prophet,¹⁰ and as Paul states in the Epistle,¹¹ many more were procreated from her who was barren [than from her who had a husband]. For on account of the grace of the promise the blessed seed was, [in the case of Sarah], turned into a living and fecund fount—more so than in the case of fecund Hagar, the bondwoman. For the descendants of Isaac increased innumerably. Similarly, spiritual fecundity, as symbolized in barren [Sarah], is immeasurable. For John of the Apocalypse says that he saw a multitude that no one can number¹²—[a multitude] which, in the vision, followed from out of the tribes of Israel. [11] Moreover, note (in accordance with the lovely gloss¹³ on this passage to the Romans¹⁴ concerning the fact that Abraham believed against [all] hope and was justified) that even as Abraham was justified because he believed that through his seed Christ would come according to the flesh, so we too are justified who believe that Christ has come and that God has raised Him from the dead. Hence, we do not have doubt about [our] resurrection and glorification on the basis of justification by faith.

[12] I understand, then, that we who are not descended from the bondwoman Hagar (for he who is born from a bondwoman is a servant, [since] the offspring follows the womb)¹⁵ are from barren Sarah, our mother, who is free. Through her we are children of the promise,¹⁶ which is faith. And so, we are not brothers of Ismael (who was born in bondage and according to the flesh and in a natural way). For we are not bound to the servitude of the Old Testament, viz., to circumcision and to ceremonial observances and to the law of works. For in accordance with the promise we are brothers of free Isaac and are born of faith. [13] Hence, the promise made to Abraham, the father of faith, culminated in Christ, who was promised to Abraham; that is, [there was promised] that Christ would come from Abraham's seed. Therefore, it is evident that the promise-of-faith does not stop with Christ in order that He can be greater but rather is fulfilled in Christ, than whom nothing greater can be thought.¹⁷

[14] Likewise, note that Abraham, who believed the foregoing, was justified by Christ, for his faith ascended all the way unto Christ. Therefore, all justification by faith is perfected in Christ. Therefore, one errs who thinks that he can obtain justice¹⁸ on the basis of a faith that does not accept Christ. Hence, in the Gospel there is rightly said that Christ is the son of Abraham,¹⁹ for He is the Son promised for Abraham's seed. And, likewise, Christ is promised to us believers; i.e., it is promised that He is to be born spiritually in our spirit by means of the seed of faith. For He is born in us when His life is hidden in us.²⁰ For just as because of Abraham's faith Christ, according to the flesh, was in his seed, so through faith Christ was spiritually in Abraham's spirit. For in spirit Abraham desired nothing except Christ. Therefore, Christ, who was yet to exist from Abraham according to the flesh, was in a real way present in Abraham's thought and spirit. And so, Abraham was *just*, because God's justice was in him. [15] Christ is the true Justice that justifies everyone who is just. Thus, in every believer who is justified by faith it is necessary that Christ be present, who alone is the justification of those who are just.²¹ This justification is received when one takes account of the merit of the suffering by means of which when [Christ] obeyed²² the Father He merited eternal life for all those who accept Him by faith. Because they believe Christ, Christ makes them to be sharers of the merit of Him who justifies everyone who is justified. Therefore, Christ is the Liberator, who frees the sons of God²³ and of the promise from all bondage of the Prince of darkness²⁴ and of death.

[16] Pay careful attention to the fact that Abraham had two sons. One was born according to the flesh; the other, according to the promise. One was born by natural means; the other, through the grace of faith. The son who [was born] according to the promise propagated from himself the people of *Israel*—i.e., *the people who saw God*.²⁵ Hence, all who arrive at seeing God are sons of Abraham according to the promise. And the promise was fulfilled in Christ, who was promised in and through all the sons of promise. (For they all have the name of promise from Christ, who was promised in and through them. Indeed, Christ *is* the Promise.) Therefore, the sons-of-Abraham in whom Christ is present through faith—these are the true sons of the promise. They are born not according to the flesh but through faith.

[17] Therefore, the mystical Body of Christ is the Promise, i.e., the Seed, in and through which all the nations of the earth will be

blessed. Thus, it is evident that only Christians are sons of Abraham according to the promise. The true names “Israel” and “Jerusalem that is from above” befit them—i.e., [the names] “the vision of God” and “the vision of peace.”²⁶ All other sons are called sons of Abraham (i.e., sons of the father of many nations),²⁷ according to the flesh; these sons do not arrive at the things that are of the Spirit of God. Consider the Apostle, who says that Jerusalem that is from above is our mother,²⁸ i.e., is [the mother] of Christians. And this mother is faith. In the present [world, faith is] a symbolic seeing, but in the future [world there will be] a face-to-Face seeing. Moreover, faith is from above because it is a grace of God.²⁹

Let these points suffice with regard to the first topic.

II

[18] The second topic concerns the rose. We ought to know that by means of the rose—which [at today’s feast] the pope carries with honor and gives to one who is quite noble—the Roman Church symbolizes for us spiritual joy. For at the beginning of planting, the rose was hidden in the rose-cutting;³⁰ and in the springtime it comes into the visible world. [The new rose is] not another rose than what it was in potency; but [it now exists] in a different way. For what is intellectual takes on visible form when it is seen by the intellect, which saw the bush in the seed and saw, in the bush, the blossom—and [which saw], speaking generally, in the potential the actual and in the present [condition] the future [condition]. Hence, when the rose that comes from potency to actuality is visible, then the rose-cutting ceases its activity; and so, the rose is the end-product of the planting of the rose-cutting. [19] In the rose there are two things, viz., beauty and fragrance. Beauty nourishes the eyes; fragrance nourishes the sense of smell. Hence, by means of the rose we are given to understand that a certain immaterial beauty nourishes the eye of the mind, viz., the intellect, and that [a certain] immaterial fragrance nourishes the olfactory power of the mind, viz., the will, or the affective power.

Now, this immaterial beauty is an object that makes the intellectual spirit cling tightly to it; and [this beauty] continuously infuses a likeness of itself, so that it makes the [intellectual] power to be like itself. We see that the beauty in things turns the eyes to itself and in a certain way binds immovably to itself the beholder, so that he cannot look away. [20] Lo, how greatly pleasing is the beauty of innocence, the beauty of life, the beauty of courage, the beauty of honorableness,

the beauty of glory, the beauty of honor, the beauty of orderedness, the beauty of customs, the beauty of virtue, and so on. And since all of these are beautiful because of beauty, how greatly pleasing can be true Beauty itself, which has no admixture of the impure and imperfect. No one can [adequately] express this fact. [Yet,] he easily understands [it] who considers that the ornate cosmos—or something perceptibly beautiful (which has a sizable admixture of impurity and imperfection) is [greatly] pleasing. Now, no beautiful thing in this world has all possible beauty; and so, [it] is imperfect. However, Ineffable Beauty—the Fount of everything beautiful [insofar as it is beautiful]—has within it all beauty in an eternal and infinite perfection.

[21] Secondly, there is in this world nothing that so resembles a feast for the spirit as does a fragrance, which is an invisible aeration and thus is more nearly immaterial than are all other nutrients. Now, a fragrance nourishes; for it is written that certain men in India are nourished by, and live from, fragrance. Therefore, fragrance that so greatly delights us arouses us to draw it unto us. And when it is drawn unto us, it begets enjoyment in our natural spirit. For it very greatly comforts our nature. Hence, that [analogous] fragrance that nourishes our rational spirit with gladness is pleasant, pure, true, and unmixed, and is pleasantness itself.

[22] Our spirit, or mind, is rightly made happy by God's beauty and pleasantness. God is Goodness itself. Hence, by means of the goodness of beauty (which unites the mind to itself) and the goodness of pleasantness (which is drawn-close by the mind) the mind will live in perpetual gladness. But the Medium of the coinciding in which the beauty and the pleasantness of the intellectual life coincide is the Word-of-God made flesh. Through this [Medium] the happy man is united with God, who is Beauty itself; and through this [Medium] the happy man is nourished with divine pleasantness.

[23] Thus, since this rose symbolizes Christ's humanity, in which is present Beauty itself and divine Pleasantness, and since Christ's humanity is no longer corruptible, because it is glorified and hence is completely separated from death and corruption: the pope carries a golden rose (i.e., one that is incorruptible and very precious), so that we are elevated from a corruptible rose unto that incorruptible [Rose] and are elevated from the visible [rose] unto the eternal and invisible [Rose] that bestows immortal life and that is the Paradise-of-delights for our mind.³¹ [24] Therefore, to the [golden] rose [carried

by the pope] chrisim is applied in order to denote Christ; and balsam is added because of its very pleasant fragrance, which the gold does not have, although it well has the shape of a rose. Paul said: “We are Christ’s fragrance.”³² For those who convey the word of God convey Christ; and by preaching the gospel they spread the fragrance. If they live like Christ did, then they *are* His fragrance; for he who pursues this fragrance will come to this Rose.

Let the foregoing things have been said according as God has given [them] for an increase of our gladness. He who desires to know more concerning the symbolism of the rose will be able to read the *Rationale regarding Divine Matters*³³ and other writings of the learned.

III

[25] There is a third topic concerning the third name for [this present] Sunday, viz., “Loaves of bread Sunday.” [This name is given] because the Gospel-reading [for today] speaks of loaves of bread.³⁴ So let us consider that the Word of God, who preached to the people about eternal life, willed to inform even the simple people [of the following]: that he to whom God is merciful and to whom He disposes to give the Kingdom of eternal life—[to him] the Word of God can give living food, even as here below He gave, by the power of God, food to the hungry when there was more [food] than it took for the feeding. [26] Today’s feast is joyous because if [when] we are hungry because of abstaining from vices, we find here below in our desiring spirit [that] there is someone who can feed [us] and who is merciful, so that He permits no one to perish on this pilgrimage, then how much more abundantly will the Word of God feed [us] in the Heavenly Land of plenty! By means of this Gospel-passage of ours³⁵ we see, in [right] order, that the word of God nourishes first through our hearing [and] then through our tasting. We saw earlier that it nourishes through our sight and our sense of smell. By reference to these four senses let us infer four stages of spiritual contact. Every sensing is a certain touching. The intellectual nature is nourished by the word of God—i.e., is nourished by its authority [and] by its succulence. [27] Here it is relevant to consider in what condition, in relation to us, ought to be the spirit that is to be fed in this way. For our inner man, in order to apprehend the word, ought to have (1) ears that are open and receptive and (2) a strong and clear auditory spirit. Hence, since the word of God is intellectual bread, we ought to take note of the condition of the bread.

[28] The bread is Sacred Scripture. And he who is to draw nour-

ishment from the bread must chew it and must moisten its dryness with his own moisture in order in this way to [be able to] swallow it and be nourished. Scripture ought to be greatly broken into smaller sections and greatly ground up as if by teeth. And [this breaking-and-grinding] is called *searching*; for the Savior says “Search [the Scriptures] ...,” etc.³⁶ Now, vital nourishment is elicited if one comes to Scripture’s center; for its deepest [center-point] is Christ, who is Living Bread.³⁷ [29] And consider that the one to be fed must introduce salivary moistness into the bread that has been broken down [in chewing]—[must do so] if the bread is to provide him with nourishment. This moistness is the humility of faith. Thereafter, the word is conveyed into the stomach of memory, and there it is cooked by the heat of love. Next, the *spiritual* (which befits the spirit) is separated from the *perceptible*, i.e., from the letter.³⁸ And this separation is made by the very subtile mesentery veins; they are the spiritual senses. And in the liver there is made a distribution to all the [bodily] members, i.e., to all the powers of the soul. [30] All these things occur by themselves without our paying attention if only we are healthy, so that our soul has healthy senses and instruments—i.e., healthy spiritual organs. If [the soul] lacks teeth, or if the teeth are dull or unfit for chewing, [or] if the mouth is dry, [or] if the tongue is infected, [or] if the stomach is weak, [or] if the liver is infected, then the word will not nourish the spirit.

[31] The word of God³⁹ gives wholesome bread; but the Evil One gives the bread of death. The word of God gives the bread of nature. Genesis 3: “In the sweat of your face ...,” etc.⁴⁰ Ecclesiasticus 33: “Fodder and a rod and a burden are for an ass; bread and correction and work are for a slave.”⁴¹ By “ass” and “slave” the body is understood; by “fodder” and “bread” the food of nature and the necessity of sustenance [are understood]. By the other [two] things [are meant] (1) an affection for mortifying [the flesh] and (2) the engaging in labor. Consult Mauritius’s *Distinctions* as regards *bread*.⁴²

[32] Likewise, we must carefully consider the fact that Christ ministers the bread of life. As has been said very wisely, let Christ be conceived of as Virtue. In that case, the persuasion that leads away from the lusts of the flesh and leads unto a love of the immortal virtues is the ministering of the bread of life for the intellectual spirit—[the bread of life] that the Word of God ministers. And [the Word] distributes one bread unto a thousand who are hungry, because, in them all, there is one faith, one spirit, one baptism.⁴³ Even as they are *just* by

means of one justice and through one justice have been called from injustice unto justice, and even as by one heat [they have been brought] from coldness into warmth, so all who are just are the body of a single justice—of which body justice is the form, or life. The case is similar as regards truth and life; for there is one divine life that enlivens all the spirits of [all] the just. And [the just] are one body that is alive with one divine life, which is the Word of God, i.e., Christ.

Our having touched upon the foregoing topics in the foregoing way suffices for our better understanding the things that follow, in John 6, regarding the Living Bread, which enlivens all who partake of it.⁴⁴

NOTES TO *Non Sumus Ancillae Filii*

- * Sermon CCLXXV.
- 1. Galatians 4:31.
- 2. Romans 9:8-10.
- 3. Luke 1:5 ff.
- 4. Galatians 4:4.
- 5. Nicholas does not mean that all the natural descendants of Abraham are saved. He means that all men of faith are saved. These are called children of Abraham, the father of faith (Galatians 3:7). Abraham and many of his natural descendants were saved by looking forward to Christ, even as Christians are saved by looking back on Christ. See section **1 4** below.
- 6. I Corinthians 13:12.
- 7. As regards the translation of “*infallibilis*” and its variants, see pp. 10-12 of my *Hugh of Balma on Mystical Theology: A Translation and an Overview of His De Theologia Mystica* (Minneapolis: Banning, 2002).
- 8. II Cor. 1:20. N.B. In the Latin text above (at **9**:10) I am repunctuating the Latin sentence so as to read: “... est promissio et verbum. Assequetur filiationem ...” This punctuation is permitted by both manuscripts (viz., *Codex Ashburnham* 1374 in Florence, Italy and *Codex Vaticanus* 1245).
- 9. II Corinthians 6:18.
- 10. Isaias (Isaiah) 54:1.
- 11. Galatians 4:27-30.
- 12. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:9.
- 13. Origen, *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos*, IV, 6. See n. 19 of Sermon CCLXX, as regards an English translation.
- 14. Romans 4:18-22.
- 15. “The offspring follows the womb” (“*Partus sequitur ventrem*”). That is, the offspring follows the mother. In other words, if a mother is a bondwoman, then her neonate is born into bondage, irrespective of whether the father of the child is a bondman or a free man.
- 16. Galatians 4:28.
- 17. St. Anselm’s formula (“God is Something than which a greater cannot be thought,” from *Proslogion* 2) is here applied by Nicholas to Christ, who, according to Orthodox theology, is God.
- 18. Nicholas uses “justice” (“*iustitia*”) in the sense of *righteousness*.
- 19. Galatians 3:7.
- 20. Colossians 1:27. Cf. therewith Colossians 3:3 and John 6:54.
- 21. I Corinthians 1:30.
- 22. Philippians 2:8.
- 23. John 1:12.
- 24. Satan is the Prince of Darkness (and the Prince of Death). Cf. Colossians 1:13.
- 25. Nicholas here unfolds the meaning of the name “Israel”.
- 26. “Jerusalem” means “possession of peace,” and “Israel” means “seeing God.”

27. "Abraham" means "father of many."
28. Galatians 4:26.
29. Ephesians 2:8.
30. Usually, not a rose-seed but the "cutting" from a rose-plant is planted in order to grow new roses.
31. Christ is this Rose. Traditionally, Song of Solomon (Canticle of Canticles) 2:1 has been construed by Christian orthodoxy as signifying Christ: "I am the rose of Sharon"
32. II Corinthians 2:15.
33. Guillaume Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (Nürnberg, 1494), Book VI, section entitled *de Quarta Dominica Quadragesimae et Feriis*. In particular, see folio CXCI^v.
34. John 6:5-59.
35. John 6:5-59.
36. John 5:39.
37. John 6:41.
38. That is, the meaning is extracted from the written words.
39. See my n. 22 of Sermon CCLXIX ("Sufficit Tibi Gratia Mea").
40. Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread" These words were said by God to Adam and Eve after they had sinned and immediately before they were expelled from the Garden of Eden.
41. Ecclesiasticus 33:25.
42. Mauritius Hibernicus, *Distinctiones*. The editors of the Latin texts here refer to *Codex Cusanus* 27.
43. Ephesians 4:4-5.
44. More literally: "In the foregoing way [we] have sufficiently touched upon the foregoing matters, so that in John 6 the items that follow [there] regarding the Living Bread, which enlivens all who partake of it, are better understood.