

**Qui per Spiritum Sanctum semet ipsum Obtulit\***

(“Who by the Holy Spirit Offered Himself”)<sup>1</sup>

[April 4, 1457; preached in Brixen]

PART ONE

[1] “By the Holy Spirit He offered Himself.” (Hebrews 9)

At an earlier time you heard sufficiently how it is that Christ—not by another’s [blood] but by His own blood—entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption.<sup>2</sup> Animals are found to have been offered in sacrifice to God—namely, those animals which were worshiped in Egypt as representing God. [Note] Exodus 8, where Moses says: “For we shall sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians to the Lord our God. But if in the Egyptians’ presence we kill those things which they worship, they will stone us.”<sup>3</sup>

[2] I have read that the Egyptians abominate the sheep that were supposed to be sacrificed to God. But Nicholas of Lyra says that the Jews designate as abominations sacrifices that are made to idols.<sup>4</sup> And note that before the Israelite people went out from the land of Egypt, the sacrificing of animals was [already] established [as a practice]. But after this people took up [the practice of] these sacrifices (in order to show that the Lord their God was a Great-God-above-all-gods, to whom the gods of the Egyptians were presented [by them] as an offering), there arose at length [among the heathen] a sacrifice in which even human beings were sacrificed to the gods of the Gentiles—[sacrificed] against their will by others. St. Augustine and Eusebius Pamphyli [write about this practice].<sup>5</sup>

[3] But because God the Father is so great that even man is supposed to offer himself to God by the Holy Spirit: the consummate sacrifice, through which the God of gods is made known, is the sacrifice of Christ, who offered Himself by the Holy Spirit in order to show the glory of God. [He offered Himself] by the Holy Spirit, not by the spirit of error, as those were deceived (1) who offered human beings to Saturn in order to placate an evil [spirit] or in order to obtain a victory or (2) who hurled themselves toward death in order to have an immortal memorial.

By the Holy Spirit Christ offered Himself unspotted unto God—[unspotted] because by means of this [deed] He did not seek anything except God’s glory. He was unspotted [by sin]; and so, [He was] a

Holy Sacrifice pleasing to God. Therefore, God the Father is shown to be so great that Christ, who alone is immaculate and most high, taught by His own example that one is to be obedient to God even unto death.<sup>6</sup>

[4] The Apostle asserted that “if the blood of goats and of oxen and the ashes of a heifer, being sprinkled, sanctify (i.e., cleanse) the defiled, for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Spirit offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”<sup>7</sup> Under penalty of excommunication it was forbidden [under the Law of Moses]<sup>8</sup> that anyone who touched something dead, thereby becoming defiled, should associate with others before being sprinkled with the ashes of a heifer—as if he were being bathed with water. This [sprinkling] was done for the cleansing of the flesh. Much more will the blood of Christ, which is more efficacious, cleanse our conscience from the dead works of mortal sin.

[5] Indeed, every sacrifice is for the cleansing either of the flesh (i.e., of the outer man) or of the conscience (i.e., of the inner man). There is a sole sacrifice for the cleansing of the conscience, namely, the sacrifice of the Immaculate Christ by the Holy Spirit. In this [sacrifice] all [other] sacrifices are enfolded. For the variety of baptisms and sacrifices for the cleansing of the flesh do not cleanse the spirit; and so, [this] variety does not have perfection, because it cleanses only temporarily the temporal body and because it [only] *frees* the one who has been excommunicated (namely, the one who was cast out of the synagogue). But [Christ’s] perfect sacrifice cleanses and frees from Satan and *causes* [one] *to enter into* the Holies after [his] having obtained eternal redemption.<sup>9</sup> The Apostle says “having obtained.” For these holy things were lost, but by means of Christ’s death they were obtained.

[6] Note: the conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ, i.e., by a spiritual and invisible sprinkling (just as by the visible sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer the defiled flesh [is cleansed]). The sprinkling is the application of the merit, or payment, of Christ’s death. For when the priest under the Law applied his intention to the cleansing of the defiled-one, then the unclean-one was made clean by the shedding of the blood [of animals]. Likewise, the application of the intention of Christ, who wills to cleanse, makes clean the conscience by means of the shedding of His own blood.

[7] Consider the fact that [the Apostle] says “by the Holy Spirit”—as if the Holy Spirit (namely, Love) had offered up Christ but yet Christ gave Himself over [to death]. The Father delivered Christ up [to death] for us; Christ Himself offered Himself; and Christ was offered up by the Holy Spirit. These [occurrences] are nothing other than that the will of the Father that [Christ] would die was also the Son’s [will], which is [also] the Holy Spirit’s [will].

The text says that [Christ] offered Himself. Thus, Christ’s death was not a natural death or a forceful death but, as Augustine says (in *De Trinitate* 9),<sup>10</sup> was, rather, a miraculous death.

The text says “... [offered Himself] unspotted unto God.” For the lamb that at Passover was commanded to be offered was to be without blemish. Therefore, Christ, who was befigured in all the sacrifices, had all the virtues. For He was the innocent and immaculate Lamb, etc.

[8] [The text] says “... from dead works.” For the death of an incinerated animal [served to] cleanse from the contamination that was contracted from contact with the dead. Similarly, Christ’s death frees from dead works, i.e., from the infection-of-soul contracted from dead works. Contact with the unclean *defiles*, just as it is said “He who touches pitch is defiled from it.”<sup>11</sup> The case is similar as regards [touching] someone leprous or [touching] a corpse. So this defilement comes from a conjoining, i.e., a union, of a healthy body with a leprous body and of a living body with a corpse. Similarly, the soul is defiled from its union with an unclean spirit and with a spirit of death. From this infection [the soul] works dead works, which are without the [presence of the] enlivening Holy Spirit, who is called Love. Therefore, by the death of Christ the soul is freed from this union by which a man’s spirit clings to the spirit-of-death, through which his works are dead.

[9] The Savior said: “I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven.”<sup>12</sup> Likewise understand that with Christ’s intervening merit, or with the power of His suffering or the power of the shedding of His innocent blood, Satan quickly falls as lightning from the sky. [10] The physicians say that the blood of innocent children cures leprosy of the body. Similarly, the power of the merit of Christ’s blood [cures] leprosy of the soul. The Prophet told the leper Naaman the Syrian to bathe seven times in the Jordan River and he would be cleansed.<sup>13</sup> If by means of water the word [of the Prophet] cleanses the believer from leprosy of body, why is it strange that also [the Word of God], by

means of the merit of His death, cleanses the believer from leprosy-of-soul? If Naaman, once bathed, obtained living flesh as of a clean and lively child in order that he might serve his king, then why is it strange if a living soul is made, by the washing of the merit of Christ's blood, [such] that he may serve the Living God?

[11] Moreover, note the text of Leviticus 16, how it is that the priest under the Law dipped his finger into the blood of a sacrificed lamb and sprinkled it with his finger seven times against the propitiatory to the east.<sup>14</sup> These [actions] signified, by means of the befigurement made, that Christ, the true Priest, sprinkled—with the Finger of God (i.e., with the Holy Spirit), anointed with, or dipped in, the merit of [Christ's] blood, or death—seven times against the propitiatory of the Paternal graciousness. It is as if [Christ] showed that by the Spirit of Love His blood was shed in order to move the Father to be propitious to sinners, for whom the blood of His Beloved Son was shed, with the Father thus ordaining it. Now, [Christ] sprinkled seven times, so that we may understand by the number seven (whereby all things are signified) that all those sins are washed away which are understood to be present in the septenary of sins<sup>15</sup>—just as Mary Magdalene is read to have been freed by Christ from seven demons.<sup>16</sup> In this septenary, according to the saints, all transgressions are understood [to be included].

[12] The Apostle says that Christ is the Mediator of a New Testament.<sup>17</sup> The Law of Moses and the sayings of the Prophets are said to be the Old Testament, i.e., to be a befiguring of the New [Testament].<sup>18</sup> Lactantius said<sup>19</sup> that the Testament is called Old because it was a closed testament until the death of the Testator. Hence, before the death of the Lawgiver, namely, the Incarnate Word, it remained concealed; but by means of the death, that which was hidden was revealed. And so, the veil of the temple was rent when Christ died.<sup>20</sup> It is as if someone were to bequeath to someone else an almond with an outer-hull and a nut-shell. The whole [almond] is as the testament, or bequest, of a testator. But in the outer-hull there is bitterness; in the nut-shell, hardness. [13] But when the outer-hull is removed and the nut-shell broken open, there is found the new bequest, previously unknown; and it is the fruit of life. Similarly, there is a word hidden within the outer-hull of the written form. Or again, [the Word is hidden] in the humanity of Christ. Finally, by means of the breaking open of the nut-shell the power of God appeared in the Resurrection. Note

that in Numbers 17 it is said that the rod of Jesse bloomed; and the blossoms, with leaves spread out, were formed into almonds.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the almonds signify Christ; the rod of Aaron [signifies] the birth of Christ, with respect to which [the rod] symbolizes.

[14] Pay attention also to one [more] thing: [namely,] that when—after the nut-shell has been broken open, and after the veil has been rent—one comes to the inner coverings: the nucleus still has a [surrounding] husk. The visible outer-hull is [i.e., symbolizes] the [alphabetical] letter. The nut-shell hidden within the outer-hull is the corporeal seed of blessing, i.e., the human nature of Christ. The [surrounding] husk that adheres to the nucleus is Christ's inner man. The pure nucleus is the Word, or Divinity.

Moreover, those who seek the deliciousness of the fruit in its purity discard the inner husk. For just as our outer man is related to our soul, so Christ's inner man [is related] to His divinity, which furnishes the delicious and immortal life that united to itself the husk [and that] deliciously nourishes. Christ's soul contains the divine deliciousness that nourishes the entire living spirit.

[15] It seems to me that the [New Testament] is called a testament because it contains the decree of the adoption of sons,<sup>22</sup> who are to obtain the inheritance so that they are true co-heirs of the Son.<sup>23</sup> And of such a thing it is written-about in the book which no one can read except Christ, who through His voluntary death was made worthy to open the book and to loose its seven seals.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the Son opens the book, because He explains the hidden meaning and declares that He is the true Heir and that by means of His death He has many brothers and co-heirs.

[16] Zacharias [Zachariah] the Prophet called this merit-of-blood a testament-of-blood, saying "You also by the blood of Your testament have sent forth Your prisoners from the pit wherein is no water,"<sup>25</sup> namely, from Limbo. For those who were imprisoned because of transgressions, [and] who have been sent forth by grace, came to the inheritance of God. Now, the New Testament is that which God proclaimed for our sake, that which Christ foretold, that which the Holy Spirit wrote in the hearts of His believers, that which renews us by means of true sacraments, of just precepts, and of eternal promises. Augustine in his book of *Eighty Three Questions*, Chapter 16, marks the difference between the two Testaments.<sup>26</sup> For in the Old [Testament] there are the burdens of servants; in the New [Testament] there is the glory of chil-

dren. In the former the prefiguring of our possession is known; in the latter that possession is contained. In the former there is fear; in the latter, love. The former pertains to the old man; the latter, to the new man. In the former rigorousness restricts; in the latter love delights. Nevertheless, by the most merciful dispensation of the one God [the New Testament] was set forth and confirmed.

[17] I rightly understand, in accordance with the Gloss on Hebrews 9, that the [New] Testament was confirmed by [Christ's] death.<sup>27</sup> The Gloss says: Christ, in the declaration of the things to which He attested, willed to give Himself up to die, lest someone would have doubt about those [declarations]. He Himself who is Truth deceives no one with respect to that which He promises. But He promised an eternal inheritance; and by means of His death [believers] receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.<sup>28</sup> [The text] says "by means of His death" because unless it were true [that He died], no one would be saved. For the suffering of the Lord is the payment for the world. Understand [this statement] always in a spiritual sense—namely [in the sense that] the merit of [Christ's] suffering justifies us, as regards the justifying and enlivening fruit that restores and heals and strengthens and vitalizes our souls. We arrive [at the promised inheritance] by means of the despoiling of [Christ's] Body and by means of the breaking open of the shell of Christ's humanity. And thereupon we taste of the payment of the enlivening merit—according as we set forth in the example of the almond.

Let these points have been stated in the foregoing way with regard to the first part of the sermon.

## PART TWO

[18] "Verily, verily I say unto you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death" (from the Gospel).<sup>29</sup> These words, for now, I have taken up to be reflected upon separately [from the others]. Earlier [the text] said: "If you do not believe that I am [the Messiah], you will die in your sin."<sup>30</sup> For as you have quite often heard, this belief is necessary: [namely,] that Jesus be believed to be the Messiah, or Son of God. For he who does not believe this [tenet] does not receive Christ's word as [the word] of the Son of God; and so, he does not heed [it]. For no disciple who is taught by a man so heeds [that man's] word as if he were being taught by the Son of God. With regard to the Son of God's doctrine all doubt, dispute, opinion, [and] surmise cease; instead, there

is undoubted certitude and very firm faith, because each [follower of Christ] naturally knows that Christ's word is the truth.

[19] Therefore, we must note the fact that our Teacher says that one who keeps His word will never see death. Earlier He said to the Jews who believed Him: "If you continue in my word, you shall truly be my disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."<sup>31</sup> Those who believe are said to keep [Christ's] word when they continue in [His] word. Those who continue in the word of the Son of God will be His true disciples. The disciples of Truth<sup>32</sup> will know the truth. This knowledge is knowledge of the Word, or Son, of God. For there follows immediately [in the text] that it is the Son who truly makes free. Therefore, the Son and Truth are the same thing.

[20] "And the truth shall make you free," i.e., shall free [you] forever from a vision of death, as the theme-verse says. When I was preaching, it occurred to me that the vision of death—in terms of an acquaintance with [death]—is the consummate punishment. Now, Christ's death was a consummate [death] because He saw death in terms of an acquaintance with [death], which He had chosen to undergo. {Job 38: "Have the gates of death been opened to you, or have you seen the darksome doors?"<sup>33</sup>—as if to say not "you" but "I, Christ" (as [in his work] *On the Creed* Albert expounds [the text])}. Therefore, the soul of Christ descended unto the lower regions, where there is a vision of death. For in Apocalypse 29 death is called Hell.<sup>34</sup> And [His soul] was freed from the Lower Hell.<sup>35</sup> For the Prophet states that Christ said to the Father that He had delivered His soul from the Lower Hell.<sup>36</sup>

[21] The lower and deeper Hell is where death is seen. When God raised up Christ, He delivered Him from the Lower Hell. In Acts 2 it is said: "The sorrows of Hell having been loosed ...."<sup>37</sup> And the Prophet [writes]: "He did not leave my soul in Hell."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, if you rightly consider [the matter], Christ's suffering, than which there cannot be a greater [suffering], was as [the suffering] of the damned who cannot be more greatly damned—i.e., was [suffering] all the way to punishment in Hell. As the Prophet said in Christ's name: "The sorrows of Hell have encompassed me."<sup>39</sup> From these [sorrows the Prophet] says that his soul was freed, stating: "You have brought forth my soul from Hell."<sup>40</sup>

[22] But it is [Christ] alone who through such a death entered into glory. He willed to suffer that punishment-of-the-senses like that of the

damned in Hell, [doing so], surely, for the glory of God His Father. [He did so] in order to show that one must be obedient to God even unto the ultimate torment. For this [obeying] is to magnify and glorify God in every possible manner and is for the sake of our justification. In such a way it was done by Christ. For in and through Christ we sinners discharge the debt of infernal punishment that we rightly merit, so that in this way we may arrive at resurrection of life.

[23] But those who are not Christ's remain in [the state of] death [and] do not arise with Christ; and they shall see death eternally. And this seeing of death is the second death, for it follows after the temporal death of which John [speaks] in the Apocalypse.<sup>41</sup> And, in the same text, it is called the pool of fire. And so, you [now] have a deeper understanding of that which is read: [namely,] that Christ descended unto the lower parts of Hell and overcame the power of death.<sup>42</sup>

[24] "You have redeemed my soul from the hand of Hell," says the Prophet,<sup>43</sup> taking [the word] "hand" for "power". This power of death retains all other captives who descend unto the inner regions of Hell. Only [Christ] Himself, the Victor, has broken open the enclosure and its gates, as says the Prophet in Osee 13: "O Death, I will be your death! O Hell, I will be your bite!"<sup>44</sup> For there would not be the death of future death if death were able to have dominion [over Christ]. Nor would [Christ] have bitten Hell if Hell had truly been able to bite His members. [This fact] accords with that canticle of gladness: "O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?"<sup>45</sup>

[25] See to it that you understand that (1) in and through Christ believers dispel the punishments of Hell and that (2) in and through Christ all sinners can be freed from these infernal punishments. The eternal vision of death is nothing but being knowingly in [the state of] death; from this death the one who views [it] will never be set free. Truth frees from such a death. Therefore, the seeing of truth is being knowingly in [the state of] inalienable and immortal life. And so, elsewhere [Christ] says that eternal life consists of a knowledge of God and of Himself, who calls Himself Truth.<sup>46</sup> [26] With an attentive mind consider that the seeing of truth frees from surmise and from the symbolizing of truth, [both of which are present] as long as the intellect does not see truth, which it desires alone to see. [The intellect] cannot conform itself to truth, because it cannot by its own means conceive of the form of truth, which it has not seen. But when truth shows itself face to face as it is, then the intellect will attain conformity. John the



Evangelist said this: that when the Son of God, namely, Truth, appears to us, then we shall be like Him.<sup>47</sup> Just as the imagination becomes like the figure seen, so the intellect becomes like the truth that is seen. Therefore, truth is a form that turns unto itself the formable intellect, just as what is visible turns unto itself the imaginative power.

[27] Because Truth frees, i.e., offers eternal freedom, it is called the Son. Hence, the intellect passes over into conformity with the Son of God when He appears, because [the intellect then] becomes true. This is that which Christ promised the Apostles as the greatest gift, namely, that He would show Himself to them. But Judas the Apostle did not understand. However, Philip began to understand; [and] he said: “Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us.”<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, truth *as it is* is taught only by Him who is our Teacher, whom by assured faith we believe to be the Son of God. Only this truth frees. For all handing-down-of-truth that is done by human procedures can be truer and clearer. And so, it does not set free. For although we believe that someone is learn-ed and hence believe him, surely we would believe to a greater degree one who was more learn-ed. But no one is as perfect as is Christ, who is the Son of God.

[28] Moreover, note that if one with whom Christ’s teaching remains is a believer, then he will know there to be truth in [Christ’s] word. Faith will pass over into knowledge. [It is] not [the case] that he will know by means of *hearing* (i.e., by means of faith); rather, [he will know] by means of understanding, i.e., of *seeing*, which is a light vital-ly illuminating the intellective soul. And if he cannot reproduce the reasons and revelations in order to disclose to others his viewing, nevertheless it is not the case that for this reason he is the less certain. (By way of illustration, he who sees the New Jerusalem,<sup>49</sup> which he does not know how to describe so as to disclose to others his viewing just as it is, [is not for this reason less certain of what he has seen]). [29] The wise of the world think that Christ’s true disciples are ignorant because they cannot reveal divine things in a human manner. Yet, [Christ’s disciples] are wiser the less they know that human things serve them for a disclosing of divine things. This fact is shown to us sufficiently in the Gospel, where the Jews, who were of this world, were unable to understand Christ, who was not of this world and who spoke of the Spirit of another world. Now, according as [the Jews] were of this world they [so] understood the words regarding the other world. And because [these words] did not fit with their world, they said

that the words were false and were set forth by one who had a demon.<sup>50</sup>

[30] Jesus said: “Who among you will accuse me of sin?”<sup>51</sup> See how Christ manifests Himself—[manifests] that He is the Son of God and is Truth! Every sinner is a servant [of sin], as [Christ] stated.<sup>52</sup> Does not a licentious man serve licentiousness [and] a greedy man, greed? But sin is from darkness and from the Prince of error. Therefore, the sinner serves his father, the Devil, i.e., [serves] the Prince of error and of the lie. But the one who is free was freed from this servitude to the Prince of the lie—[freed] by the Son of God, i.e., by the Prince who is Truth [and] who is more powerful than the lie because the Lord’s eternal Truth remains forever.<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, it is more powerful than the lie, which has no permanence in itself. Hence, every man can be accused of sin to the extent that sin is characteristic of his nature—[every man] except for Him alone who is the Son of man in such a way that He is also the Son of God. Therefore, if Christ could not have been [rightly] accused of sin, it followed that He was the promised Messiah, in whom there was to be (1) fullness of grace and of truth and (2) a blessing for all, as Scripture attests.<sup>54</sup>

[31] Hence, there rightly follows [in the text]: “If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me?”<sup>55</sup> [It is] as if He were to say: “Since no one can [rightly] accuse me of sin either in my deeds or in my words, and since my word is truth, whereby you can know that I am the Son of God: why do you not believe me?” For there can be no reason that truth is not believed. Now, words of truth are from God, and those persons who are from God hear [these words]. And so, sinners do not hearken to [these words] since sinners are not from God.<sup>56</sup> (They are, qua sinners, from the Devil.) Hearing is hearing intellectually, with relish. Sinners hear but are unwilling to understand in order to act rightly.

[32] The Jews said: “You have a demon.” Whatever displeases is called a demon. And the Devil’s cunning is so great that he deceives no one under his own name but [does so] under the name of God. And so, that deceiver claims for himself a domain in the name of the true King—as if he were an angel or a messenger of light and of truth.<sup>57</sup> When error is believed to be truth, then it is accepted as truth. For otherwise—were it not believed to be truth—it would not be accepted. So the one who believes error errs and has a demon. From that demon truth *as it is* sets free. For since man in accordance with his intellectu-

al nature naturally loves truth, Truth that is Christ is rightly [identical with] Mercy itself, which works with maximal love to the end that every man be justly rescued from error and from the Deceiver-Prince. [33] Accordingly, note that the Jews—polluted by the letting-in of error [and] judging a spirit, contrary to its works, to be evil—teach us that everyone possessed by a demon-of-error judges his *adversaries* to be possessed by a demon. And [the Jews teach us] that an evil spirit, because it is evil, is not appealing; and so, in order to be appealing, it puts on the form of light (which is desired), i.e., the form of truth, because it knows that that [form] is appealing. In this way [Satan] deceived our first parents. And this is what [the text] said earlier, [namely], that from the beginning [Satan] was a killer and murderer.<sup>58</sup> And he did not remain standing in the truth, for he enters deceptively with the poison of death. But when he is given entrance, then the Prince of this world is given entrance under the guise of the Prince of the other world, i.e., of Truth. Against error Truth can prevail; and Truth shows mercy to those who have been deceived because of their love of Truth.

[34] And this is a sin of ignorance: where those who believe that they are acting rightly are deceived. For them Christ pray[ed] when they offended against Him, i.e., against Truth. And He said that they do not know what they are doing. For example, certain ones, as also [the Apostle] Paul, out of zeal for the Law rushed against Christ in the belief that it was pleasing to God that they remove from the earth Him who took upon Himself divinity. For these men [Christ] surely did all things so that they would not in good faith remain deceived. But if someone out of wickedness—[and] not, as premised, being deceived under the guise of truth but, rather, knowing the truth—turns away from the truth on account of his wickedness and turns against his own nature: this [action] is the sin against the Holy Spirit,<sup>59</sup> who is the Spirit of truth.<sup>60</sup> And Christ does not, in the end, assist them through mercy, since there is no reason that He ought to be merciful to them. Such ones do not desire grace. They go against the known truth, as, for example, do those who do not believe in eternal life.

[35] The faithful Lord [Jesus Christ]<sup>61</sup> — who with all His might did all things so that no one [would be] deceived because of Him [and] would perish—does not have a demon. As He says: “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father.”<sup>62</sup> Truth does not have a demon as He said, because Truth is not present therein,<sup>63</sup> i.e., in a demon. For Truth

does not put on the form of a deceiver. For why would [Truth put on this form] when thereby it would be diminished? For if Truth could appear in the form of a deceiver it would be abominable—just as [would be] a lamb if it appeared in the form of a wolf for the purpose of deceiving the sheep. Thus, no rational thought thinks that Truth can have a demon, because a demon deceives.

[36] Truth honors its Father. Truth's Father has honor because of Truth, just as an honorable father has honor because of an honorable son but has disgrace because of a dishonorable [son]. The Devil has, because of his dishonorable sons, not honor but contempt. The Devil's wickedness is strange: that because of his sons he receives contempt and has greater torment in Hell; and, yet, he does not for this reason cease deceiving and multiplying his sons [but continues to do so] so that he can make his wickedness complete by means of his injury to himself.

[37] [Christ] adds: "And you have dishonored me."<sup>64</sup> From the fact that someone honors God, he should receive back only honor. Every worshipper of God has to reckon the honor bestowed on God as if it were bestowed on himself and on more than himself. Thus, we are obliged to honor those who are devoted to God. God is honored by him who ascribes nothing good to himself but ascribes all [good things] to God. Such did Christ, who says earlier in the same chapter: "Of myself I do not do anything," etc.<sup>65</sup> [38] Hence, He adds: "I do not seek my own glory."<sup>66</sup> Consider those who are to be reckoned as Christlike, namely, those who seek not their own glory but God's glory—[seek it] even to the point of self-contempt. But those who are Satanic seek not the glory of God but their own glory—[seek it] to the point of contempt for God. The first ones [i.e., the Christlike] prefer God to themselves; the second ones [i.e., the Satanic] prefer themselves to God. Since at other times you have heard me [preaching] on this Gospel-text, I will pass over [it now]. [39] Note only that Abraham saw the day of Christ and rejoiced.<sup>67</sup> For he saw [it] by faith, since the promise was made to him that Christ—i.e., He who is the blessing for all people—would come from his seed; and Abraham did not doubt this [promise] to be true. So he saw the day of Christ's future advent, and he rejoiced. Assuredly, [for Abraham] to see Christ, namely, the Word of God, in human nature and [descended] from Abraham's own seed according to the flesh, is an inexpressible joy. It is a most joyous thing (1) to see the Wisdom through which all things are that [which they are] and (2) to

see, [as present] in a creature, one's own Creator, who bestowed existing and living and in whose power it is to perpetuate joyful living, [and] (3) to see Graciousness itself, which withholds nothing, [and] (4) to see the Sun,<sup>68</sup> whose rays enliven eternally.

[40] Likewise, note that [Christ] says: "Before Abraham was made, I am."<sup>69</sup> Christ exists always; Abraham was once in the process of being made; but Christ was not [made], inasmuch as all things exist through Him. Therefore, says Christ, there is a time when Abraham is not; but, nevertheless, Christ took His origin from Abraham's seed. Thus, it is evident that no other Word was incarnated from Abraham's seed than that [Word] through which all things exist.

As if Christ had blasphemed, the Jews "took up stones to cast at Him. But He hid Himself and went out from the Temple."<sup>70</sup> [41] Analogously, if a rose did not permit a multiplying of its images to be made, it would be hidden; for it is not seen unless it presents itself to sight by means of its images. Similarly, if the sun did not cause a multiplying of its rays, it would not be seen, because it is visible only by means of the images that arrive at sight. Were the sun to go through the middle of the sky as Christ went out through the midst of the Jews, it too would not be seen. He who had the power of laying down his life and of taking it up again<sup>71</sup> also was able to prevent or to permit the natural multiplying of the sensory images—just as if a piece of fruit were intellectual, it could spread its odor or keep it within itself.

[42] From Christ, when He wanted, there went out power that healed all men. When He willed to, He did not permit this power to flow forth. In Christ His nature obeyed His will, because He was innocent. In us [the nature] is not subject to the will's authority; for the nature retains its laws and multiplies images having its likeness whether or not we will [for it to do so]. For we lost the command over our nature when the sensory appetite in and through the first sin of our parents [Adam and Eve] dominated reason.

### PART THREE

[43] "They took up stones to cast at Him."<sup>72</sup> Since it is known that Christ is Virtue—i.e., is Justice, Truth, Holiness, Love, Mercy, Repose, and other things of this kind—then we rightly understand those who endeavor to destroy the virtues to be like the Jews who wanted to stone Christ and, as best they could, did stone Him. Vices

are to be stoned, because they lead unto death; and virtues are to be cherished, because they furnish life to the soul.

[44] In Leviticus 24 it is commanded that a blasphemer be led away and stoned by all the people. Likewise, it is commanded that disobedience be stoned, as (in Numbers 15) was he who collected wood on the Sabbath. Likewise, the adulterer is commanded to be stoned; and so on. Hence, note that blasphemy, disobedience (especially as concerns the precept about the sabbath), and adultery exceedingly pollute the Christian common good. [45] Blasphemers rage against divine godliness; and as best they can they destroy all worship of God; and they rain down stones on the Giver of life. A blasphemer by [the instrument of] his tongue, as if by a strong arm, hurls a stone in order to abolish honor to, and reverence for, God. This diabolical spirit often comes from a game in which one plays because of a mind greedy to have another's goods. And so, assuredly, the game of dice (and any other game that proceeds from greediness) ought to be eliminated from all Christian common affairs—lest blasphemy be nourished and God's wrath provoked.

[46] Disobedience is the sin of idolatry; and it too destroys all orderliness and all religion; and it confuses all things. Adultery disturbs peacefulness and inheritance and is a very bad poison, since it contains within itself all evils.

Every religion and all laws and all sects condemn the foregoing vices. But, alas, because we know that these extremely evil vices prevail today, we know that Christ is stoned daily. In our Gospel-passage Christ says: "I honor my Father." That is, is not Christ indeed that Virtue by means of which the Heavenly Father is known and honored? But where [the Father] is dishonored and blasphemed, stones are cast at Christ as often as this [dishonoring] is done. [47] Christ said that He is the Son of the sabbath.<sup>73</sup> For all paternal movement finds rest in Him. Christ, who is our Day of rest,<sup>74</sup> is cast out and stoned when the precept of the sabbath is violated. Is it not violated daily? For from all physical work one is to cease in order that there can be time for spiritual [activities]. But we see that the holy days have—not Christ and virtue [but]—vices. Men use this time for guzzlings, deceptions, business transactions, amusements, carousings, trivial conversations and all [other] vices. [48] Observance of the sabbath is ordained by God for the public benefit as concerns both this world and the next. A man and his animal ought to rest on the eighth day (which is also the first day

through the rolling over [of the days of the week])<sup>75</sup> so that he does not become weary but, by resting, recovers his strength in this way. And, so too, the donkey and the ox [should] do. This [recuperating] is useful and is for the common good. By means of this rest a man is made wise, because his spirit is free for contemplation. Sermons are heard, the ignorant are instructed, the church assembles, one person listens to the other, friendships are contracted, and the pleasantness of the next life (which is a life of peacefulness) is foretasted. Accordingly, he who does not keep the sabbath commits a sin.

[49] Christ is the unity and sanctity and truth of the sacrament of marriage, as says the Apostle: [matrimony] is a great sacrament with respect to Christ and the Church.<sup>76</sup> But adultery is an infringement of the sacrament. Therefore, Christ is cast out and stoned [by adultery].

What about injustice? Is there not a public injustice where favoritism and hatefulness and avarice and worldly fear reign and cast out justice? *There* Christ is cast out and stoned. What about false witnesses, who prefer a lie to truth? What about usurers,<sup>77</sup> who prefer the mammon of iniquity to eternal life? What about sinners who harbor hate or anger or schism or defiance in their soul and expel Christ? They choose *not to approach* the eucharist rather than *to embrace* peace with their neighbor. What about those who resist the word of God and speak against the prelate who endeavors to care for them? They surely are worse than those perverse Jews who, on account of their teaching about life, wanted to stone the Word of life. I say that they are worse, insofar as a Christian who rages against Christ is worse than a Jew. He-who-is-knowing commits a greater sin than one-who-is-unknowing. [And he commits a greater sin] when he goes against his own religion and against the father, [or prelate], of his spiritual life. All such individuals who cast out Christ and as best they can endeavor to deprive the Christian public good, and the mystical Body of Christ, of its own life, which is Christ—are not all such ones of their father, the Devil?<sup>78</sup> And so, [are they not] to be cast outside the camp of the Church as ones who are unclean and possessed [of an evil spirit]? Are they not to be ostracized as lepers, lest they pollute [others]? For unless these are cast out of the temple, Christ departs from the temple as one who is hidden [from their sight].<sup>79</sup>

So, then, my brothers, let us see to it that we not be Jews, confessing Christ with our mouth but, nevertheless, picking up stones [and] working in concert toward the death of Him under whose banner

we promised to fight. Rather, let us abide by His word, so that within us He may speak and command and live very greatly. Then we shall not see death. This *seeing* is a *tasting*, as the Jews, rightly rephrasing, understood.<sup>80</sup> We shall never taste of the pangs of death, because we shall be sons of immortal life by the grace of the ever-blessed God.



## NOTES TO *Qui per Spiritum Sanctum semet ipsum Obtulit*\*

\* Sermon CCLXXXVI.

1. Hebrews 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Spirit offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"
2. Hebrews 9:12.
3. Exodus 8:26.
4. Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super Exodum* 8:26.
5. Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*, Book VII (XLIX, paragraph 13). [*PL* 34:815].
6. Philippians 2:8.
7. Hebrews 9:13-14.
8. Numbers 19.
9. Hebrews 9:12.
10. The passage referred to is not found.
11. Ecclesiasticus 13:1.
12. Luke 10:18.
13. IV Kings (II Kings) 5.
14. Leviticus 16:14.
15. Nicholas here is referring to the seven deadly sins.
16. Luke 8:2.
17. Hebrews 9:15.
18. I Corinthians 10:6.
19. The editor of the Latin text finds Nicholas's allusion not in Lactantius but in Isidor of Seville, *Etymologiae* V, c. 24. n.2.
20. Matthew 27:51.
21. Numbers 17:8, which mentions the rod of Aaron, not the rod of Jesse.
22. Romans 8:15.
23. Romans 8:17.
24. Apocalypse (Revelation) 5:1-10.
25. Zacharias (Zchariah) 9:11.
26. The editor of the Latin text finds this passage in Augustine, *Contra Adimantum*, Chapter 16 (*PL* 42:157).
27. *Glossa Ordinaria ad Hebraeos* 9:17. [*Biblia Latina cum Glossa ordinaria*. Facsimile reprint of the *Editio Princeps* (Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81). Turnhout: Brepols, 1992.]
28. Hebrews 9:15.
29. John 8:51.
30. John 8:24.
31. John 8:31-32.
32. John 14:6.
33. Job 38:17.
34. Apocalypse (Revelation) 20:13-14.
35. Psalms 85:13 (86:13).
36. *Loc. cit.*

37. Acts 2:24.
38. Psalms 15:10 (16:10).
39. Psalms 114:3 (116:3).
40. Psalms 29:4 (30:3).
41. Apocalypse (Revelation) 20:14.
42. Cf. Hebrews 2:14.
43. Psalms 48:16 (49:15).
44. Osee (Hosea) 13:14.
45. I Corinthians 15:55.
46. John 17:3 and John 14:6.
47. I John 3:3.
48. John 14:8.
49. Apocalypse (Revelation) 21:2.
50. John 8:48.
51. John 8:46.
52. John 8:34.
53. Psalms 116:2 (117:2).
54. Colossians 1:19 & 2:9.
55. John 8:46.
56. I John 4:6.
57. II Corinthians 11:13-15.
58. John 8:44.
59. Mark 4:29.
60. I John 4:6.
61. Psalms 144:13.
62. John 8:49.
63. John 8:44.
64. John 8:49.
65. John 8:28.
66. John 8:50.
67. John 8:56.
68. (Psalms 84:11). Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:16.
69. John 8:58.
70. John 8:59.
71. John 10:17-18.
72. John 8:59.
73. Cf. Matthew 12:8.
74. Hebrews 4:9.
75. Cf. Leviticus 23:39.
76. Ephesians 5:32.
77. In the Latin text at **4 9**: 11 I am reading "usurariis" with ms. *L*.
78. Cf. John 8:44.
79. John 8:59.
80. John 8:51-52.

**Hoc Sentite in Vobis\***  
("Let This Mind Be in You")<sup>1</sup>  
[April 10, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Let this mind be in you which [was] also in Christ Jesus."

My intention is to speak very briefly about the Epistle and the Gospel. I will expound the text of the Epistle: "Let this mind be in you ...." By the example of Christ the Apostle teaches that humility and obedience are necessary for the soul that is Christlike. From this [teaching] let us note [that] if we have such virtues in us by the example of Christ, then Christ is the Exemplar of our soul's virtues. And so, in us [we have] Christ, to whom we are made like, just as Christ—who is the Figure of His Father's substance<sup>2</sup>—said that the Father was in Him.<sup>3</sup> Then Christ speaks and works within us, and God [speaks and works] within Christ. For we shall be disciples of Christ, whose teaching, as He says,<sup>4</sup> is of God His Father.

[2] But [the Apostle] says: "Let this mind be in you." I understand "*sentire*" ["to have [this] mind"] in the way in which Dionysius [understands it in] *On the Divine Names*, in the chapter on wisdom and the senses where he says the following:<sup>5</sup>

If in our customary way we accepted those things that are above us and examined them in terms of our usual meanings [and] compared divine things with our things, then we would be deceived. We would be pursuing that divine secret in accordance with visible image[s], although, assuredly, we ought to know that our soul partly has a power of understanding, through which it views intelligible things, [and] partly has a power that [altogether] surpasses affinity with the nature of the senses. Through this [latter power the soul] is joined to those things that are above it. And so, we must understand divine things by means of this [latter union and] not in a human manner.

These things [Dionysius says] there.

[3] Hence, note that one power-of-sensing is a brute-power;<sup>6</sup> another [power-of-sensing] is human; another, angelic; another, divine. By means of a brute-animal's sensing, things human that are seen in accordance with the inner man, i.e., reason, are not attained. Nor in accordance with this [human power] are things divine attained. And so, the Apostle rightly said that the sensual man (*animalis homo*), who is brute-like, does not perceive, or sense, those things which are of God<sup>7</sup>—just as the sense of touch does not perceive visible images. But

just as every sensing is a certain touching, so too every perceiving is a certain sensing. [4] But in our intellectual sight we have (1) a certain lower power by means of which we see intelligible things and (2) a higher power than this one, by means of which [higher power] we are joined, above nature, to those things that are above us. By means of this excellent power we see not in a human manner, but in the manner of the one to whom the mind is joined. By way of illustration: a Christian's mind, united to Christ, views Christ's gospel in one way, but the intellect of a heathen or of a Jew [views it] in another way.

[5] Hence, *sentire* [i.e., *having [this] mind*], as the Apostle here puts it, is viewing by means of the mind's deep intuition the virtues insofar as they are Christ—[viewing them] , i.e., in the manner that within oneself one senses and experiences that Christ lives. Analogously: one person in one way reads a moral story perfunctorily and without comprehension, but [another] reads it in another way, so that he comprehends it and imitates it. The case is similar with one who at this [Easter] season hears the story of Christ's suffering and who, commiserating [with Christ], senses within himself pain and takes up his own cross and follows Christ.<sup>8</sup> This person has a Christlike sensing, and his soul's higher power is united with Christ.

[6] The Apostle says "in us". For the feeling [of commiseration] ought not to be in the foliage of words or in the outward shape, or surface, of the lettering but within in the heart, where the Prophet harbored the word of God as hidden. As he says to God: "In my heart I have hidden Your words"<sup>9</sup>—as if the infixed arrows<sup>10</sup> and the stigmata<sup>11</sup> of Christ were harbored [there].

[7] [The Apostle] says: "in Christ Jesus," i.e., [in Him who is] God and a man. Since He was in the Form of God,<sup>12</sup> (for He dwelt among men, and God appeared in the workings of His signs), He was called the Form of God and the Image of God,<sup>13</sup> so that He was understood not to be God the Father; rather, He is *that* which God is. The Form of God is unmultipliable; thus, Christ, [who is] in the Form of God, is God. [In the text the word] "image" is added in order that it might be understood that Christ is God in such a way that He is the Image, or Son, of God the Father. [8] Note that [the Apostle] says: "who since He was in the Form of God, i.e., of [God] the Father ...." To be in the Form of God is to be God. And although He was God, He received the form of a servant.<sup>14</sup> [The Apostle] does not say that [Christ] was transformed into a servant but that, with His prior Form

remaining, He put on, externally, another [and] visible form—as if a king were to put on the weapons of an underling to the end of waging warfare.

[9] Therefore, the divine person did not put on another *person* but put on, over [the divine person], a *human form* in order for the human nature to attain to Christ’s glory. By way of illustration: Wisdom put on the man King Solomon in order to manifest itself in and through him and in order to make Solomon a partaker of Wisdom’s glory. For Solomon, because of the wisdom that was in him,<sup>15</sup> had a glory that was common to the Wisdom that alone is the splendor of God’s glory.<sup>16</sup> [10] And the Doctor Solemnis<sup>17</sup> said in his *Quodlibeta* that glory is the perfection of wisdom.<sup>18</sup> (For example, a king who lacks all wisdom is neither a king nor does he have glory.) But the difference between Christ and Solomon is the following: The wisdom of Solomon supervened by God’s gift and grace after the kingdom was assumed [by Solomon], so that Solomon was a man before he was wise. But in the case of Christ, Wisdom eternally preceded the human nature which He put on within time. Moreover, Solomon likewise leads us to the knowledge that wisdom (1) is the splendor of immortal glory from on high and (2) glorifies him who possesses it.

[11] “He thought it not robbery to be equal to God”<sup>19</sup>—[equal] not in magnitude but in power and might. (For that person thinks it robbery who makes himself equal to him than whom he is inferior.) Rather, He emptied Himself.<sup>20</sup> In the Form of God He was equal to God; but in order to teach the law of humility to the Jews, He not only shunned [equality] but even emptied Himself. That is, He withdrew His own power from His work[s], taking on the form of a servant (i.e. a human form), being made in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man. [12] Take note of (1) His equality with God with respect to power [and] (2) His oneness with God with respect to the Form. And [note] that He took on the form of a servant, i.e., [the form] of humanity. Thus, the Form of God in the Image of the Father, which Image is called the Son of God, took on the form of a servant (i.e., of humanity) and was made like a man; and so, He is called the Son of man.<sup>21</sup> And note also that the *Form of Divinity* in an Image [namely, in the Son of God], put on the *form of humanity* in a likeness; and He was found in appearance as a man—i.e., as one leading the common life among human beings. (Luke 7: “The Son of man came eating and drinking,” etc.)<sup>22</sup>

[13] He humbled Himself when He endured the shame of suffering like a man who is a sinner, becoming obedient to the Father (to whom He knew Himself to be equal) unto death, even to the death of the Cross<sup>23</sup>—i.e., to the most horrible of all horrible [deaths]. Therefore, He teaches us to imitate this suffering and humility. [14] “For this reason God has exalted Him.”<sup>24</sup> [Christ] shows how much [one’s] humility merits; [and He does so] in order that we may imitate humility, with pride trodden under foot. But [God] has exalted [Him]—i.e., has made [Him] to be understood as exalted, i.e., has exalted the human nature that was in Christ. And [God] gave Him a name that is above every name.<sup>25</sup> The gift of the Father qua Father is to beget the Son. And this gift is the name that is above every [other] name, so that [Christ] is called God and is God.

[15] “... so that in the name of Jesus every knee would bow.”<sup>26</sup> The creature bows the knee not to an adoptive [Son] but to the true God. For the heretics say that Christ is an adoptive Son but is not a true Son. Elsewhere I have touched upon this [theme of] how it is that adoption has a likeness to sonship because an adoptive son *inherits*, just as does a natural son. However, with respect to the fact that Christ was a man in such a way that He was also God, someone could [rightly] say that Christ was an adoptive Son in such a way that He was also the natural Son of God. For He was the Son of man in such a way that He was the Son of God.

[16] “... [every knee would bow] of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth”<sup>27</sup>—that is, of those who are in Heaven and in the sky and on earth and in Hell. “And every tongue would confess,”<sup>28</sup> if not willingly, then of necessity. Understand the knees and tongues to be [those] of rational creature[s], who alone can confess these things in their own manner, namely, by affirming [them] and by reverently manifesting the affirmation.

“... that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.”<sup>29</sup> Glory is the brightness of majesty. Hence, the Father is said to be *Glory* by the Apostle to the Romans,<sup>30</sup> and the Son is said to be the *Brightness of Glory*.<sup>31</sup> A single Brightness of the majesty of God the Father and of the Son is present in God the Father and His Son. By the praise and adoration of all tongues and by bending-the-knee, [this one Brightness] is given adoration.

[17] The intent of the Apostle is to instruct the Philippians to be obedient in such a way that Christ, who is perfect obedience,<sup>32</sup> lives in

them. Hence, he adds: “Do all things without murmurings and hesitations so that you may be blameless and sincere children of God.”<sup>33</sup> And later [he adds]: “... holding forth the word of life.”<sup>34</sup> Lo, those who are true obeyers hold forth the word of life. And there is no obedience without *humility* (Jesus said: “Learn from me, for I am humble and meek in heart”<sup>35</sup>) or without *suffering* (“He was lead as a sheep to the slaughter,” etc.<sup>36</sup>). [18] The obedient soul is like clay that is tempered for the receiving of the form that the potter fashions. Christ is the Potter who fashions from an obedient soul a precious vessel, in which manna is placed (Exodus 16). For this is the word-of-life of which Paul [writes] in this chapter<sup>37</sup>—[and] which is contained in the obedient soul. *Clay* bespeaks humility; and its tempered flexibility is obedience. [The clay] is trodden under foot and pounded-out in order to be made suitable for the receiving of form. And by this [example] “suffering” is [symbolically] shown, without which [the clay] would not obtain a form. The firmness [of the clay] is, [symbolically], perseverance. Hence, from the mud of the earth the inner man is made, and into him is breathed the breath of life.<sup>38</sup>

[19] With regard to the mud’s (or soul’s) being made suitable to receive the divine in-breathing of eternal life, let us consider how we are instructed by the example of Christ. God the Father willed to make suitable Christ’s humanity so that it would be capable of supreme glory. By His own Word, [God the Father] made the humanity to be subject [to Himself] and worked, as by the Hand of His own power, in a contrary way to the Devil’s deception.

The First Adam,<sup>39</sup> since he was a man who willed to be God,<sup>40</sup> knowingly departed from obedience; and in the beauty<sup>41</sup> of the fruit of the tree he sought the nourishment of the knowledge of good and evil but found death. He accepted the authority of one fashioning a lie, whom the man obeyed; and he acquired the form of error. That [human] clay, infected with pride, became as stiff and unpliable as cold wax that is hard [and] did not obey its trace of eternity. And it was not able to be softened without a spiritual fire, which is not found in this present world.

[20] Christ came. Although He was God, He took the form of a servant; and being in that form He emptied Himself, humbling Himself to the point of [a likeness to] what is empty and devoid of every useless form. Such a thing happens when clay-that-is-formed, e.g., a pot, is reduced to formless clay, so that it becomes obedient to all [manip-

ulations]. For the [formed] clay must be emptied and must become completely formless. [Only] then will it be fit for obeying every command of the potter. And in a similar way it happened that Christ—having been emptied, so that in Him there remained neither form nor life—entered into the glory of the Father by means of the Cross, i.e., the Tree of death. Adam by means of the fruit of the Tree of knowledge finds ignorance and death; Christ by means of the Tree of death finds life. [21] Hence, in and through Christ, human nature is assuredly all these things. Whether [human nature] is the mud from Adam or the cold wax, it is freed from its cold nature by the warmth of the Heavenly fire, which is called love (*caritas*), and is made obedient to the governance of God. Therefore, the more a soul is more suited for [receiving] the noble impression of the Divine form, the more brightly there shines forth in it the glory of God. For by means of the Divine Art [the soul] is made to be, from that [impressing], a living vessel in accordance with its own capability. It is first of all freed from all worldly desires and is filled with the moisture of grace in order that it can be drawn upward by the Son of Justice<sup>42</sup>—in the way in which, when an emptied eggshell is filled with moisture and is sealed with wax, it is drawn upward by the [heat of] the sun.

[22] Note [the following]: We who are inhabitants of this world have a soul that is transformable, as if it were intellectual wax that conforms itself to its desires and to forms that are pleasing to it. And because [the soul] is ignorant of divine forms, which are Heavenly and everlasting, it conforms itself not to them but to temporal [forms], which cannot give it what they do not have. But if [the soul] subjects itself unqualifiedly to the Potter who has fashioned the hearts of all beings individually, so that He forms [them], then [the soul] obtains, according to God's word or concept, a Heavenly and immortal form, which is not of this world [and] which [the soul] did not know prior to its reception [of the form]. Nor does anyone know [this form] except the one who receives it. And after the receiving, [the soul] recognizes that it is conformed to the Word of God, to whom it has been obedient.

[23] Moreover, note [the following]: Because the soul conforms itself to that which it loves, and [because] when it loves itself it conforms itself to itself, and because it does not have from itself its existing and being alive: it does not love itself when it loves itself. But if it loves God—from whom it has its existing and living [and] of whom it is an image—and does not love itself, in order to love Him the more:



then it loves itself (as Augustine beautifully concludes in his Homily on John ([Tractatus] cxxiii).<sup>43</sup> But the soul cannot love God unless in it there is the form of Christ, who alone instructs us by His word and example as to how it is that we can love God the Father, namely, by means of the form of Christ and the imitating of Christ. And so, if we sense within ourselves that which we believe to be in Christ, namely, obedience unto death, then Christ is formed in us and we receive the form of the Son of God, through which form we attain to the glory of the Father.

[24] But how do we sense within ourselves Christ on the Cross? Pay attention to the statement of Cassian in Book IV, Chapter 35, of his *De Institutis Monachorum*.<sup>44</sup> For he says: ‘One who is fastened to the gibbet of a cross does not reflect upon things present, nor does he think about his own affections. He is not filled<sup>45</sup> with worry about, and concern for, tomorrow. Nor is he perturbed by lust. Nor is he inflamed with pride, with rivalry, with strife. He is not grieved because of present wrongs, nor does he recall past [wrongs]. But while he still has breath in his body, he believes that there is a failing that is present in all his elements, [and] he advances his heart’s viewing to the place where he does not doubt that he is going to come.’ Lo one who thus senses [death] together with the crucified Christ—being crucified with Christ and [being delivered] not only from vices but also from the elements of this world—has his eyes fixed on the place to which he hopes at any moment to depart. Such a person obeys fully; and this obedience is perfect. [25] He ought to have seven stages of obedience. First, he ought *willingly to obey* his prelate—[who stands] in the place of God—in all intermediate matters. These [are matters that] are neither forbidden nor commanded in the Law of God. Rather, they are things in-between, with which or without which eternal salvation can be had. Examples are [the following]: fasting on the sixth day of the week with bread and water; wearing a hair-shirt; praying extendedly; and so on. In these matters the prelate or the confessor is to be obeyed just as would be the divine precepts or the divine prohibitions.

[26] The second stage [of obedience] is *to obey unqualifiedly and without murmuring or complaint*. For he who walks without misgivings walks confidently. The people of Israel murmured,<sup>46</sup> longing for the melons and garlic and cucumbers and flesh pots that they had left behind in Egypt.<sup>47</sup> And so, they were overthrown in the desert.<sup>48</sup> Moses and Aaron murmured against the Lord at the waters-of-strife;<sup>49</sup>

wherefore, they did not merit to enter into the land of promise.<sup>50</sup> Hear what the Lord said: “A people whom I did not know served me; at the hearing of the ear they obeyed me.”<sup>51</sup>

[27] The third stage is *to obey with gladness*. For the Lord loves a cheerful giver.<sup>52</sup> For where a sick countenance is discerned, this place of obedience is left behind. Indeed, a sick face signals a sick mind; and sadness of the outer appearance indicates a frightened mind.

The fourth [stage is] *to obey swiftly*. One must beware lest a delay bring danger. For the word of the Lord runs swiftly, and [the Lord] desires a swift hearer. [The Psalmist] said: “I have run the way of Your commandments”<sup>53</sup> and “I have loved Your Law.”<sup>54</sup> The obedient believer does not know delays, nor does he put off [doing] what is commanded. For he prepares his eyes for seeing, his ears for hearing, his tongue for speaking, his hands for working, his feet for journeying. He gathers himself as a whole, inwardly, in order to acquire the will of one who, outwardly, gives commands.

[28] The fifth [stage] is *to obey manfully*. “Act manfully,” [the Psalmist] says, “and let your heart be strengthened, all you who hope in the Lord.”<sup>55</sup> Likewise: You have reached your hand out for [doing] strong works. You are to be insistent and to act courageously. If trouble resounds, if persecution results, if the enemy impedes your journey, then say, nonetheless: “I am prepared, and I am not perturbed.”<sup>56</sup>

The sixth [stage] is *to obey humbly*, because “He was mindful of us in our humility.”<sup>57</sup>

The seventh [stage] is *to obey perseveringly*. “He who perseveres unto the end will be saved.”<sup>58</sup> And the end-result, not the struggle, brings the reward. It is characteristic of many people to begin but of few to persevere.

Because of the shortness of time, let the foregoing [points] now suffice for the first part of the sermon.

## PART TWO

[29] “Behold, your King—[as one who is] meek—comes to you.”<sup>59</sup> ([Passage] from the Gospel; originally from the Prophet Zacharias). As was prophesied of Him, Christ the King and Messiah willed to enter the city [of Jerusalem], where there was the Temple and House of His Father. And He came as God’s Emissary. He did not come on foot; but so that the whole city would be moved with wonderment, He came on

the foal of an ass, upon which no man had previously sat.<sup>60</sup> And by means of suitable signs divine reverence was paid to Him by the Apostles, the children, and the people, who went before Him and who followed Him.<sup>61</sup> And they acknowledged Him to be the Emissary of God—blessing Him as such [an Emissary] and acknowledging Him as Savior, while crying out “Hosanna in the highest.”<sup>62</sup>

[30] After He had entered [Jerusalem] as God’s Emissary and Envoy, He entered the Temple. And as one powerful in works and in word—[one] to whom all power had been given by His Father—He rectified the things that needed to be rectified.<sup>63</sup> And as the Gospel-writer says,<sup>64</sup> the whole city was moved by this coming of His, and each person asked the other who He was. And in this way, by means of questions and answers, the King whose Kingdom was not of this world was known; i.e., [it was known] that His Kingdom was with the Father, from whence He was sent.

[31] Consider that Christ, after the resurrecting of Lazarus<sup>65</sup> wanted to enter Jerusalem as the Emissary of God, because He came in the name of the Lord. For already by means of that miracle, which was known to all—of whom many were present who had heard Him cry out “Lazarus, come forth!”—He showed that He was sent by the Father. [And He showed it also] to many others by His works and power. For He said: “If you do not believe *me*, believe [my] works, because the Father, who abides in me, does the works.”<sup>66</sup> And these were authoritative signs that engendered belief in His power of binding and loosening<sup>67</sup> and belief that He had the full authority of His Father. [32] In the province to which He had been sent, He had exhibited authoritative signs of His mission, and He had adduced witnesses: Moses, the Prophets, John the Baptist, shepherds, the Magi, those restored and set free by Him from various infirmities, and the Apostles, whom He transformed from a state of ignorance to a state of preaching the gospel of life. Hence, when in this way He manifested Himself to the world and proclaimed Himself sufficiently as Overseer and as both Pastor (or Priest) and King-of-the-inner-man: He wanted to fulfill His ministry and to enter into the Holy of Holies at the feast of Passover by [the shedding of] His own blood so that he would effect the purification of souls, as Paul refers to [in his letter] to the Hebrews.<sup>68</sup>

[33] But the time had come. For there had already happened the events which according to the foretellings of the Prophets were supposed to precede [His advent]. And there had arrived the time of

Zacharias, who spoke of the manner in which Christ would come as Savior and Just One. For in Chapter 9 he says: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold your King will come to you, the Just One and Savior. He is poor and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”<sup>69</sup> According to all the rabbis of the Jews this authoritative text speaks literally of the Messiah. But the Gospel-writers say “Fear not, O daughter of Sion”<sup>70</sup> where here in [Zacharias] there is put “Rejoice greatly!” For the Prophet [Zacharias] had indicated many future tribulations; but he adds that the Messiah would come as Savior. And so, the Gospel-writers say that the Prophet by the words “Rejoice greatly ...” wanted to indicate “Fear not, O daughter of Sion.”

[34] [Zacharias] says “Jerusalem,” which was built near the Fortress of Sion, the mother of [all] defense[s]—[i.e., a major stronghold]. He says “Behold, your King—the Just One and Savior—will come to you.” The Jews understood salvation, or liberation, to be [liberation] from the oppression of the Romans, so that they would not [any longer] be forced into tribute and other forms of servitude. And the first disciples of Christ seem to have understood [the matter] similarly, at the beginning. And so, because they did not see in the case of Christ things useful to this end—i.e., [did not see] riches, an army, and a military spirit—they spurned Him, as if it were not possible that He be that King-Messiah. Yet, the Prophet spoke clearly; for he said that [the Messiah] was to be *just* and *poor* and that he was to be *riding upon an ass* and its colt and was thus to come. [35] By means of these [prophetic] judgments [the Jews] could have understood the Messiah, King, “Savior” (who for this reason is named “Jesus”)<sup>71</sup> to be the King of the salvation of souls. For He was the King of Justice,<sup>72</sup> i.e., the King of divine religion, which was to be spread to the ends of the earth, so that His Kingdom would thus be very full, according as the Prophet subsequently says in that passage.<sup>73</sup> Hence, [the Prophet] speaks of the Church (whose Head is Christ), which is the kingdom of justice. This is the true and immortal kingdom that will not at all fail,<sup>74</sup> to which the kings of the world are subject. Hence, we read that God said, in Exodus 19, that His Kingdom is priestly and that the inhabitants of His Kingdom are a holy nation.<sup>75</sup> [God] handed over this Kingdom to be governed by the Son, whom He sent. Therefore, Christ the King and Priest thus came to Jerusalem on that fifth day before the day of the Passover—i.e., on the tenth day of the month<sup>76</sup>—when, in Exodus 12, the lamb-to-be-slain is commanded to be taken. And the Immaculate

Lamb, [i.e., Christ],<sup>77</sup> entered the Temple, or House of Sacrifice.

[36] Let us note that our Christ was received with palms, branches of trees, garments, etc., and with a song: “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”<sup>78</sup> We must take note of each of these [phrases]. With the branches of palm trees and of olive trees [the people] paid honor to a triumphant and peace-making King, according as in ancient times victory was signified by a palm branch; peace, by an olive branch. That the Apostles took off garments and spread them over the donkey and made Him sit thereupon (perhaps because there was no saddle), and that the children of the Hebrews strewed garments in His pathway—[these things] were done for the sake of great reverence to Him. If nowadays reverence is shown by uncovering the head, how much greater reverence it was to take off one’s garments and to place them on the King’s donkey. Accordingly, they acknowledged that the poor King was the Lord of [all] things, who was to be served even to the point of [one’s own] nakedness.

[37] [The multitude] shouted: “Blessed is He who comes!” They acknowledged that the Promised One would come (in whom all are blessed) to bless the children of Abraham and of David. As [Nicholas of] Lyra<sup>79</sup> interprets this in [his *Postilla*] on *John*: [to say “Blessed ...”] is to say words of praise with which those-who-are-blessing praise Him who is worthy of all praise. The word “*confessio*” is used in place of “*laus*”—as the Golden Gloss<sup>80</sup> interprets the word of the Apostle to the Romans: “I will *confess* to You (*confitebor tibi*) among the nations”—i.e., “I will make the nations *praise* You” (*laudare te*).<sup>81</sup> And Christ says in the Gospel: “I will confess to You (*confitebor tibi*), Father of Heaven and earth”—i.e., “I praise You (*laudo te*), Father.”<sup>82</sup>

[38] About Christ it is written: “[The Lord] gave Him the blessing of all nations and confirmed His covenant upon His head.”<sup>83</sup> For [Christ] is the Fount-of-blessing of Living water. For Christ was the Rock<sup>84</sup> from whose Living water all drink spiritually. He is the Light-of-understanding, who says: “I am the Light of the world.”<sup>85</sup> Hence, He is the Sun of Justice<sup>86</sup> and is Enlivening Life.<sup>87</sup> For everything that is blessed has from Him the fact that it is blessed. For His speaking—inasmuch as it is the Word of God—can only be blessed, because His *speaking is being* (“He spoke and they were made”).<sup>88</sup> And they shall be made to be exceedingly good because they are from the Good.

[39] With regard to their saying “Hosanna in the highest” (i.e., “Hosianna,” namely, “Save ...”): This can have reference to the shout,

so that there is meant that the shouts were in the highest [volume], i.e., that [the people] shouted very loudly. However, the doctors [of the Church] explain that [the expression] was a prayer that [Christ] would save in the highest degree, so that we may understand [from the text] that the people were moved by the Holy Spirit to signify that Christ is King and Savior and is the Giver of Heavenly goods and is not of this world. Ambrose in his sermon for today says the following: to say “Hosanna in the highest” is to say as much as if it were said “Save us on earth, You who<sup>89</sup> also save in Heaven.” And because they said this with great devotion, they doubled their volume so that they said a second time “Hosanna” in the highest [volume]. (Ambrose [says] these things.)<sup>90</sup>

[40] The Prophet Zacharias<sup>91</sup> said that [Christ] is *King* who is also *Priest*—of whom Melchisedech, who is king of justice, was a type. I recall that I once stated [that] since Christ is Wisdom and Justice and Gentleness and the Power of powers<sup>92</sup>—yea, rather, is the King of powers<sup>93</sup>—then He is the One through whom kings rule. He is that Word of God through whom God created, and rules over, all things. Every ruler, insofar as he is a ruler, partakes of this Imperial Word of God; for all power is from God. Thus, all that wisdom of ruling is from God and was always with Him. Therefore, all kings partake of the power of the Word, through which Word they rule. But not all [kings] who rule through the Word rule *in Christ*. Now, if they are not Christlike—i.e., just, truthful, merciful—they are not ruling *in Christ*. They rule through power given from on high, but [they do] not [rule] *in Christ*.

[41] Hence, no one is a true king unless he rules in Christ, i.e., unless he is so indued with Christ that Christ rules him and, through him, his subjects. We who confess that Christ is our King and Lord ought to pay attention to the Golden Gloss on the word of the Apostle to the Romans: “For if you confess . . .,” etc., “you will be saved.”<sup>94</sup> The Gloss says the following: Whoever confesses that Christ is his Lord: it is necessary that Truth, Peace, and the other virtues that are identical with the Lord, govern him. If these govern him, and if he endeavors to profess these with his mouth, and if he believes that Christ was raised from the dead, and if he adorns so healthful a faith with [good] works, then without doubt he shall be saved. “With the heart we believe unto justice.”<sup>95</sup> For, first of all, justice is to be originated by means of the heart’s belief; then it is to be professed with the

mouth; but later, as was said, it is to be adorned with worthy works. He who in this way believes shall not be confounded.<sup>96</sup>

That brief exposition [in the Golden Gloss] has the foregoing points.

[42] Hence, let us reflect upon [these points] lest we who invoke the name of the Lord be liars. For as the same expositor says: He invokes the name of the Lord who in all that he does strives to fulfill the will of the Lord. (In this way one who invokes [the name of the Lord] can fulfill the Apostolic precept which says: “Pray without ceasing.”<sup>97</sup>) This [expository] teacher, who assuredly is reliable and clear, teaches us that unless the will of Christ prevails in us, we do not rightfully say that Christ is our Lord and King. For [in that case] *He* does not move us but our own will does. Likewise, here in the example [from the Gospel-text] Christ was seated on the donkey, and He moved it to compliance with His [will]. [43] Hence, the Christian must say: “I became like a beast-of-burden in Your presence.”<sup>98</sup> (Enough is said about this [topic] in the other part of the sermon.)<sup>99</sup> Therefore, our King, who is the Word of God and is called *Logos*, or *Ratio*, is seated upon the donkey (i.e., upon the soul), covered with, and adorned with, the Apostles’ garments—in particular, when the soul by imitating the Apostles puts on [Christ] and when [Christ] leads the soul into His Holy City, where with Him it dies and rises.

## NOTES TO *Hoc Sentite in Vobis*\*

\* Sermon CCLXXXVII.

1. Philippians 2:5. In Part One Nicholas speaks of this text in the Epistle to the Philippians. In part Two he speaks of a Gospel-passage in Matthew 21.

2. Hebrews 1:3.

3. John 14:20 and 14:9-11.

4. John 7:16.

5. *Dionysiaca* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937), I, 384<sup>2</sup>-385<sup>4</sup>. Nicholas follows the translation of Ambrose Traversari—though he does not follow it exactly. For example, at 2:6 (of the present Latin text of Cusa's sermon) he writes "quia", although Traversari has "quia".

6. That is, the power is such as brute animals have.

7. I Corinthians 2:14.

8. Luke 9:23.

9. Psalms 118:11 (119:11).

10. Psalms 37:3 (38:2).

11. Galatians 6:17.

12. Philippians 2:6.

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

14. Philippians 2:7.

15. III Kings 3:28 (I Kings 3:28).

16. Hebrews 1:3.

17. "Doctor Solemnis" is the title given to Henry of Ghent.

18. The editor of Cusa's printed Latin text cites Henry of Ghent's *Quodlibeta* I, q. ix.

19. Philippians 2:6.

20. Philippians 2:7.

21. John 5:27.

22. Luke 7:34.

23. Philippians 2:8.

24. Philippians 2:9.

25. *Loc. cit.*

26. Philippians 2:10.

27. *Loc. cit.*

28. Philippians 2:11.

29. *Loc. cit.*

30. Cf. Romans 6:2.

31. Hebrews 1:3.

32. Hebrews 5:8-9.

33. Philippians 2:14-15.

34. Philippians 2:16.

35. Matthew 11:29.

36. Acts 8:32.

37. Namely, in Philippians, Chapter 2.

38. Genesis 2:7.



39. The second Adam was Christ. I Corinthians 15:45-47.
40. Genesis 3:5.
41. Genesis 3:6.
42. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
43. Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*. See Tractatus CXXIII, section 5 (PL 35:1968).
44. Joannes Cassianus, *De Coenobiorum Institutis* Book IV, Chap. 35 (PL 49:196A).
45. Here at 2 4:7 I am reading, with the Latin mss. and with the Paris edition, “distenditur” and not “discenditur”, an error in the printed edition of the Latin text of this sermon.
46. Exodus 16:2-3.
47. Numbers 11:5.
48. I Corinthians 10:5.
49. Exodus 17:2-7.
50. Deuteronomy 32:49-52.
51. Psalms 17:45 (18:43-44).
52. II Corinthians 9:7. Ecclesiasticus 35:11 .
53. Psalms 118:32 (119:32).
54. Psalms 118:163 (119:163).
55. Psalms 30:25 (31:24).
56. Psalms 118:60 (119:60).
57. Psalms 135:23 (136:23).
58. Matthew 10:22 and 24:13.
59. Matthew 21:5. Zacharias (Zechariah) 9:9.
60. Luke 19:30.
61. Matthew 21:8-9.
62. Matthew 21:15. Mark 11:10.
63. Matthew 21:12.
64. Matthew 21:10-11 .
65. John 11:43-44.
66. John 10:38.
67. Matthew 16:19.
68. Hebrews 9:12.
69. Zacharias (Zechariah) 9:9.
70. John 12:15.
71. Matthew 1:21.
72. Hebrews 6:20–7:2.
73. Zacharias (Zechariah) 9:10.
74. Matthew 16:18.
75. Exodus 19:6.
76. Exodus 12:3.
77. I Peter 1:19.
78. Matthew 21:8-9.
79. Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super Iohannem* 12:13.
80. *Glossa Ordinaria ad Romanos* 15:9.
81. Romans 15:9.

82. Matthew 11:25.
83. Ecclesiasticus 44:25.
84. I Corinthians 10:4.
85. John 8:12.
86. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
87. John 14:6.
88. Psalms 32:9 (33:9).
89. Here at **3 9**:11 the mss. have “qui” (as does Ambrose) and not “quia”, as found in the printed Latin text.
90. Pseudo-Ambrose, *Sermo XXXI*, section 3 (*PL* 17:668A).
91. See Zacharias (Zechariah) 6:11 & 13. Nicholas in the passage above misremembers this text in Zacharias, which speaks not of Melchisedech but of the son of Jehozadak. See Hebrews 5:6 & 7:1 and Psalms 109:4 (110:4) and Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
92. The phrase “virtus virtutum” can also be translated (depending upon the context) as “Virtue of virtues”—as it is translated in Sermon CCLXXIV (*Loquimini ad Petram coram Eis*), n. 33, lines 22-23.
93. Psalms 67:13
94. Romans 10:9: “For if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him up from the dead, you shall be saved.”
95. Romans 10:10.
96. Romans 10:11 .
97. I Thessalonians 5:17.
98. That is, I became compliant to Your will.
99. Re compliance to Christ’s will, see sections 20-28 of the present sermon.

**Crucifixus etiam pro Nobis\***

(“Moreover, for our sake He Was Crucified”)<sup>1</sup>  
[April 15, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “Moreover, for our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried” is the fourth article-of-faith, which is ascribed to St. John. John, who alone among the Apostles was present [at the Crucifixion] and saw all the things that happened with regard to Christ’s suffering, rightly added this article of faith to the Apostle’s Creed. Let us pray, then, to the Apostle beloved by God<sup>2</sup> and implore him earnestly to convey to us what he means by these words. And let us appoint the Mother of Mercy, Mary, as our advocate in order that she may speak in our name and that when John answers her, we may be informed about each of the things that happened on this day.<sup>3</sup>

[2] Let us, then, with a devout prayer beseech Mary to accept the task, saying: “Since you are that Mother who is named *theotokos*—namely, the Mother of God, or the God-Bearer—and since you are a human being (so that your Son Jesus has His name from you), and since He frequently called Himself the Son of man in praise of you (whom you did not abandon even at His burial), and since you know that today we are celebrating the anniversary of your Son’s death, and since you know that, unto His glory, we wish to be able, with our internal eye, to see Him in His suffering (which He endured for our redemption): take upon yourself this task, O saintly Mother, so that when you ask, then your John<sup>4</sup> may describe to us all the things [that transpired].

[3] *Mary*: This request is worthy of voluntary accommodation. For I desire this: that there be known my Son’s love (*caritas*), which He at that time very greatly manifested when He preferred this [love] to His own life.

*Church in Brixen*: You know, O most merciful Mother, how necessary it is for our salvation that [we] be acquainted with the Life of your Son, in whose Life is the life of all living beings. We fear lest the remembrance that is necessary for us summon up again in you the wounds of empathetic-suffering. We wish for things that are for our salvation; we do not wish that because of us the very bitter pain of a penetrating sword once again take possession of your virginal and maternal heart.

[4] *Mary*: The memory of the pain of giving birth is joyous when

the living child is seen. It is not grievous to me to hear the voices of compassion which you devout ones emit—yea, rather, it delights [me] above all [other] things when this [love of yours] results in your salvation and in my Son's glory. By the gift of my Son I am henceforth of an impassible nature. For He (who through His death brought to impassability the nature that He had from me) made my nature in itself to be impassible. And so, as long as you do not lay aside that mortal nature through death, you are passible and can commiserate with my Son, by means of whose suffering you who suffer empathetically with Him will—when freed from the body of death—arise after the likeness of Him and will put on with an impassible nature. The death of my Son will cause this [result] in you if you will be found [to participate] in His death through compassion.

[5] *Church*: We understand, O mother of godliness, that the remembrance of the death of Jesus (so that [in this remembrance] we die with Him) is necessary for all people for obtaining impassibility.

*Mary*: You understand rightly. For although my Son died once, nevertheless He wills that this very bitter death be present to the eyes of believers in order that it always merit life for those who [thus] die with Him. For he who dies with the Son of God lives with Him; they are associates in His suffering and associates in His consolation. No death merits this eternal life except the death of the Immaculate Christ—[a death] which is designed by Him to the end that He share life with all who die with Him. For eternal life, which is spiritual, enlivens all partakers of it, even as justice justifies all partakers of it and enlivens and renders flavorful all meritorious works. For even as all food, although [it may be] valuable, is tasteless without salt, so too my Son, the Salt of the earth,<sup>5</sup> underwent a death that is the Salt that saltifies every martyr's death and makes it flavorful.

[6] *Church*: O Mother of grace, tell [us], we ask, how we are supposed to suffer with, and die with, the Savior.

*Mary*: First, you ought to believe that my Son is also God's Son, who by His death merited life for everyone coming to Him and uniting himself to Him in highest faithfulness. For those who are bound to Him in highest faithfulness pass over into a union of merit, because they are His faithful members. For the sons rejoice over their having been acquired by the merit of their Father. But faithfulness demands that [the faithfulness] be whole and true until death. Therefore, if the Son of God was faithful unto death and by means of that death merit-

ed for those believing in Him deliverance from eternal death, then His death is rightly imprinted on all those who have been delivered, so that they carry in the memory of their bond this most excellent work of faithfulness. [They carry it] with great affection, so that they desire to be able to show their faithfulness to their Deliverer in every manner possible to them; and [they desire] to regard as the highest grace the fact that Christ's death is renewed in them for His honor.

[7] *Church*: Accordingly, the empathetic-suffering ought to be joyous.

*Mary*: Assuredly, that which is voluntary is not without cheerfulness. Although the flesh is weak, the readiness that is present in the spirit displays gladness. In my Son's suffering, supreme gladness-of-spirit was present together with supreme pain-of-the-senses. [In Him] the will of the flesh did not want to die but abhorred dying more than did any will of any man who was going to die. For [my Son] had knowledge of His [impending] death. [His] rational will had a supreme desire to die the death, because He knew that through death He could supremely please God and neighbor. For the senses, which are of this world, are at rest here below; the spirit, which is of Heaven, can be at rest only in Heaven.

[8] But the spirit, which gives noble and vital being to man's senses, brings about death by means of its separation from the body— [death] with respect to the body, which is deprived of life, which is the spirit's delight. Therefore, the sensitive soul is very greatly saddened [by death of the body]; but the spirit, which by means of that death, passes on to its own Life, [very greatly] rejoices. And because no one is certain that his spirit passes from death to life except that person in whom is present the Spirit of God's Son, who is Victor over death: death is bitter to all except to those who have the pledge of certainty.

[9] *Church*: What things lead us to a remembrance of Jesus's death?

*Mary*: All things instituted on the part of the Church: for example, baptism, the eucharist, [and] the other sacraments (which have within them the death of Christ as regards their merit and their power), the Scriptures, pictures, the image of the Crucified One ([present] in every church [and present] at crossroads [and] in oratories), the story of the Passion, the living sermon of the preacher (who transfers what is set forth in a perceptible form to the intellectual capability of the soul, where it infixes the power of the Redeemer's merit). And the soul

is inflamed toward love of the Savior and is made Christlike, so that in the soul there is a continual, joyous memory of the Crucified One's love [*amor*].

[10] *Church*: Therefore, so that this memory may be begotten in us, John preaches; and by guiding you, [Mary], he impresses on us [the memory of] the Crucified One. For we stand as attentive—as being very eager to grasp, through hearing—the word of salvation.

*Mary*: Speak, then, O beloved John.

*John*: Tell [me], Mother, what you wish.

*Mary*: First, say some things about the mysteries of the Cross so that the story may become more relishing.

*John*: O saintly Mother, in a few [words] you have touched upon all the mysteries of the Cross. But because it pleases [you] that I reiterate this, I will gladly comply in such a way that you who are the Mother of the Incarnate Word may guide [me] and may clarify things that are unclear to me. [11] First of all, know, you Believers, that there is a twofold kingdom of the rational nature, which alone rules, because it enjoys free will. The one kingdom is of this world, and it is seated in wickedness,<sup>6</sup> because the Devil has dominion over it. The other is the Kingdom of Heaven, which was unknown in this world; but it was preached of by Christ. In the first kingdom *this world* is the end-goal of all religion and virtue, and there is temporal life. In the second Kingdom, namely, of Heaven, the end-goal is *God*, and there is eternal life. In the first kingdom, only perceptible things and perceptible delights are promised. In the second, only intellectual things and intellectual delights are promised.

[12] But when He came from the Kingdom of Heaven, the Word made flesh<sup>7</sup> revealed those things that were altogether unknown to the world: namely, the fact that rational nature does not have its goal and its beauty in the delights of this world but in the delights of the Paradise of the Heavenly Kingdom. [And He revealed] that the kingdom of this world is, in comparison to the Heavenly [Kingdom], to be regarded as bondage and unhappiness; for the difference between this world and that Kingdom [is the difference of] what is visible and temporal in contrast to what is invisible and eternal. This [message] was new to the entire human race and was previously unheard. [13] But the Teacher said many things for understanding this [message]—admonishing that this world and the things in it not be loved, since the goods that appear in it are only apparent and erroneous goods lacking truth

and eternity. But the goods of the Heavenly Kingdom are eternal and true goods; and they furnish everlasting happiness and gladness. And since this world could not grasp His preaching (because the world did not understand the things that are of the spirit, inasmuch as they are things which it had not heard of nor seen nor could conceive of), then He, being moved by mercy, wanted to introduce faith, through which what is not known is attained. And He said that faith pertains to all things and that He Himself had come from Heaven and that the things which He had there seen with God His Father He declared here below and that, assuredly, He was to be believed because He was Truth and was the Son, or Word, of God

[14] Moreover, He showed with regard to His power and might that He was God, the Son of God—[showed it] by means of wondrous works that are beyond human capability. As He said: If you do not believe me, believe the works which God the Father (who is in me and who has sent me to you) accomplishes for your salvation.<sup>8</sup> [And He said] that nothing was impossible for one who believes,<sup>9</sup> because He-who-believes-God cannot be deceived, since [God] is truthful and is trustworthy with respect to His promises. And the fact that [Jesus] was the Giver of life [Jesus] showed in His resurrecting of the dead, and especially of Lazarus<sup>10</sup>—promising that He would give immortal life to those who believed Him, since He was the Word of God through whom God made all things that are in Heaven and that are on earth.<sup>11</sup> And so, since He is the Art and Knowledge of the Omnipotent God, there is no doubt that He can effect that life in believers.

[15] But He declared that just as the perceptible life consists of the perceptible refection of food and drink, so the spiritual, intellectual life [consists of] spiritual refection, which is the refection of wisdom. For wisdom enlivens the intellect vitally ; and [He said] that He was this Wisdom, or Word, of the Father-who-enlivens-all-things. Accordingly, He affirmed that the happy life consists in a knowledge of God and of God's Word and that only the Word, or Son, knows the Father.<sup>12</sup> And no one else besides the Son reveals [the Father], even as no one knows the wisdom of any teacher unless the teacher's mental concept (or [mental] word) and his [expressed] word (or begotten concept that takes on a perceptible voice) reveals its "father". Christ's every endeavor was the following: to transfer man from perceptible delight to a tasting of the pleasantness which the spirit has in apprehending the enlivening truth. And He opened the divine Scriptures,

which have in their perceptible words the spirit of truth that nourishes the soul immortally. [16] And [He said] that only on the surface and outer-hull [of the Scriptures] is there error<sup>13</sup> that seductively conduces to death of the spirit but that with spiritual understanding [of the texts] there is truth and pleasantness. And [He said] that one can be freed from the error in which this world is situated, far from the truth, only by receiving His word as the word *of the Son of God*, i.e., *of the Word sent from God*, in order to illumine the darkness of the world. And [He said] that the spirit of error—which is also the spirit of spiritual darkness—which has held captive the human race can be expelled only by the spiritual Light of the Word of God. And only the Word of God has the power of banishing death (which is darkness of spirit) by manifesting Himself and His Father. For the manifesting of the Light that is present in the Fount of truth drives out of the intellect the mortal darkness of ignorance, just as the sun's light [drives away] perceivable darkness. [17] And this [expelling] makes a difference because the illumination that enlivens the spirit remains; for it turns the spirit toward itself, just as wisdom, or savory knowledge, turns the soul toward itself [and] nourishes the soul appetizingly with its own flavor—[nourishes it] not [just] temporarily; for [wisdom] is a food that does not perish. Hence, from this [illumination's] power the [human] spirit is more and more strengthened and enlivened: and so, [the illumination] furnishes immortality. Such is not the case with temporal, perceptible food; and so, the animal nature ages and dies.

[18] But human souls, because of the infection contracted from their origin and because of [the infection's] long continuance, were not suited (1) for expelling the spirit of error from their formerly acquired passion and (2) for cleansing themselves. For they lacked justice, which alone justifies the spirit with regard to its being capable of possessing that immortal beauty; for the spirit of wisdom will not enter into a malevolent soul. And so, to the end that He would complete His mission as legate in accordance with the Father's desire, [Christ] established Himself as a Purifier of souls by the merit of His death, so that He was able to impart to purified souls His divine life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

[19] But for obtaining this purification, which consists of a washing away of sins (i.e., [a washing away] of spiritual infirmities), He preached that it is necessary that the [human] spirit adapt itself for receiving purification. And He taught that this preparedness would



come about if one would imitate Him—if, that is, one would look to Christ's virtues (which He preached by word and showed by deed) and would imitate them by pursuing meekness, humility, patience, truth, mercy, peace, faith, love, justice, and other things of this kind, which are fruits of the Spirit.<sup>14</sup> [20] For then the will which is the spirit's would—by conforming itself to Christ's will and by exhibiting this [conforming] through its works of virtue—prepare itself for receiving the merit of deliverance and for union with the Spirit of Christ's Life. For moral virtues that are habituated in the soul dispose the soul for the receiving of immortal life. For when the spirit comes to have such obedience that in the spirit there lives only virtue and the will of God, and when the spirit's own will is dead (a will which is of the flesh and of this world), then [the human spirit] is fit for the motion of the Divine Spirit's Life. And [He said] that the man who in this way would arrive at the Spirit would keep God's commandments<sup>15</sup> with respect to loving God and neighbor and would prefer the love of God and neighbor to his own perceptible life.<sup>16</sup> And he would be [so] disposed that the Divine Spirit would dwell within him everlastingly.

[21] Hence, [Christ], being willing to show in Himself all these evidences of love of God and of neighbor, chose death (while being innocent) in order to manifest how much He loved God (on account of obedience to whom He willed to die) and how much he loved man (on account of whose salvation He died). Therefore, all the Divine mysteries are enfolded in the crucifixion of innocent Christ. For thus is God to be loved with entire strength of soul, so that all things—even life itself—are to be regarded as nothing, for the sake of showing God's glory. The salvation of the neighbor's spirit is to be cherished in such a way that [even one's own] temporal [and] most contemptible death is to be deemed as nothing on account of the neighbor's very great good. The death of most innocent Christ merited eternal life, which rightly is bestowed on Him. For [Christ] suffered only on account of His love of God and of neighbor—not in order to wash away sin, of which He had nothing in Him.

[22] As [Christ] drew near to suffering [on the Cross], He said (1) that He would sanctify and sacrifice Himself for the Apostles and for all believers<sup>17</sup> and (2) that the Prince of the world who was in possession of man, would be cast out.<sup>18</sup> And it would be made clear how great is the goodness of the Father, who created man in order to show to man His own glory. And [the Father] did not spare His own Son<sup>19</sup>

but delivered Him up for the freeing of man. And [it would be made clear] how great is the goodness of the Son, who for man's sake gave Himself [over to death] , whereby He showed Himself to be the Son of God.

[23] Therefore, the power over all life is given to the Son because of the merit-of-love of His lost life. Hence, by means of this death, which was occasioned by love alone, Christ was given eternal life as a reward. This [life] can eternally enliven in body and spirit all the dead who are prepared by faith and virtue. Thus, the very life of the spirit was given to Him as a reward. By way of illustration: if God had given to someone our visible sun as a reward, such a person would have in his possession and in his power the power of illumining and enlivening every sensory nature capable of light and of life.

[24] Therefore, Christ—as being the just Possessor and Heir of the Kingdom of Life—has the life of the [human] spirit in His power. For He alone fulfilled the Law, which promises life. And within this Law Christ Himself was promised. For the fact that someone could love God and neighbor as perfectly as the Law commands was not possible except for the Son of God, who has knowledge of, and who knows by acquaintance, the Father and eternal life. Therefore, within the Law the Messiah was promised, as Christ said that in the Law and the Prophets He was written of.<sup>20</sup> Hence, Christ is the Spirit of the Law. And because the Law promises life to one who observes it, Christ is the one to whom the Kingdom of Life is promised.

[25] Therefore, so great is the intensity of love that is shown in Christ's death that no greater [love] is possible as concerns God and neighbor. And so, since [Christ's love] includes within itself all possible love, it includes the complete fulfillment of the Law<sup>21</sup> and includes every promise [of reward made] for [anyone's] observance of the Law. Therefore, Christ is the Bridegroom who has the bride and the delights of the spirit.<sup>22</sup> Hence, it is evident that just as no soul can be just without Justifying-Justice, so no [soul can be] alive without that Enlivening Life. And justification is not anything other than enlivening. Thus, Christ, through the merit of His death, is Justice that justifies—and Life that enlivens—all Christlike believers. Hence, those who walk in light, as did Christ—these He cleanses by His blood from all sin. For they are His neighbors, for whom He died [and] for whose salvation He gave Himself over unto death.

[26] Now, no one's death can cleanse that same one, because no

one has given himself being. And no one who has died can resurrect himself and be the cause of his own salvation or can cause himself to live again. For no dead sinner has [any basis] whereby he merits life. And no one can say truly that he is without sin; rather, he who says that he has no sin is a liar.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, only the death of innocent Christ, who offered Himself on the Cross for us, justifies those who are capable [of being justified]—those who are in Christ and who remain in Him, those who walk as He [walked]. In Him the perfect love shown in His death teaches that those who walk in love by following Him are sons of God.<sup>24</sup> Here below [we are sons of God] in expectancy; but when [Christ] appears after our death, [then we shall be sons of God] in reality, because we shall be like Him.<sup>25</sup>

[27] The death of Christ teaches mysteries—in particular, that God’s commandments (namely, [the commandment regarding] love of God and, similar to it, [the commandment regarding] love of neighbor) are to be kept, in order that love may be perfect. And [Christ’s death teaches] that one who thus keeps and does [the commandments] will live and is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven but is on the way [there] because he imitates Christ, who leads him to the Kingdom. No one has ever fulfilled the Law, which consists in love<sup>26</sup>—[no one] except Christ, who came not to destroy [the Law] but to fulfill [it].<sup>27</sup> This is the perfect love that appeared in Christ’s death [and] which merits the Kingdom of Eternal Life.

[28] But no one can attain to that perfect love, which promises eternal life. For there is no one who does a good than which there is not a [still] better good—[progressively better] all the way to one man, namely, Christ. Therefore, Christ is He alone who supplies and perfects that which is lacking in all [others]. And from His fullness all receive.<sup>28</sup> And because the merit of His suffering is this [eternal] life and [this] treasure, we must say that all who are saved are saved through the mystery of the Cross. And so, in the Apostle’s Creed I stated that Christ was crucified for us.<sup>29</sup>

[29] *Maria*: Tell [me], John: How does life abide in believers who follow my Son?

*John*: Eternal Life is the Father’s Kingdom that He gave to the Son. And [the Father] is the Living Light of Wisdom and is Love. One who abides in the Son abides in the Light, and in the Life, of the Father. For this is the promise: that he who abides in love abides in God;<sup>30</sup> [and] he who is in the form of Christ’s love abides in Christ. Christ is

the Son of the Father. He who abides in Christ is a son of God through the form of Christ in which He abides. And so [he abides] also in the Father (because the Son is in the Father), and the Father is in him (because the Father is in the Son).<sup>31</sup> And this is eternal life.

[30] He who acknowledges the Son has the Father. He who denies the Son denies the Father. Formed faith<sup>32</sup> is the acknowledgement that furnishes life. For the love that forms faith is Christ's love, which alone is perfect. It is the perfect forming-Form.

Hence, in order that I, [John], may conclude this section, [I will add]: We know that the Son of God has come; and He has put on flesh and has died for us and arose for us from the dead and has taken us up and given us an understanding in order that we may know the true God and in order that we may be in His true Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>33</sup> He is the true God and is Eternal Life.

[31] *Mary*: You have now explained sufficiently, Beloved John, (1) the reason for my Son's coming into the flesh and (2) His path unto death. And [you have explained sufficiently] that His death on the Cross makes clear that He is the One who is promised in the Law and the Prophets—[the One] in whom all [human beings] are blessed and enlivened. And [you have explained] that by means of His intercessory death He is the Mediator<sup>34</sup> who pacifies<sup>35</sup> all things and leads unto that which is perfect. He is the Justice<sup>36</sup> of God and of men; and so, [He is] the Mediator who makes peace. He is the *Justice of God the Father*, for all the Father's promises are fulfilled in Him. He shows the Father to be just, trustworthy, and truthful. He is the *Justice of men*, in and through whose Justice all are justified. And this justification is consummated by His death on the Cross. [32] But how He arrived at death, the devout people expect to hear from you.

*John*: But I fear greatly that my account—which is cooler than the warmth of love as regards Christ, who suffered, and which is milder than the spitefulness of those who persecuted Him—will not satisfy [both] the fervor of your desire and the spiritual welfare of an expectant people unless your love supplements [my account].

*Maria*: I will remain present and will assist.

[33] *John*: First, I ask my hearers that in this faith they note that Christ, the Emissary of Love, performed all the foreordained things without defect, so that it is impossible that [those things] could have been done better. If, then, the Father intended [i.e., foreordained] that the Son would free from death the human race, then the Son underwent

such a [brutal] death. In its intensity of pain [His death] enfolded within itself the penalty of death of all those who were to be freed [from eternal death]. Thus, each individual who was rightly supposed to suffer death because of his transgression of, or disobedience to, the Law makes satisfaction in and through the death of Christ, even if [that individual] ought to have suffered the penalty of torment in Hell. Therefore, the intensity of the sorrow of Christ (who bore our sorrows<sup>36</sup> and who took upon Himself the sentence of condemnation and who fastened the handwriting to the Cross,<sup>38</sup> where He made satisfaction) was so great that no one could have suffered it except Him in whom there was most perfect love—which love was able to be present only in the Son of God. Hence, whatever punishment is either written about or thought of is less than that satisfaction-making punishment that Christ suffered.

[34] Therefore, [Christ] had knowledge of His death and of all the punishments of all those who can suffer punishments. And with respect to His sensory nature [He had] such a noble body that He could suffer more intently [than others]. And in that kind of punishment—than which no [other kind] was more bitter, more contemptible, and more shameful with regard to place and time and in the gathering of all those who were present at the spectacle so as to increase the painfulness, and [with regard to] whatever [other] such things can be imagined for increasing the pain, so that the death would be a consummate death—there was no mercy, no kindness on the part of the Jews and the accomplices and the tormentors. Isaias had written these things about Him: in particular, that He is a man most steeped in sorrows, experiencing infirmity, being innocent, [and] bearing our sins.<sup>39</sup> And this is the belief of those who hear [this description], so that they know that the bitterness of the punishment is not expressible. And when one person attempts to express the bitterness in one way and another person, in another way, [the hearers know] that in this [attempt] there is no error on the supposed ground that [the description] is exaggerated but that always less is said than ought to be said.

[35] *Mary*: John speaks excellently. For how could my co-suffering—which was suffering in and through my Son—be expressed by someone else, since not even I could express it? But it suffices that each person in proportion to his devotion and love for [my] Son make—as best he can—a conception that is approximately conformable to [that] most bitter suffering.

So, continue on, [John].

*John:* Let us begin, then, and let us first consider that the resurrecting made of Lazarus (a man well-known)—and made near Jerusalem and on the fourth day [of his death] and in a marvelous manner (with Jesus openly crying out “Lazarus, come forth!”)—stirred the Jews to think about the execution of Christ. For they saw that many people turned aside and believed that Christ is the Son of God and the Messiah. And since they could not at all be persuaded that [that] man was God, they ascribed to the art of magic and to the Devil the mighty works which He exhibited.

[36] And so, when deliberation was undertaken—with Caiphas the high priest prophesying that it was expedient that one man die for the people so that the whole nation not perish<sup>40</sup>—the conclusion was reached that Christ would die in Jerusalem, (outside of which [city Caiphas] does not understand the prophet to die) when the occasion for dying presented itself. Behold, a marvelous mystery: It was expedient that Christ die in order to be glorified; and once known and glorified in the exaltation of the Cross, He would draw all things unto Himself.<sup>41</sup> But the Jews, purposing to blot out the memory of Christ from the earth [and] believing that the saying of Caiphas served their purpose, followed his counsel. Christ willed to die—but in this way: that He die as one condemned. [37] And since He was just, then when He died as one condemned, Satan lost all the justice which he [had] laid claim to over the descendants of Adam. For by sinning against justice he lost justice, even as abuse deprives the abuser of privilege.<sup>42</sup> Christ permitted all these things to be thus done because they were not opposed to His purpose. Rather, it was necessary that [they] be done in that way, so that, indeed, He would be offered to God by the Jews and the Gentiles as a sacrifice for the nations (as Caiphas prophesied), so that the whole nation would not perish. These things are marvelous. [The Jews] aimed to be free of deception; and so, they offered up Christ. And the nation obtained freedom from the deception of the Prince of the world.<sup>43</sup> Satan deceived himself. He brought it about that Christ died in order that he himself would not lose his dominion; but through this [bringing about of Christ’s death] he did lose [dominion].

[38] Next, there followed another cause [of Christ’s death. It is the reason] why Judas became a traitor: Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, when Lazarus would be with Him at dinner and when many [others would be present] who had gathered also for see-

ing Lazarus.<sup>44</sup> Mary Magdalene<sup>45</sup> brought a precious ointment of pure spikenard; and, having broken open the alabaster vessel in which it was contained, she poured [it] on His head,<sup>46</sup> and the fragrance filled the whole house. With Judas prompting, the [other] disciples were indignant over the waste of so precious an ointment. For it could have been sold for much [money] for use of the poor. Judas urged this [viewpoint], so that the [other] disciples spoke about the poor. Nonetheless, Judas himself did not care about the poor but was a thief<sup>47</sup> and would have received a portion [of the money] if the ointment had been sold. For he carried the purse.<sup>48</sup> But he thought that he would have had, of the tenth-part, thirty pieces of silver; and he determined to betray Christ to the Jews for those thirty pieces. Now, how Christ acquitted Himself and Mary [of Bethany] I think to be clear to you.

[39] Then on the next day when Christ, purposing to visit as King and Priest, came to Jerusalem on a donkey and the crowd and His disciples, together with the children of the Hebrews, gave reverence to Him as the Son of God: the indignant Pharisees approached Him [and asked] that He would restrain His disciples and the others from [their] praise [of Him]. Christ replied to them that if these people were to remain silent, the stones would cry out [in praise of Him].<sup>49</sup> And after the money-changers were ejected from the Temple, because of [Christ's] zeal for the House of God, [and] after many sick ones were healed, [Christ] returned to Bethany. From these [events] the envy of the Scribes and the Pharisees was increased toward Him.

[40] On the next day, the second day of the week, when He returned in the morning to the Temple, He was tempted by the bringing in of the adultress.<sup>50</sup> And He responded to the Disciples (who reported to Him that there were Gentiles who had come to the feast desiring to see Him) that the hour of His glorification had come;<sup>51</sup> and the Father in Heaven bore witness to this fact.<sup>52</sup> But He said that He was to be glorified through His death. He used the likeness of a grain of wheat, which by its death multiplies its power.<sup>53</sup> And [He said] that He, if He were lifted up from the earth, would draw all things unto Himself.<sup>54</sup> That evening He once again returned to Bethany. For the town of Lazarus and his sisters was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, fifteen furlongs, or almost two Roman miles distance, from Jerusalem.

[41] *Mary*: Permit me to give a clarification of what my Son said to His hearers.<sup>55</sup> All things that make the soul happy are wisdom, or

savory knowledge. And so, the highest happiness consists in a knowledge of the Best, i.e., of God and of His Emissary, my Son. And clarity is clear knowledge; and [that knowledge is] such that it is accompanied by praise; and it is called glory because of its clarity [or brightness]. Therefore, the knowledge of God and of His Son that engenders praise is what Christ came in order to reveal. And He especially showed it in and through His death, wherein Love (*caritas*), which God *is*, manifested it. And *there* [i.e., in His death] Christ glorified the Father, on account of obedience-to-whom He underwent death. And the Father made clear that [Christ] was His Son—[Christ] who, unless He were the Son of God and [the Son] of Love, which is God, could not have been of such great strength that He underwent such a death out of love .

[42] *Church*: We thank you, O Virgin of virgins, who in accordance with your name, which is Mary, have enlightened us.<sup>56</sup> We ask that you enlighten us more regarding how eternal life is present in knowledge.

*Mary*: The intellectual nature is [a nature] which knows and understands. To understand is to collect within oneself, or gather within oneself. Therefore, when the intellectual nature understands those things that are material, it does not gather into itself the material objects, which cannot enter into a spirit; for the intellect is of an immaterial nature. Thus, when it understands the heat of fire, it is not made hot; and when it understands coldness, it does not become cold—and so on. For it is not altered by those things, as the senses are altered by them when they sense. [For the intellect] does not gather into itself these [material] objects, but it makes for itself images and sensible forms in the likeness of the material objects; [and] by means of these it understands the material objects. [43] But when [the intellect] understands things divine, which are immaterial and *can* enter its nature, then it has them, i.e., gathers them, within itself. For, as they are, they can enter the intellectual spirit. And so, the intellect understands divine wisdom not by means of sensory images or by means of a [sensory] likeness to wisdom but by means of the wisdom itself, because [the intellect] finds wisdom present within itself. And unless the intellect has wisdom within itself, it cannot understand it; and by virtue of the fact that it understands, it is wise. [The situation is] similar as regards life [and] as regards love and the divine virtues. Therefore, the intellect, because of the fact that it *knows* the divine life, has that life with-



in itself; and, likewise, because of the fact that it *understands* [that] life, it is alive.

[44] Therefore, [the intellect] has God present within itself when it understands Him; and [it has] Christ [present within itself] when it understands truth, for He is Truth. And it has love [*caritas*] (which is living, divine warmth) when it understands love. Hence, it is evident that [the intellect's] knowledge of God and of His Son is [for the intellect] to have within itself the All-Desirable and Him who is better than can be conceived of.<sup>57</sup> And this [knowledge] constitutes a happiness which, unless it is had, cannot be conceived of or understood.

*Church:* You are rightly called Mary and the Mother of light that enlightens believers.

*Mary:* Let John now continue on with his account.

[45] *John:* On the third day of the week [Jesus] once again returned to the Temple; and the chief priests asked Him by what power He did that [which He did].<sup>58</sup> But He, having put to them another question, to which they did not respond, acquitted Himself in a similar way [i.e., by not responding to their question]. And He set forth several parables—in particular, [a parable] about two sons—the one of whom, when ordered [by his father] to go into the vineyard, refused in *word* [but] obeyed in *deed*; the other [son acted] in a contrary manner.<sup>59</sup> [Jesus told] another [parable] about the cultivators of the vineyard; by means of this [parable] He disclosed that He was not ignorant of the fact they [the Pharisees and others] wanted to kill [Him], the Son-and-Heir, in order to obtain His inheritance. But they did not understand that because of the death of the Son-and-Heir many would be made co-heirs.

[46] Moreover, [Jesus] spoke [a parable] about those who were invited to a wedding.<sup>60</sup> And then the Pharisees approached [Him and] asked whether it was permitted to the Romans to take tribute from them. After the coin was shown to Him, He answered them in such a way that He kept for each one—God and Caesar—his own respective rights unfringed upon.<sup>61</sup> Thereafter, He spoke of the great commandment and of the love for neighbor.<sup>62</sup> And [He said] that the neighbor was the Samaritan—meaning that among all neighbors the one who frees from death of the soul is unqualifiedly a neighbor. And hereby He manifested Himself in the name of the Samaritan.

[47] Moreover, [Jesus] gave an understanding about Christ, whom David calls his Lord.<sup>63</sup> He disputed with the Pharisees about

false teaching, about desire for honor, about cruelty, hypocrisy, greed, and pride.<sup>64</sup> And departing from the Temple, He said to them: “You shall not see me [again] until it is said [by you] ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”<sup>65</sup> And when, after departing, the amazing work of the Temple was pointed out to Him, He foretold the things that were going to happen: namely, that the day of the overthrow [of the Temple] would come, on which day stone upon stone would not remain.<sup>66</sup>

Returning to Bethany He said: “You know that in two days the Passover will be made, and the Son of man will be betrayed,” etc.<sup>67</sup>

## NOTES TO *Crucifixus etiam pro Nobis*\*

\* Sermon CCLXXXVIII.

1. Although the Apostles' Creed is being discussed in this sermon, these words come from the Nicene-Constantinople Creed of 381.

2. John 19:26 and 21:20.

3. April 15, 1457 was Good Friday, the day of commemoration of Christ's Crucifixion.

4. John 19:26-27.

5. Cf. Matthew 5:13.

6. I John 5:19.

7. John 1:14.

8. John 10:38 and 14:10.

9. Matthew 17:19.

10. John 11.

11. John 1:3.

12. Matthew 11:27.

13. Cf. II Timothy 2:14-16. Luke 24:45. John 5:39 and 20:9.

14. Galatians 5:22-23.

15. John 14:15.

16. Cf. Romans 5:7-10.

17. Cf. John 12:32-33.

18. John 12:31.

19. Romans 8:32.

20. Luke 24:25-27. See also John 1:45.

21. Romans 13:10.

22. John 3:29. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 7:6.

23. I John 2:4 and 1:10.

24. I John 4:16 and 3:1-2.

25. I John 3:2.

26. Romans 13:8-10.

27. Matthew 5:17.

28. John 1:16.

29. The Apostles' Creed—in almost all of its variants—does not contain the words “pro nobis” (“for us”).

30. I John 4:16.

31. John 14:10-11.

32. Cf. Galatians 5:6. Faith formed by love is faith in-formed by love.

33. I John 5:20.

34. I Timothy 2:5. Hebrews 8:6 & 9:15 & 12:24.

35. Colossians 1:20.

36. “Justice” here as elsewhere means “Righteousness”.

37. Isaias (Isaiah) 53:4.

38. Colossians 2:14.

39. Isaias (Isaiah) 53.

40. John 11:47-53.

41. John 12:23 & 12:32.
42. Here Nicholas repeats the essence of Augustine's "Devil-Ransom theory". See Augustine's *De Trinitate* XIII.16.21 and *De Libero Arbitrio* III.10.
43. The Devil is the Prince of this world. John 12:31.
44. Matthew 26:6-9. Mark 14:3-5. John 12:1-6.
45. Nicholas here identifies Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha, with Mary Magdalene. This view is controversial.
46. John 12:3 states that Mary anointed Christ's feet. Matthew 26:7 and Mark 14:3 state that she anointed Christ's head. We may infer that she did both.
47. John 12:6.
48. *Loc. cit.*
49. Luke 19:39-40.
50. John 8:2-11. Nicholas is not here perfectly concerned with the chronological order of events—an order that is not consistent throughout the four synoptic Gospels.
51. John 12:20-23.
52. John 12:28.
53. John 12:24-25. & 12:33.
54. John 12:32.
55. Here the Paris edition has a different word-order and punctuation—two variants that give a slightly different meaning: "Sine ut clarificationem de qua filius meus locutus est, gentilibus audientibus exponam": "Permit me to give a clarification, for the Gentile hearers, of what my Son said."
56. Mary is called *Illuminatrix*. See Sermons XLII (3:12). XLIX (5:21-22). LV (4:23-24).
57. The description of God as Something better than can be thought of is borrowed from St. Anselm's *Proslogion*, Chapters 2 and 3.
58. Mathew 21:23-46. Luke 20:1-16.
59. Matthew 21:28-30. The other son said that he would go but then did not go.
60. Matthew 22:1-14.
61. Matthew 22:15-21
62. Matthew 22: 34-40. Luke 10:25-37.
63. Matthew 22: 41-46. Mark 12:35-37. Luke 20:41-44.
64. Matthew 23:1-32. Mark 12:38-40. Luke 20:45-47.
65. Matthew 23:39.
66. Matthew 24:1-2. Mark 13:1-2. Luke 21:5-6.
67. Matthew 26:2.

**Descendit ad Inferna\***  
("He descended unto Hell")<sup>1</sup>  
[April 17, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "He descended unto Hell; on the third day He arose."

When Christ wept over the city of Jerusalem at His entrance on the Day of Palms,<sup>2</sup> He expressed the reason for His weeping: [namely,] because [the city] did not know the time of His visitation.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, He came for visiting the city of Jerusalem, [a visitation] written about ahead of time by many prophets—indeed, by almost all of them. For, as if everywhere [in Scripture], there is found [written] about the coming of a Visitor. God the Father said through the Prophet Jeremias: "I will visit you and will keep my word concerning you ...."<sup>4</sup>

[2] And if you search the Scriptures concerning the visiting of Jesus, you will find in all of them manifest agreement. Moses says that a prophet will be raised up ..., etc.<sup>5</sup> Another [writer] says: He will go out from His holy place for visiting ....<sup>6</sup> Another [says] that after many days He will come for visiting<sup>7</sup> and that this Visitor is to be called Messiah, i.e., Christ, i.e., the Anointed King.<sup>8</sup> The Prophet Daniel expresses [this point] more specifically.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Christ Himself spoke expressly enough about the visiting of the vineyard and said that the son, who was sent last for visiting, was killed.<sup>10</sup> The Holy Spirit by the mouth of Zachary, the father of John [the Baptist], attests that the Visitor had already come: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He has visited ..., " etc.<sup>11</sup> And subsequently [he said]: "... through the bowels of mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high has visited us."<sup>12</sup>

[3] Much earlier [Christ] had visited the Heavenly Jerusalem, where God is seen. And He found wickedness in His angels,<sup>13</sup> and He purged Heaven and the Temple of God in Heaven; and the Dragon, the Deceiver (namely, Lucifer), was cast out of Heaven. And salvation was bestowed, and the power of Christ was shown (in accordance with Apocalypse 12).<sup>14</sup> Then because the Devil, with great wrath, descended to earth<sup>15</sup> and into the abyss, or sea, and persecuted the Church: Christ came for casting him off the earth. And this [casting off] could not have been done unless [Christ] were to come as a Visitor who would be able to die. Hence, when the time of His suffering drew near, He said: "Now the Prince of the world shall be cast out."<sup>16</sup> And when

He visited the city of Jerusalem, entering on the Day of Palms, He visited for three days—namely, from the Day of Palms until Tuesday. And He began with the purgation of the Temple; and He gave instruction to those who were erring—as you know and have recently heard.

[4] Then, after His visit was finished, and after the purgation of the Church (which [purgation] was accomplished by means of His blood), He descended unto Hell. John the Baptist, when he was in prison, had sent to Christ because he knew that he himself would die before Christ. And so, he asked if Christ were going to come to Hell as Visitor—i.e., whether He was [the Christ] who was going to come or whether someone else was expected [to come].<sup>17</sup> The doctors [of the Church] interpret John to have been concerned about the coming of Christ to Hell so that he, [John], could announce [it] to the dead. For the Father in Heaven said through Isaias: “On that day the Lord will visit Leviathan...”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, Christ descended to the lower parts, i.e., to Hell, in order to visit there; and He occupied Himself with that visit even unto the third day, [at which time He arose].

[5] When the Word of God visited in Heaven, i.e., in the Kingdom of God, He was the Son of God and was, among the angels, a Messenger of great counsel<sup>19</sup> free from sin. When He visited in our world, He was the Son of man and was, among men, free from sin. When He visited the dead in Hell, He was dead; but among the dead He was free of sin. The Word of God visits every rational creature, whether in Heaven or on earth or beneath the earth. But He has always made His visit in accordance with the law that He imparted to rational nature; for He visits reason [so as to ascertain] whether it is living in accordance with its own rational being. For He imparted to reason a living law, which is the law present in living-obedience. For the rational spirit is free and noble, created in accordance with the freedom of Divine Reason. Hence, lest in its freedom it go astray, the law of living-obedience was given to it. By means of this law [the rational spirit] is [both] kept from error and grows in nobleness. For it is characteristic of reason [qua reason] that it obey the Word of God and believe Him from whom it has that which it is.

[6] I am speaking of living-obedience. For obedience that results from fear is not alive in a rational, free nature. In fear there is coercion and servitude, not freedom. Living-obedience is only from love [*amor*]. Accordingly, perfect obedience in the rational spirit is perfect love. Hence, in one who obeys perfectly, the only reason found [for

obedience] is love. Hence, the law of obedience is nothing but rational love (*rationalis amor seu dilectio*).<sup>20</sup> This law enfolds every rational mode of living. For love (*amor*) is life that is delightful. That which the rational spirit especially loves is life; that which especially lives within the rational nature is love, which obedience manifests. [7] Therefore, rational love is that there be loved that Fount from which [the rational spirit] has life, reason, and love. For to love the Fount of life is to live in gladness. And this love is manifested through maximum obedience, which all the virtues attain to. Hence, that rational spirit that lives in love [*caritas*] is good and does only what is good. It loves all things and hates nothing. And it wills no evil to anyone but wishes to be able to devote itself to the well-being of each person, unto the praise of its God.

[8] But the Word visits the rational spirit, which has received its rational power from the Word. For the Word of God is Logos, i.e., is the Rational Form of rational forms. Whether, then, [the rational spirit] lives reasonably and, by bearing fruit, grows and approaches to conformity to the Word of God, is ascertained by making inquiry. For if the rational nature lives reasonably, it approaches ever more closely to the Wisdom of God, or Word of God, whose image it is. For to live virtuously instills a habit which perfects a potency—as if a living image were continually to move itself so as to approach more and more conformably to its exemplar.

[9] Next, note that because of the merit of obedience the Word was exalted above every rational spirit. And this merit John in the Apocalypse (in the place already cited) calls the shedding of the blood of the Lamb.<sup>21</sup> According to our [human] way of thinking, [Christ], through obedience even unto death on the Cross, merited that exultation [on the Cross] many years after the creation of the world, so that, rightly, at His name every knee would bow, in Heaven and on earth and beneath the earth (as Paul says to the Philippians).<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, as concerns God: that day [of Christ's obedient death], which was future for Adam and is past for us, must be deemed to be neither future nor past with respect to God. With God the certainty of [Christ's] merit was *present* tense. [That day of obedient death] relates to angels, who are above time.<sup>23</sup> And it relates to human beings—with the proviso that by means of the aforesaid shedding of blood the Son as a man takes possession of the firstfruits of the human beings who are to be saved by the merit of His death.<sup>24</sup>

[10] Therefore, Absolute Obedience—which the Son of God, or Word of God, is rightly called [and which] is exalted above every rational spirit—has to examine the rational spirit with regard to the law of obedience. And so, it is evident that the Son of God, who *is* Obedience, is the Judge of all rational spirits—in particular, as to whether they keep the law [of obedience]. And in comparison with His obedience a judgment about all obedience is made. For His obedience is the exemplar of obedience (i.e., is the Book of the law), so that in accordance with it all men are judged. And so, He is the Judge of the living and of the dead.<sup>25</sup>

[11] But how He visited in this present world and how He completed the purgation by means of His own blood was spoken of on the day before yesterday. But how, with His body left behind in this world, He visited the dead, who are deprived of a body, we would wish to speak of if we knew [any details]. At an earlier time you heard how His suffering had application to the punishments of Hell, so that He conquered death in Hell; but right now we state that there is justice even in Hell. And so, the Judge who *is* Justice descended into<sup>26</sup> Hell and visited, wanting the purgations of the souls to be justly made [and] wanting orderliness, so that the ghosts or shades or spirits that are not bound to bodies would be either justly tormented or justly purged. [12] Hence, there is one justice for punishing one sin, another for punishing another sin, as even the philosophers have supposed. And Virgil in Book VI [560 ff.] of the *Aeneid* makes [such] a surmise, as does also Plato in the book that is called *Axiochus*<sup>27</sup>—and [as do] many others. For the philosophers agree that the shades, or souls deprived of bodies, are tormented by the gods (e.g., by Pluto, etc.) in accordance with the variety of [the souls'] sins. [They are tormented by the gods] who are positioned for [administering] these [torments]. And [the philosophers agree that], at length, [these souls] are purged—some after the course of many years, as Plato declared in the *Phaedo*.<sup>28</sup>

[13] Although those who spoke surmisingly by the light of reason did not arrive at the correct conclusion, nevertheless these surmises are not to be rejected. For reason dictates (1) that there ought to be various torments in accordance with the variety of transgressions and (2) that it is necessary that for that purpose executors be established by the Supreme Judge, whom we call Christ. Therefore, Christ in that visitation [of Hell] gathered many purged souls which could no longer with just reason be detained, because of their returning virtue, which



their suffering brought. [14] [Christ] gathered and took with Him this holy booty snatched from Hell.<sup>29</sup> And He left behind a regulation that those who were redeemed by His blood and imprinted with sacramental characters should no longer be held captive except in case of purgation (if it were needed), which He decreed was to be done mercifully by imparting *grace* and—on the basis of merit—by granting *indulgence*. And He gave a regulation regarding those spirits that were to be [further] purged and confined. And He visited Leviathan,<sup>30</sup> the Prince of death, whom He bound for a while in order that he would do no harm, as he was accustomed to do; and [Christ] established another day for judging fully all those who were visited.

[15] On that [future] day He intends to judge, without mercy, all men in accordance with the laws handed down and then to separate the sheep from the goats<sup>31</sup> and to separate from the entire mixture light from not-light and to place the light upwards [and] to send the not-light toward the center. And at that time the light of fire will be upwards in the Kingdom of the blessed; but fire's heat [will be downwards] in the Kingdom of the damned. Thus, the light of water and of snow will be in the Kingdom of the blessed; coldness [will be] in the Kingdom of the damned. [The case will be] similar regarding all other things, according as Albert, following [St.] Basil, says in *On the Creed*.<sup>32</sup>

## NOTES TO *Descendit ad Inferna*\*

\* Sermon CCLXXIX.

1. The words “descendit ad inferna” appear in several version of the Apostles’ Creed, the first appearance being around 404 A.D. Cf. Ephesians 4:8-10.

2. Luke 19:41.

3. Luke 19:42.

4. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 29:10.

5. Deuteronomy 18:18.

6. Micheas (Micah) 1:3.

7. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 38:8.

8. Habacuc (Habakkuk) 3:13.

9. Daniel 9:25-26.

10. Matthew 21:33-44.

11. Luke 1:68. See also Zacharias (Zechariah) 3:8 & 6:12.

12. Luke 1:78.

13. Job 4:18.

14. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:9-12.

15. *Ibid.*, 12:9.

16. John 12:31.

17. Matthew 11:2-3.

18. Isaias (Isaiah) 27:1.

19. *Ibid.*, 9:6 (in the Septuagint).

20. Nicholas in this sermon, as also elsewhere, makes no systematic distinction between his use of “*amor*” and his use of “*dilectio*”. Similarly, God’s love is not routinely referred to by Nicholas as *caritas* rather than as *amor* or *dilectio*.

21. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:11 (also cited in section 3 above).

22. Philippians 2:10.

23. Angels are above time in the sense of being everlasting, not in the sense of being eternal. Only God is eternal, timeless.

24. Apocalypse (Revelation) 14:4.

25. Acts 10:42.

26. Here Nicholas writes “in infernum” and not his usual “ad infernum or “ad inferna”.

27. Plato did not write a work called *Axiochus*. The editor of the printed Latin text points to Codex Cusanus 177 in Nicholas’s library.

28. *Phaedo* 107 d-e.

29. Epesians 4:8. Psalms 15:10 (16:10). Acts 2:27 & 31.

30. Cf. Isaias (Isaiah) 27:1.

31. Matthew 25:32.

32. The editor of the printed edition of the Latin text cites Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Super Symbolo* (Codex St.Gallen SB 974, f. 592b, lines 19 ff.).

**Ego Sum Pastor Bonus\***

(“I Am the Good Shepherd”)<sup>1</sup>

[May 2, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] The reading of the Holy Gospel, O Brothers, ministers to us suitable nourishment for this [our] sacred synodal meeting. Thus, there is no need to seek elsewhere food by which we may be refected—[we] who under Christ [our] Shepherd are led to the pastures-of-life and are guided to the art of feeding by which art we feed [to] the sheep the things entrusted to us.

[2] Christ said: “I am the Good Shepherd.” You have heard very often that the nature which is nourished by wisdom is incorruptible because of its capability for having wisdom. For the intellectual nature, which alone is suited for being nourished by wisdom and truth, can never be reduced to nothing. And in order that we may enter into the wide and gladsome meadow-of-the-feast, where we find rich herbage, let us note the fact that Christ, after the healing of the man born blind, had said: “I came into this world in judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.”<sup>2</sup> The Word of God enlightens ignorant and blind minds that recognize their blindness and desire to be enlightened by Christ, who is Light.<sup>3</sup> [3] But [the Word of God] makes blind those who presume that they have the light of understanding—because sin remains in them. For when they boast that they are seeing, their presumption does not allow them to approach in order to be enlightened. And since the Pharisees and the shepherds-of-others who presumed themselves to be seeing attempted to lead others by the light of their own understanding, Christ adds that ones-such-as-they are seducers, because they do not enter by the door. [Christ] gives the example of the shepherd of the sheep who enters the sheepfold by the door, but thieves and robbers climb up by another way.<sup>4</sup>

[4] [Christ] explains by what means the shepherd is recognized: namely, because his voice is known to the sheep, and they obey [him] and follow him.<sup>5</sup> They flee from a stranger because they do not know his voice. Thereafter, [Christ] reveals that He is the Door by which the shepherds enter and that those who do not enter through Him are thieves and robbers. He says, next, that He is the Door of the sheep [and that] He does not come as do other shepherds, whose goal is only to slaughter the sheep and destroy them; rather, [He comes] in order

that [the sheep] may live more abundantly.<sup>6</sup> [5] Therefore, He spoke as follows: “I am the Door. If anyone enters through me, he will be saved and will go in and out and will find pastures. The thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come in order that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, we know according to the prophecy of Jeremias 3 that Christlike shepherds (*pastores*) feed with knowledge and doctrine<sup>8</sup> and that for this reason if we pastors (*pastores*) seek to feed to our sheep [the knowledge and the doctrines] entrusted to us, we ought to lead our sheep into the meadows of sacred Scripture—and [to do] this by the Door that Christ is. For the true entrance is through Christ, of whom the Scriptures speak.

[6] For that which nourishes the soul in the meadow of the Scriptures is the word of God contained beneath the alphabetic letters. For just as beneath the different herbs the invisible nourishment for sheep is contained, through which alone the sensory life is nourished, so too beneath the various written-forms the spirit that nourishes the mind is hidden. Hence, the immaterial, life-giving, and enlightening nourishment is not discerned except by means of Christ, who is the Living Door, opening itself to one who knocks and closing itself to one who presumes. [7] And note that the rational mind that subjects itself to Christ knows His voice and, by means of the voice, knows the word hidden in the voice and follows it. So great is the pleasantness of God’s word (to which the mind that subjects itself to Christ through faith comes by means of knowledge) that [the mind] follows no one but Him. (And the voice of him who speaks other words is strange-sounding and unknown to the rational mind, and [the rational mind] flees from him.) For when Christ asked Peter and the other Apostles whether they would go away, [Peter] answered: “To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”<sup>9</sup> He who believed that Christ is the Son of God knew His voice and, in the voice, the word. And He knew that the word was the word of eternal life and that [he] could not go away.

[8] If, then, we seek to save those whose care we [pastors] have undertaken, let us lead them by means of the Door. Thieves and robbers teach [one] to enter by another way, so that they may destroy. For he who spurns the doctrine of Christ is seduced away from the pathway of Truth and of Life. Be aware that he alone will be saved who enters by the Door that is Christ, who is the Way and the Life.<sup>10</sup> If you

are looking for the doorway to life, Christ is [the Doorway]; if you are looking for life, Christ is [Life]; if you are looking for the pastures of life, Christ is [the Pasture]. [9] But who is this Christ? Surely, Christ is He who is the Giver of spiritual life, because He is Truth and Wisdom and the Light-of-reason that enlightens every man. And He comes in order that [human beings] may live and live more abundantly.<sup>11</sup> By way of illustration: The sun comes now in order that trees and animals may live. And it comes closer for infusing its power in order that trees which in winter were without fruit-bearing life (but, nevertheless, were not altogether dead) may now live, and live even more abundantly, for bearing fruit. Similarly, Christ the Sun of Justice,<sup>12</sup> in whom is the power of God, has come to us with the Light of understanding and the Warmth of love.

[10] Moreover, [Christ] shows Himself to be the Door of Paradise, i.e., of Sacred Scripture. For if by way of Christ you enter the house-of-understanding by searching the Scriptures, you will find Him in all [the Scriptural passages] to be the nourishment of life. If you go out through this Door by explaining and interpreting the Scriptures, you will find pastures. You enter into the Old Testament through Christ; from the Old Testament you go out into the New Testament through Christ.

Moreover, consider in another way how it is that Christ is a Door in which going-in and going-out coincide, as [is the case] with a [material] door. For a door is both for going-out and for going-in. Christ is the Door through which every creature goes out into existence, because [Christ] is the Form of things, through which Form all things have been made and without which Form nothing [is made].<sup>13</sup> He is also the Door through which all things return unto their Cause, or Form, as unto their own Beginning. He is the Door both of creation and of salvation—i.e., of flowing-forth and of flowing-back.

[11] If someone considers deeply by means of his intellect (1) that Christ is the Way through which every creature flows into being, so that [the creature] is that which it is, and [if he] considers (2) that Christ, who is the Way, is also the End-Goal of creation, because in Him the creation is ended and perfected—and if together with this he reflects carefully on (1) the fact that Christ is the Way through which, necessarily, every creature completes the circle of [flowing-forth and]

flowing-back and (2) [the fact that every creature] returns by entering into the First Cause and (3) [the fact] that [this Cause] is the End-Goal of the return-flow: then he sees that Christ is the means of flowing-forth and flowing-back in such a way that He is also the Beginning and the End. [Those who reflect upon these matters] will always find such pastures to be nourishing.

[12] Therefore, if Christ is known, all things are known in and through Him. If Christ is possessed, all things are possessed in and through Him. Therefore, it pertains to us to preach Christ in order that He may be known; for salvation and life consist of His name and of a knowledge of Him. And except for that [name and knowledge] there is no other name or knowledge that saves the intellectual nature, which lives from knowledge. Hence, Christ is that Truth which is sought by every intellect in order to be known. When this Truth is possessed, the uttermost fulfillment of our desires is possessed. And that joy of apprehended Truth is life eternal.

[13] Some one of the more simple people might ask: "How is it that we ought to preach Christ in order that He be known? For He says that no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son."

I answer that we ought to preach Him by means of the Door of [His] humanity in order that we may lead our subjects to a knowledge of Him. This knowledge is the faith in us that suffices for our salvation. For although God the Father cannot be known as He is except through the Son (for no one knows the Father as Father except the Son, and no one knows the Son as Son except the Father), nevertheless the Father and the Son are known by means of the revelation of faith. For if we arrive at the point that we know by faith that Christ is the Son of God, then Christ reveals to us the Father. Now, to this end we have the Door of [His] humanity. For when we look to the things which Christ the man performed, we will find in the man a divine power that exceeds [the power of every other] man. From these [deeds] we *believe* Him with respect to the fact that He said that He was the Son of God and was sent by the Father. For He produced the most certain and most efficacious evidences, so that no one who makes use of his reason can have doubt about this matter. [14] Therefore, [when we preach], we speak to the people of how it is that Christ came as one born of a

Virgin, of what miracles He worked, of what He taught, of what He promised, of how He died in order to bear witness to the truth [taught] by Him. Preach that He arose from the dead, that He appeared after His resurrection, and that those to whom He appeared received the Holy Spirit. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, they bore witness to the Resurrection, even unto [their own] death. And not only *they* [bore such witness] but also countless others [did so too]. From these [considerations] we ascend [in our preaching] unto the faith that, indeed, that man was also the Son of God and that as the Son of God He is to be believed and obeyed.

[15] Next, we turn to proclaiming the teaching and the precepts of the Son of God and to proclaiming that He opened the Scriptures because He showed Himself to be Him of whom the Scriptures speak. And [we proclaim] that by receiving Him by means of formed faith,<sup>14</sup> by obeying His teaching and His precepts, and by looking unto Him as unto the Exemplar of our life, we are to look forward to being conformed to Him and to possessing happiness with Him. And so, Christ is to be preached as is [here] set out. Then if He is believed to be the Son of God, reason concludes that He must be believed [as to what He taught] and that He must be obeyed in the way He taught and that His way is the pattern for all those who are striving for eternal life.

[16] You might still ask: “How shall I preach to the people that Christ is the Way, and the Door, to Paradise, i.e., to the Kingdom of Life and of Delights?” [I answer]: Preach [the following]: Christ is the Way, and Door, to immortality; for Christ was humble, meek, truthful, just, merciful, obedient, and one loving the Father and keeping the Father’s precepts even unto death—and so on, as regard each of the virtues. Now, Christ says that He is the Way—[Christ] who had such very lofty, and such immortal, virtues. Therefore, when we say that Christ is the Way to immortality, we ought to understand that he who keeps to the pathway of virtues imitates Christ and follows Christ and enters with Christ into the Kingdom of Immortality. [17] If, then, you *reduce* the Way to justice or to another virtue, you understand clearly. For to say “I am the Door, or Way,” is as much as if He had said “I am Justice or Truth or Humility or Virtue itself, which leads to the pastures of life.” As the prophet says: “All Your ways are truth.”<sup>15</sup> And elsewhere: “All Your ways are mercy and truth.”<sup>16</sup> And in Apocalypse 15:

“Just and true are Your ways.”<sup>17</sup> These ways are eternal because [they are the ways] of the never-failing virtues. Hence, he who has true justice has the Way (which is Christ) to salvation. [This fact holds true] for all the virtues, since Christ, who is the Way, is every virtue—i.e., is true Virtue, which enfolds within itself all virtues.

[18] You might ask: “Is, then, every *just* human being on the Pathway, which is Christ?” I answer: Every just human being who is truly just is on the Pathway, which is Christ. But true justice can be present only with the Christian believer, who alone has justice that justifies. For Christ, who is believed to be the Redeemer and the Justification for sins, is He who through grace justifies believers who imitate Him. For our works do not justify us apart from faith; rather, through grace Christ justifies those who follow Him. Hence, there is no true virtue that is the way to supreme happiness except the Virtue which is Christ. And so, although he who holds to Christ may seem just and merciful, nevertheless he is not justified before God by means of his own works. For there is only one Justice that justifies unto immortal happiness, and it is the Form that gives being to one who is just. For the Justice of the Son of God gives being to everyone who is just, in order that he too may be a son of God and a son of Immortal Life. For in the sight of God no living being is justified without that Justice which Christ is [and] in which God takes delight.

[19] Subsequently now, let us continue on with the text of the Gospel. For it says: “I am the Good Shepherd.” He who said that He is the Door says that He is the Shepherd. Therefore, the Shepherd through Himself leads His sheep to pastures. Let us reflect upon the words. For He says: “I am.” [The word] “I” properly befits God. For all *rational* substances refer to themselves by “I”; but “I” most properly befits God alone. For [this word] indicates mere substance prior to any dependency [and] without accidents, genus, or species. Hence, except for God there is no precise substance;<sup>18</sup> rather, every such ‘substance’ can be more substantial. God alone is the Most Substantial Substance, which cannot be more perfect or greater or lesser. And so, “I” befits God alone.

[20] Likewise, too, the word “am” befits God. For no creature can properly say “I am.” For to say “I am” properly befits the



Beginning, from which all that which exists has the fact that it exists. God, the Absolute Being, is the Cause of all being.

About these two things—namely, “I” and “am”—God speaks through the Prophet: “I alone am.”<sup>19</sup> And in Exodus 3: “I am I-Who-Am” and “He-Who-Is has sent me.”<sup>20</sup>

God, who nourishes all things, is properly the Shepherd. And, likewise, He alone who is God can say that He is good. For “no one is good except God . . .”<sup>21</sup> God is unqualifiedly [and] essentially good; a creature is good by participation. Similarly, fire is unqualifiedly hot, [whereas] other things are hot by participation. Christ is the Good Shepherd. He is, indeed, *Shepherd*, because He is the Head of the Church.<sup>22</sup> But He is *Good* because He is the Son of Goodness, i.e., of God.

[21] Let us take note now of what is requisite for being a good shepherd. For He says: “The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep.”<sup>23</sup> Assuredly, there cannot be a shepherd of such great goodness except for the Son of God. For so [greatly] good is no one except that one who cannot be a greater Good. Take note: He says that He gives His life for [His] sheep. He allows Himself to be put to death in order to feed His subjects. Wonderful is the goodness of the Shepherd who says: ‘You, my Subjects, do hunger and are altogether needy and lacking. And there is no means of nourishing you unless I make myself to be your Nourishment. Therefore, I shall die in order that you may be fed.’

[22] Let us note, Brothers, that we are obligated to feed the flock that has been entrusted [to us]—[to feed them] not by seeking our own life but by seeking their life. How are we who are shepherds good?—[we] who not only do not give our life for our sheep but are unwilling even to suffer harm for their sakes. Lest we offend men, we neglect the flock. Who feeds our flock nowadays by word and example? And what do we suffer for their life and nourishing? Do we not work all things not in order that the sheep may live but rather in order that we may live? Are we not hirelings?

[23] For Christ says: “But the hireling and he who is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees. And the wolf catches and scatters the sheep. And the hireling flees because he is a hireling and has no concern for the sheep.”<sup>24</sup> By means of this practical example it is manifestly evi-

dent how few are the shepherds nowadays and how many are the hirelings! For when the Adversary<sup>25</sup> comes, almost all flee, as being those who seek their own [benefit]. But if they were shepherds, then they would regard the sheep not as someone else's but as their own. [24] A pastor flees from his sheep less than a father flees from his children or a mother from the infant of her womb. For a pastor ought to be affected by the Christians entrusted to him, so that he watches over them more than does a parent. How much concern that Pastor of ours displayed, who said that He did not lose anyone entrusted to Him!<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, Brothers, not only are very many of those who have the name of pastor hirelings, acting as if to them there were no concern about the sheep, but they are [also] ravenous wolves: they do not feed; rather, they devour. For they snatch away whatever they can get—they, the very ones from whom their subjects are supposed to live. And as much as they can, they deprive of life those whom they are supposed to feed. [25] I speak also spiritually. For those whom [the pastors] ought to nourish by word and teaching, [the pastors] slay by their evil life and their [bad] example and their flatteries and ingratiating words. What is more horrific, O Brothers, than the fact that very many [pastors], seeking to please, absolve from serious wrong-doings—not emphasizing the graveness but smoothing-over and excusing, with little or no penance imposed, in order to curry favor and to profit illicitly. Surely, they sacrifice souls in order greedily to consume earthly [goods].

[26] Let us note, Brothers, what the comparative relationship is between a pastor and his flock: it is surely [comparable to] that which exists between a man and a sheep. So great ought to be the discernment and wisdom in a pastor that he has authority over his subjects as a man has authority over his sheep. The care-taking on the part of the shepherd of sheep teaches what watchfulness, what persistence, what circumspection is required for someone to be a good pastor of souls. The shepherd is a guardian, a doctor, and a guide. Thereafter, is it not God who nourishes substantially, who gives to the animals their food? Similarly, a pastor, too, guides a flock of souls so that they may arrive at the inner regions of the desert, where they are fed by the word of God.

I [will] pass over many point that each [of you] can readily understand from the things [already said].

[27] Subsequently, we are taught [from the text] who a good pastor is. For Christ says the following: “I am the Good Shepherd, and I know my sheep, and they know me—just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father.”<sup>27</sup> Assuredly, there is only one Good Shepherd, who is the Wisdom of God the Father,<sup>28</sup> so that He does not err. And He is a human being, so that He judges from His own [human] weakness how to feed a weak human being. Christ is the Shepherd of shepherds. He is the Law and the Light of the shepherds. He is the Way of feeding and is the Life which is the goal of the feeding and is abiding Truth. In all things He holds the pre-eminence.<sup>29</sup> [28] And He was so Lord and Teacher that He was the humble Minister of all people. Indeed, He was Minister in such a way that He performed even the utmost ministering by washing the extreme part of a human being, namely, the feet. Only the Good Shepherd is He with whose supreme Superintendence there coincides supreme Humility and with whose supreme Justice there coincides [supreme] Mercy and with whose supreme Gentleness there coincides [supreme] Discipline and reproof—and so on, as regards the other [virtues]. Thus, in Him is present every virtue that there is, [and these virtues exist] in a coincidence of extremes. And [in Him] is equality of being, so that in Him all human beings have His form. He conforms Himself to all, so that He attracts all [human beings] to His own Equality.

[29] Let us pay attention to how it is that Christ says, first and foremost, that He is the Good Shepherd and knows His sheep. Only this Shepherd, who is the Giver of life, knows for whom the Kingdom was prepared from the beginning and who are the predestinated. And they, [in turn], know Him as Shepherd, because they hear Him as the Son of God. (Other shepherds do not know [Him] in truth as Christ but [know Him] surmisingly.) And the more eagerness they exhibit for knowing [Him], the more Christlike [they are].

[30] Therefore, knowledge makes evident a good pastor. It is necessary that a physician know the one who is under his care. It is necessary that a pastor know his sheep in order to know how they are to be fed. [A pastor must know] not with vague public and surmising knowledge but with true and confidential knowledge—[must] know, that is, as a father [knows his] child. And this knowledge implies a [corresponding] knowledge on the part of the sheep, who indeed are

supposed to know the pastor as children [know] their father.

[31] In pastoral knowledge there is a coincidence to be considered. In the order of divine governance that is called hierarchy the ascending of *submission* coincides with the descending of *governance*. (For this coincidence is the means-of-union in which the Church exists.) Similarly, [there is a coincidence] in the case of [pastoral] knowledge. For to know the sheep [i.e., the congregants] in and through the pastor as pastor is what it is to know the pastor in and through the congregants as congregants. If the pastor knows paternally those who are to be fed, then they know filially the pastor-doing-the-feeding.

[32] Who is a father who is so careless that he does not know his children? And who is a child so careless that he does not know his own father—[does not know], that is, him who has shown himself to the child as father? From this [example] we are taught how great the friendship ought to be between pastor and congregants. For the primary friendship is that of parent to child. It holds the pre-eminence among friendships. But there is no such [friendship] if knowledge does not precede [it]—namely, that [parent and child] know each other. Therefore, the knowledge that initially precedes the friendship that is supposed to be the primary and greatest friendship ought to be the knowledge as between parent and child. Therefore, a pastor is the father of a subordinate child; and the subordinate [children] ought to be as one child, because they constitute one mystical body because of the oneness of the pastor. For [the pastor] ought to regard each of the congregants as a one-and-only child. [33] And how ought a pastor to be a father? Surely, [he ought to be a father] as God is Father. God is Father in such a way that no [other] fatherhood can be equal to [His] Fatherhood. For all other fatherhood is less than that [Fatherhood]. For from Himself and from His own Essence He begets a Son in such a way that He imparts to the Son the whole Essence, holding back for Himself [alone] nothing that He does not impart to the Son. Likewise, the Son of God is Son in such a way that no [other] son can be equal to Him. For every [other] son is less the son of his father than the Son of God [is Son of God the Father]. Now, a pastor ought to be father in such a way as is the Heavenly Father; and a congregant ought to be a congregant in such a way as the Son of God [is submissive] to God.<sup>30</sup>

[34] But the Teacher said that the knowledge between the pastor and his flock is a likeness of the knowledge between the Father and the Son. For God the Father begets the Son by knowing. Likewise, a pastor ought to beget a ‘son’ from the supremacy of knowledge, which is faith. For just as the faith of the one baptizing and of the one baptized is one faith, so in the spirit of the pastor there ought to be faith, in which Christ is present. This [faith of the pastor] ought to beget spiritual sons who are equal—i.e., [ought to do so] by begetting from the pastor’s own faith a faith that is present in the spirit of the [believing] subject, so that Christ is formed in the believer. Behold, a good pastor has within himself by faith the Good Shepherd, namely, Christ;<sup>31</sup> and by faith [the pastor] begets in [him who is] the subject the [Good] Shepherd, namely, Christ. [35] When the pastor by way of knowledge begets Christ in the subject, he causes the subject to have within himself the Shepherd, who governs him and nourishes him. For the [believing] subject always has the Shepherd with him. If he looks unto Him [for guidance], he [will] not stray but [will] always come by means of the Shepherd to pastures. The pastor ought not to cease from begetting temporally but ought always to keep begetting Christ by his word[s] of instruction until [the subject] is formed eternally in the resurrection. For as long as we live [the begetting] must not cease. For just as God the Father in eternity is ever begetting the Son and does not cease to be the Father-begetting-the-Son, so in this world in the course of time the pastor ought not to cease [begetting].

[36] Consider attentively that Christ is all in all.<sup>32</sup> In the pastor He is present as pastor; in the subject [or congregant He is present] as subject and as one who is obedient. In the pastor, Christ is the Word of God teaching to preside; in the subject [He is] the Word of God teaching to obey and to be submissive. In one who is wealthy [Christ is present] teaching humility and mercy. In one who is infirm [He is present teaching] patience. In a judge [He is present teaching] justice. And so on, with respect to all [the virtues]. For whatever there is of virtue, this the Word teaches. And as an example of teaching, [Christ] educes His own humanity in order that a man may look unto it and in this way be nourished by word and example.

[37] Let us next consider what [traits] are required for a pastor. First, as was said, comes *knowledge*. Then comes *doing*, as follows [in the

text]. For Christ says: “And I lay down my life for my sheep.”<sup>33</sup> I understand “life” (*anima*) as having to do with the role of enlivening— as a living *animal* takes its name from “*anima*”. [Christ] says “for my sheep.” For necessary first of all is this: that the sheep belong to Christ the Shepherd; otherwise, He would uselessly lay down His life for them. And so, there follows [in the text]: “And I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must also bring them in; and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.”<sup>34</sup> The Shepherd increases His flock. And He has other chosen sheep which He has not yet brought in but shall bring in. And they are brought in at the time when they hear the voice of the Shepherd. For they follow His voice if they hear it inwardly [calling]. And then there will be one fold and one Shepherd of them all.

[38] Next, there follows [in the text]: “Therefore, the Father loves me because I lay down my life for my sheep in order that I may take it up again.”<sup>35</sup> What is this [declaration] other than that no one who is a pastor is loved by God the Father unless he is a true and good pastor? God does not love lying and wickedness, because He is Goodness itself. But a true and good pastor has no life outside of pastoring, [i.e., of feeding and caring for the flock], just as sight [has no life] outside of seeing and just as the intellect [has no life] outside of understanding. Hence, giving nourishment is the divine form that gives to the pastor vital and delightful being. And so, nothing is dearer to him than that form. Indeed, in order to remain a good pastor he counts as nothing all sensory, animal life [*vita sensibilis animalis sive anima*] and all being and whatever can be spoken of.

[39] But let us attend to the fact that Christ previously said, first, “The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.” Then He adds: “I am the Good Shepherd . . .,”<sup>36</sup> etc., and “I lay down my life for [my] sheep.” Now, thirdly, He adds: “The Father loves me because I lay down my life for my sheep—[lay it down] in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power of laying it down and the power of taking it up again. This commandment I have received from my Father.”<sup>37</sup>

[Christ] is a wondrous Shepherd, from whom no one can remove His life; and, nevertheless, because He is the most true, and the best,

Shepherd, He lays down His life in order to take it up again. And in Him this power *is* the commandment of the Father. Take note of this. [40] Since what is impossible is not commanded by God, God's commandment gives even the power to obey. For example, if He were to command a man to fly, He would give, by this very fact [of commanding], the power by which [the man] could [fly]. Likewise, because He *gives the power* that we can be sons of God by receiving into ourselves Christ, who is the Form of sonship: He also *commands* that we do so. For by the very fact that He gives the power, He also orders and commands. For just as He would command in vain unless He added the power of fulfilling [the command], so He would give power in vain if He did not also command that the power be exercised. [41] [But] God does nothing in vain.

The Father loves Christ because Christ lays down His life in order to take it up again. John explains in his canonical letter, in I John 3, how he understands the laying down of one's life. He says: "By this we have known the love of God: that He has laid down His life for us."<sup>38</sup> The goodness of a shepherd *qua* shepherd is to love his flock more than himself; [and], for this reason, [for him] to give his life (i.e., all that he has) for his sheep is [for him] to prefer his flock to his life. Hence, if a shepherd, [or pastor], does not do his utmost—namely, give his life for the setting-free of his flock, even if they were in bonds [and] subjected to Lucifer in Hell—he is not a good shepherd. [42] Christ descended unto Hell in order to free His flock from Lucifer's bonds—as, recently, some of you have heard-about from me.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, the Shepherd Moses said: "Forgive them this trespass or else [in their place] strike me out of the book in which You have written me."<sup>40</sup> And David asked the angel to spare the innocent sheep and to turn against *him* the sword because *he* had sinned, [not they].<sup>41</sup> The Shepherd Paul chose to be accursed for his brethren's sake,<sup>42</sup> as Christ was made anathema, i.e., accursed, for us (because cursed is everyone who hangs on a cross)<sup>43</sup> in order to redeem us from the curse.

[43] And note that a good shepherd ought to nourish.

Just as a paschal lamb that gives its life so that the children of Israel may live,<sup>44</sup> so Christ, the true Lamb,<sup>45</sup> gave His life [*anima seu vita sua*] in order that we might live. Now, a lamb by means of its physical death passes over into a rational [nature] when in a human being

it is converted into the nature of the one who is fed. This is not the way that Christ lays down His life (which He called His spirit) when He died and said “Into Your Hands I commend my spirit.”<sup>46</sup> [He does not lay His life down] in order to take up another, better life (or better spirit) but in order to take up that [life] again. For He lays down His life (or spirit-of-life) in order that by the life of His spirit souls may be fed [and] not in order that he may pass over into the nature of the one who is fed. Rather, He takes up His life again—into which [life] the one who has received that [life] has passed over.<sup>47</sup>

[44] When the sun sends forth its bright ray into the air, [it does so] not in order to be turned into the darkness of the air but in order to turn the darkness unto itself so that in this way the sun may take again into itself, with gain and embellishment, the bright ray that was sent forth. A pastor acts similarly when he enlightens his subjects by instilling into their hearts faith (which is the life of one who is *just*, for one who is *just* lives by faith<sup>48</sup>) in order that the believers may be one with him. And the *taking up again* [of the faith that is present in the believers] coincides with the *instilling* [of faith in the believers]. And in this way a good pastor, who has put on Christ, instills life, or the spirit-of-life, continually in order to take it up again, so that he may take it with gain. And the Father loves him because he feeds his sheep.

[45] No one can confine this spirit of life, which is the spirit of Christ and—what is the same thing—the spirit of Wisdom and of Truth, [and] which a pastor has within himself. [No one can confine it] because it is a spirit of liberty. And, [likewise, no one can] violently remove it from the pastor. Rather, by means of his word a pastor can put forth, and send forth, [this spirit] from himself by instructing his disciples vitally; and he can take up [this spirit] again for vitalizing himself. For he who teaches others by the word of God can also instruct himself by the same word taken up again.

[46] Let us, Brothers, pay attention to the fact that the specification of the good shepherd—who is described even in the Old Testament [and] who was promised [aforetime]—could be affirmed truly only of one shepherd, namely, Christ. For who is a shepherd so good that he gives himself over unto death for his sheep?—[who] but Him alone who cannot be more good? And this one is Christ. Therefore, those err who do not think that the Scriptures speak about Christ



except where mention is made of a Messiah who is King and Redeemer. To be sure, every Scriptural passage that promises a Visitor and a Shepherd and a Redeemer and a Light-giver and a Life-giver and a Savior speaks of Christ. [47] For Christ is the promised Shepherd who knows those who are His own. And they perceive Him as Christ, the Son of God. And He gives to them eternal life, and they shall never perish—as follows in this same chapter [of our text].<sup>49</sup> For there is no power that can snatch the flock from the Hand of that Shepherd, because what the Father has given to Christ is something greater than all [else].<sup>50</sup> If the Father has given wisdom to some individuals, the wisdom that He gave to Christ is greater than all [other wisdom] because it cannot be greater. If [the Father] has given virtue, the virtue that He gave to Christ is greater. If [He has given] power, that [power] which He gave to Christ is greater. For [Christ's] being the Son of God is something greater than all [other] things. Through Him the Father reveals Himself.

[48] The Son is the Revelation of the Father. He is called the image and the Form of the Father's Substance because through Him every intellectual nature has access to the Invisible God.<sup>51</sup> For [the Son] is the Knowledge or Way or Wisdom or Truth (and other things of this kind that reveal God the Father). He is the Intermediary through which the Father-Creator works all things, because [the Father] works all things for the Father's own sake, in order that His glory may be manifested and known. And so, the Son is the Word through which the Father shows Himself in creating and working. Hence, Christ says that He is the Son because through Him the Father does the works.<sup>52</sup> Since these works are the Creator's and are done through Christ, Christ concludes that He is the Emissary of God and Son of God.

[49] Hence, from the foregoing, understand how you shall fashion for yourself a conception of Christ. For Christ is He to whom the Father has given that which is something greater than all [else]. For the knowledge of God is something greater than all [else]. And so, as long as there was expected a gift greater than anyone possessed (because no one had a gift than which a greater gift could not be bestowed), so long was Christ expected, in order that [in Him] the gift of God would come to ultimate perfection. And this is the gift of the removal of ignorance-of-God, as in Acts 17 Paul speaks of.<sup>53</sup>

[50] Consider the following things attentively: namely, that Christ is the Knowledge of God [*notitia sive scientia aut cognitio Dei*], and you will be able to understand the Gospel of John and be able to understand Paul and the others. And then, too, you will understand how it is that Christ says “I and the Father are one.”<sup>54</sup> For the knowledge and the known are *one thing*. And the knowledge is in the known, and the known is in the knowledge. From the *known* and the *knowledge* proceeds the *knowing*, which likewise, is one thing [with them]. The known, the knowledge, and the knowing are one thing in essence, although the known is not the knowledge or the knowing. Yet, they coincide in essence because, with regard to things intellectual, the known is not anything other than the knowledge and than the knowing.

[51] Perhaps someone will entertain doubt about how to understand that a pastor would give himself over unto death and the punishments of Hell for the sake of his flock; for no one is obligated to give over his own rational life unto death in exchange for [saving] the life of another.

I reply that the foregoing [claim] must be understood in such a way that the pastor ought not to look unto himself when, in ministering, he does in whatever way those things which God commands a good pastor [to do]—even if on this account he were to envision himself as going to be damned in Hell. For if someone were of such great love, he would surely *not* be damned in Hell. For in Hell one who is *just* does not receive the punishment of the unjust. Therefore, the greater the love that a pastor has, and the more ready he is to suffer for his flock, the greater the glory that he shall obtain.

[52] If, then, [the pastor] is not concerned that he himself live, provided that his subjects, who are his mystical body, live: then the truer this [characterization of him] will be, the *better* he will live. For not only will he live in and through his subjects but [also] they will live in and through him, who has offered his own life for them. {[The situation is] as if a head having all weak members [in its body] were to suffer in order that its members would be healed, [and as if] then from the members’ health (which because of the head’s suffering was recovered) the man, even with respect to his head, would be improved in health and vitality, and the head, through its pain and suffering, would find only joy.} [53] For the more [the pastor] loses his life [*anima sua*

*seu vita*] because of his love [*caritas*], the more he finds it.<sup>55</sup> For the more he loses because of his love, the greater is [that] love. [And] the greater the love, the greater is the life of the spirit (since love is the life of the intellectual spirit). For the love proceeds from a knowledge of God, [and] the love is a delightful movement, or delightful life—is, indeed, a joy of apprehending.

[54] For he who knows God does not doubt that God is to be obeyed completely; and he does all things out of love. Hence, an action through which greater love is shown shows greater life in the spirit. Thus, the spirit that, as best it can, gives itself to utmost humility is, because of its love, reduced to nothing, [as it were]. [Yet,] when it seems to pass into *not-being*, it crosses over into *more perfect being*. And for this reason Christ said, above, that the [good] shepherd lays down his life in order to take [it] up again. For to lay down, or give up, [one's] life is not to lose *being* but to find it—is not to decrease but to increase—because one dies deliberately and willingly. Nevertheless, such *dying* is *living*. Lo, [we see] the immortality of [that] spirit which by dying finds life! Whatever, in dying, *lives* cannot perish but passes from death unto life, i.e., unto conformity with God, who alone dwells in immortality.<sup>56</sup> [55] Wherefore, then, we experience in ourselves that there is an intellectual spirit, which is inclined toward the absolutely and essentially Good, True, and Just, (and whatever other things that are names of God). And the more [the intellectual spirit] has a knowledge [of God], the more it loves God. It loves *because* (by means of a rational love) it has this knowledge, which is concreated with it and natural to it. Thereby we know that our spirit is capable of receiving eternal life—life which is only love for God.

[56] And note that since Christ is only the Word-of-God who reveals the Father, it is He whose teaching instills the spirit of life. For from our knowledge of God the Father—[a knowledge] that Christ reveals in us—Love proceeds from the Father and from the Knowledge of the Father. This Knowledge is the Word, or Son, of the Father; it is infused into our spirit and enlivens it, because it moves our spirit by means of a joyous movement that is life. For it is a heart-felt, or central, loving-movement occasioned by God who is loved [and] who makes His dwelling within our spirit.<sup>57</sup> [57] Therefore, the Word that enlightens the soul—so that it knows Justice and Truth (which are cer-

tain names, or [forms of] knowledge, of God)—is Christ, who is the Knowledge that reveals the Father. And so, Christ prepares our spirit for a reception of the Spirit of God, or Love of God, whom God the Father sends (1) in the Name of Christ,<sup>58</sup> (i.e., in the Knowledge-of-the-Father, which the Son is) and (2) in the Name of the Son (i.e., in the Knowledge of Knowledge)—[sends] into the intellectual spirit. And Christ [too] gives this [Spirit]—just as a knowledge of the Good infuses a love of the Good. Hence, it is evident—because the Father is in the Son—that Christ, the Revealer of God, or Manifester of God, sends the Spirit of life, i.e., sends Love, into the hearts of believers. In the Knowledge that the Son is: the Father, who is known and revealed is present. And Love arises both from the Known and from the Knowledge.<sup>59</sup>

[58] [The situation is] as if absolute beauty (which is loved by the rational spirit in those things that are beautiful not essentially but by participation) were to send from its own essence its ‘only begotten son’ for revealing [absolute] beauty (i.e., its ‘father’) in the ‘father’s’ truth and essence. This ‘son’ would turn the rational spirit from love of participated and corruptible beauty toward love [*amor seu caritas*] of absolute and immortal beauty, of whose nature it is that it can never be loved enough, because it is always more lovable than it is loved. [59] So, too, that [rational] spirit—which from [Divine] Love is strengthened, nourished and increased in loving—obtains unitively and permanently eternal gladness. And just as I have illustrated with regard to beauty, conceive similarly as regards wisdom or justice or truth. For they are names of God, who is Absolute Lovability itself, which is also called Goodness, Truth, Wisdom, and so on. These are loved by the rational spirit. This rational love (*rationalis amor*) lives intellectually and is called *caritas*, in differentiation from brute-love [*amor brutalis*].

Let these [remarks] now suffice.

## NOTES TO *Ego Sum Pastor Bonus*\*

\* Sermon CCLXXX.

1. John 10:11. In this sermon Nicholas is addressing priests and others of the religious.

2. John 9:39. Nicholas oftentimes alludes to the Latin Scriptures without seeking to quote from them word-for-word.

3. John 8:12.

4. John 10:1-2.

5. John 10:4-5.

6. John 10:10.

7. John 10:9-10.

8. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 3:15.

9. John 6:68-69.

10. John 14:6.

11. John 10:10.

12. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.

13. John 1:3.

14. The words “formed faith” have to do with faith in-formed by love. Galatians 5:6.

15. Psalms 118:151 (not present).

16. Psalms 24:10 (25:10).

17. Apocalypse (Revelation) 15:3.

18. I. e., there is no *substance* in the precise sense of the word.

19. Psalms 140:10 (not present in the King James version).

20. Exodus 3:14.

21. Luke 18:19.

22. Ephesians 5:23.

23. John 10:11.

24. John 10:12-13.

25. I Peter 5:8.

26. John 17:12.

27. Cf. John 10:14-15.

28. I Corinthians 1:24.

29. Colossians 1:18.

30. The Son of God is not ontologically subordinate to God the Father. But in the economy of the Divine plan of salvation, the Son is obedient to the Father and is said to do the will of the Father. The obedience expresses the Son’s love of the Father, even as the Father is said to love the Son and to be well-pleased with Him (Matthew 3:17).

31. “Christ in you the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27.

32. I Corinthians 15:28.

33. John 10:15.

34. John 10:16.

35. John 10:17.

36. According to the text of John 10 Jesus twice says “I am the Good

Shepherd”—once before and once after saying “The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep.” See John 10:11 & 14.

37. John 10:17-18.

38. I John 3:16.

39. I.e., some had heard him preach Sermon CCLXXIX (*Descendit ad Inferna*) on April 17.

40. Exodus 32:31-32.

41. II Kings (II Samuel) 24:17.

42. Romans 9:3.

43. Galatians 3:13. (See also Deuteronomy 21:23.)

44. Exodus 12.

45. John 1:29.

46. Luke 23:46.

47. Here Nicholas alludes to the new life that believers receive.

48. Romans 1:17.

49. John 10:28.

50. John 10:28-29.

51. Hebrews 1:3. Colossians 1:15.

52. John 5:19.

53. Nicholas alludes to St. Paul’s speech on Mars Hill in Athens.

54. John 10:30. Nicholas goes on to illustrate how the one God can be conceived to be also three persons: namely, by conceiving of Him as Knowledge (Father), Known (Son), and Knowing (Holy Spirit).

55. Matthew 10:39.

56. I Timothy 6:16.

57. John 14:23.

58. Nicholas here alludes to the Holy Spirit, who is sent to the believer in Christ’s name. John 14:26.

59. I.e., love arises from the Father and from the Son. The Son is the Knowledge of the Father. See note 54 above.

**Obsecro Vos tamquam Advenas\***

(“I Beseech You as Strangers”)<sup>1</sup>

[May 8, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] “I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from carnal desires, which war against the soul” (I Peter 2).

We shall very briefly speak about the Epistle, then about the Gospel.

In many ways the Apostle Peter admonishes us to stay on the pathway of salvation. And in this Epistle he brings up for our remembrance the fact that we were banished from Paradise [and] have entered this world as strangers and pilgrims—i.e., as those who do not have here a permanent city but are wayfarers en route toward the city from which they were cast out.

It is the custom in Flanders that sinners are expelled from their cities until they complete their penance and pilgrimage. Such ones show all earnestness to complete their course as quickly as possible.

[2] And because those things which bind men to carnal desires hinder men, [Peter] admonishes [them] to abstain from those [desires]. For the soul hastens to return [to that place] from which the man was expelled. But carnal desires war against the soul. Hence, this present world, in which carnal desires flourish (namely, the lust either of the flesh or of the eyes or the pride of life),<sup>2</sup> does not permit the pilgrim to complete his course but holds him back and binds him. And worldly human beings do not care about any world other than this one; and so, they become inhabitants and citizens who fashion for themselves a paradise from these delights. [3] The Apostle exhorts Christians, who know the truth—namely, [the truth] that this world is not to be settled-down-in but is to be passed through—to abstain from those things which make a man a citizen of this world and an exile from his native country. For the native country of the intellectual nature is with its Father and Creator, i.e., is where every desire is intellectual and spiritual—as, for example, is (1) knowledge of the truth and (2) joy in apprehending the true and divine life that consists in a knowledge of God.

[4] Therefore, let us see to it that [each one of us] conducts himself as a stranger [to this world]; for we do not doubt that we are strangers. Now, certain strangers are sent into exile—some in order to

acquire wealth, others in order to be instructed. Surely, we are strangers sent thus into exile in order to learn and to acquire wealth—but always in order to return as purified, perfected, and enriched. And so, we are all pilgrims together. [5] Note especially that with respect to our rational spirit, which is from Heaven, we are strangers. The inner man is a stranger, and the [rational] spirit has come in order that [the inner man] might learn. For man is the last and lowest [of rational beings], as says our Savior,<sup>3</sup> because a lower angel is greater than [a man];<sup>4</sup> and [a man] exists with the potency to become actually knowing and understanding. And so, he comes into the world and into an animal body in order that by wonder he may be stimulated to reasoning and be brought from potency to actuality. God is pure Actuality. Now, the more the [human] intellect is actualized, the more similar it is to God and the more perfect it is. But it is enriched because it gathers within itself a disposition for virtues and becomes rich with virtues and merits.

[6] Let us be aware, then, that we are true pilgrims. And let us attend to what those do who long for return [to their native country]. They do not seize upon something that strikes them as so appealing that for this reason they fix upon it and cease moving. If they see things which at first sight move [them] and amaze [them], they do not for this reason change their purpose. They do not burden themselves with superfluous things; rather, they put aside things that are scarcely necessary, and they are content with food and clothing. They are not concerned about adornment, because they are not seeking to be pleasing to anyone. They have reverence for all things, and they abstain from all vice, lest they be hindered [by it]. Their mind is always on Heavenly things because they are hastening to get to Heaven. [7] Their behavior among believers is good, and such ones establish a church. Men who see you Christians conducting yourselves in this manner and not being influenced by the world more than are strangers and pilgrims will cease detracting from the faith and will glorify God in the day when you visit with them. Behold, [note] that we are to walk [in such a way] that those who speak of us as of evil-doers—[and] who observe, in the end, our conduct and our works—give glory to God. For when they find that in all matters we seek God's praise and not our own vainglory and advantage, they will give glory to God because He has such servants.

[8] Next, Peter commends obedience, saying: "Be subject to



every human creature for God's sake—whether to the king as excelling or to governors as sent by him . . .,” etc., “so that, doing well, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”<sup>5</sup> For that subjection by which we are submissive to the Divine Will through obeying higher powers removes reproach, since nothing commends us more than does obedience. [9] And we ought to do this as free and not as making liberty a cloak for malice but as the servants of God.<sup>6</sup> That is, when we are free from vice, then we obey as servants of God. For we do not obey as does he who wickedly abases himself or as those who display obedience as a cloak for their malice. “Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the froward. This is thankworthy.”<sup>7</sup>

## PART TWO

[10] “No one shall take your joy from you.”<sup>8</sup> [A passage] in the Gospel.

Christ had foretold to His disciples that they were not going to see Him because He was going to His Father.<sup>9</sup> And [He said] that He had many things to say to them which they could not bear but that the Spirit of Truth was going to teach them all things. And [He said] that the [Spirit of Truth, or Holy Spirit,] was going to glorify Him because He would receive from Christ and would declare [it] to them. (About this [topic] we shall perhaps speak next Sunday.) [Christ] added: “All things whatsoever the Father has are mine; and for this reason I said to you that [the Spirit of Truth] will receive of mine and will declare [it] to you.” And there follows the Gospel-passage: “A little while and now you shall not see me; and again a little while and you shall see me, because I go to the Father.”<sup>10</sup>

[11] You have often heard that no one can know the Father except the Son, because the Son is the Knowledge and Revelation of the Father. We cannot know the Son unless the Holy Spirit declares [Him] to us. Hence, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Truth is Knowledge and Revelation of God the Father. The Spirit conveys Knowledge. And because the Father is present in the Knowledge-of-the-Father, [i.e., in the Son], the Spirit conveys, together with Himself, the Word in which the Father is present—just as when a man who is teaching breathes out, he signifies, i.e., speaks. For without a breathing-out and a signifying, there does not come to the student a knowledge of the teacher's intellect. Therefore, the word is in the spirit; in the word is the meaning

(*intellectus*). All the things that the intellect (*intellectus*) has are in its word and knowledge. The intellect has nothing except the word, which is its word,<sup>11</sup> And so, the things that the Father-Intellect has are the Son's, [and] the Son is the Heir of all things.<sup>12</sup> The Intellect begets, from its own intellectual essence, Knowledge. The Intellect retains nothing which it does not give to its Knowledge.

[12] Understand, then, [that] if we say that God has Wisdom, then His Son is the Wisdom which God has. If we say that God has Power, then the Son is that Power which God has—and so on as regards all [other such] things. For since God is Father and Beginning, then He has nothing from anyone else but begets from Himself whatever He has. But whatever the Father begets from Himself is the Son. Hence, the Son is all that which the Father has. Accordingly, in the Son the Father has all that He has; and we cannot properly say that the Father has anything besides the Son. For although it is said that the Father is all in all,<sup>13</sup> nevertheless He has, properly speaking, only the Son.

[13] “Whatever things the Father has are mine,” says the Son.<sup>14</sup> Take note [of the following]: The Son has a Father; but He does not have a Father as the Father has a Son. For that the Son has a Father—this [fact itself] He has from the Father. The Son says to the Father: “You are my Father.” And the Father says: “You are my Son; today have I begotten You.”<sup>15</sup> That the Father has a Son is His begetting; that the Son has a Father is His being begotten by the Father. All things are in the Father as in their Beginning; all things are in the Son insofar as they are created by the Beginning; all things are in the Holy Spirit insofar as they are created. Similarly, time is in Eternity, or Father, as in its beginning; and [time] is in the Son as in its begottenness and flow; and it is in the Holy Spirit as in its completion, or end-point.

[14] Let us return now to the text: Christ said: “A little while, and now you shall not see me; and again a little while and you shall see me, because I go to the Father.”<sup>16</sup> You will find various expositions of this [passage] in [various] commentators. However, note in addition to those [commentaries] that *going to the Father* is *departing from the world of the senses*. He who departs from the world of the senses is not seen in the world from which he departs. Rather, [he is seen] in the world that is hidden from the senses—[the world] where the Father is. Therefore, he who sees one departing from the *manifest* into the *hidden*: for a little while he does not see [him]; and for a little while he does see [him]. For he sees *there* where the hidden coincides with the

manifest and where departure coincides with approach. Likewise, when Christ ascended to the Father, He vanished from the eyes of the Apostles; and when He departed from their perception, He came to them intellectually—as elsewhere He says, “I go away, and I come to you.”<sup>17</sup>

[15] Seeing is discriminating, and to see is to distinguish. Hence, sight is to be considered discriminative insofar as a thing is seen in regard to its shape or insofar as it is seen in regard to its form. Insofar as it is seen in regard to its shape, it is seen outwardly, [as] in a mirror and by means of a surmise—just as when it is seen by eyes that grasp the shape or image, as do mirrors. But as it is seen in its form, it is seen inwardly. In the first way [the object] is seen in an image and a shadow; in the second [way it is seen] in light and in truth. [16] Human sight, which indeed is animated by discriminating, has something outward and something inward. What is outward are the senses; what is inward is the intellect. By means of the outward a man attains to that which is outer; by means of the inward [he attains to] what is inner. When he departs from the outward, then he departs from the senses and beholds the approximate truth; when he departs from beholding, he goes to things that can be sensed. Between these—namely, the outward and the inward—there is a certain coincidence, where the outward coincides with the inward. This [coincidence] can be called opinion that has (laterally with respect to what is outward) *imagination* and that has (laterally with respect to what is inward) *reason*.

[17] Therefore, let it be the case that a man sees someone whom he thinks that he has seen previously and knows. Then if he is not certain, he departs from the outward seeing and reflects within himself, examining by means of intellectual sight, so that he arrives at the man’s name and at a knowledge of him. And when he thus examines, he, in turn, departs from the inner beholding and views with the outer eye, so that from the man’s figure he [now] recalls him. Thus, he goes in and goes out; and he departs from the one [kind of] seeing and embraces the other [kind], so that he attains what was sought.

[18] Now, Christ in this present Gospel-passage tells of (1) the brief time of His departure and of (2) His return to them. For He who was the joy and consolation of His Apostles was going to depart from them for a while. And with that departure there was to come upon them wailing and lamenting and sorrow. Then after a little while He was going to return and to see them [again], and then they were to rejoice

perpetually. In particular, in His suffering [on the Cross] He took away His physical presence for a little while; and because of this the Apostles were sorrowful. Then after His resurrection He manifested Himself to them by means of evidences that He was alive; and He saw them [again]. From that seeing [of His] they were made glad of heart. And this joy remained always, so that with joy over His resurrection they became witnesses as regards His [shed] blood.

[19] From the foregoing we can note that Christ permits the joy of saints to lead them into sorrow for a short while in order that after the sorrow they may come to eternal joy. For just as the Father ‘abandoned’ Christ in His suffering [on the Cross]<sup>18</sup>—as if He did not care about Him—so that [Christ] suffered without consolation: so too Christ ‘abandons’ His own [followers], so that they suffer; and [He does] this in order that through suffering and death they may arrive at life that is without suffering. The world rejoices when saints are made sorrowful. For those are saints who oppose worldly joy; and there is continual strife between the world and the saints. Hence, that which the world abhors, it inflicts on its adversaries: namely punishment, so that they lament, weep, and are saddened. But this [grief] is momentary in comparison with eternal life.

[20] You might ask: “Why does God permit saints to be tormented and made sorrowful?” The text answers: “Because of the fact that the sorrow will be turned into joy”—just as with a woman who gives birth. For since the saint suffers because of [his] love of justice and of truth, he cannot fail to be rewarded on account of the justice for which he suffers. Therefore, the sorrow will be turned into joy. For he will rejoice that he has undergone punishments for the sake of justice.

[21] Note, too, that [the text] says that eternal joy will come from a new seeing. [This statement] can also be understood as regards Christ’s coming to His saints immediately after their death. For Christ is going to come to every saint when he departs from this world—[going to come] for seeing him. And this seeing by which Christ views the soul is the infusion of eternal joy. Therefore, Christ comes as Consoler—[comes] for seeing His saint, in order that, in seeing [him], He may be seen [by him] and in order that the one seeing Him may be consoled with perpetual joy—as Mary came to Elizabeth for visiting her, so that Elizabeth was filled with joy by seeing Mary.<sup>19</sup>

[22] Consider carefully the example of a woman giving birth. For [the text] says: “A woman when she is in labor has sorrow because her

hour has come; but when she has brought forth the child, she remembers no more the anguish, because of the joy that a human being is born into the world.”<sup>20</sup> This likeness teaches many things. For just as in her womb a woman conceives a seed from which an animal-[life] is begotten, so too in the animal-life a seed-of-reason is created, from which a rational spirit proceeds. Hence, in a vegetative power a mother conceives an animal-seed; and in a sensitive power a rational seed is conceived by way of creation; and in the rational power a seed of the Word of God [is conceived] by way of grace and regeneration. For what is a woman who harbors in her womb a male child except a soul who is a bride of Christ [and] who is betrothed to Christ by faith and who has conceived in the womb-of-faith a seed of the Word of God and who has nourished [it] until Christ comes to perfection in that [soul]? [23] But Christ, who is not of this visible world, cannot proceed from the womb-of-faith into the Truth and Light except by way of death. For this [worldly] region is not a region of truth and of intellectual light but [is a region] of the senses and of corruption. Therefore, an offspring goes out from the womb-of-the-sensory-life (which is a shadow of reason), so that, once freed from the shadow of bedarkened ignorance, it may be present in its living and lucid intellectual region. Similarly, an animal-[life] goes out from the darkness of the maternal womb, from the vegetative region, into the perceptible light, wherein, in its own way, it makes progress and is delighted. [24] Hence, just as this separation from the mother and from the place of darkness—when the fetus goes out from the womb and enters into this perceptible light—occurs with very intense pain, because the offspring is a part of the womb: so too the separation of the rational soul from the body with which it was united in a supposed oneness [occurs with very intense pain]. But the sorrow is turned into joy. For the woman, as soon as she sees that a human being has been born into the world, does not remember the anguish. And as soon as the soul sees Christ born within itself in the intellectual world, then on account of the joy it does not remember the [previous] anguish and pain. And in the more Christlike way [the soul] departs from this world through suffering and persecution—departs into truth as a result of [its] faith—the more joy it has because of this. For it is found to be so much more similar to Christ than gold is found to be bright as the sun and incorruptible—[gold] that was conceived in a black mine and hidden from the influence of the sun and which when purged by fire leaves behind its slag of blackness.

[25] Let us consider that the promise that sorrow is turned into

joy is certain, because it is the promise of Truth and of the Son of God. And so, we ought to bear sorrows patiently. And although there is sorrow in the nature of the senses, nevertheless we ought to rejoice as [did] the Apostles about whom we sing that they went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Christ.<sup>21</sup> Let us, therefore, make useful to ourselves this brief passage of our lifetime by enduring hardships patiently [and] with a willing mind, so that we may be found to be rich in joy, so that when Christ shall come and shall see us, and we Him, our heart shall then rejoice with eternal joy. For no one will be able to take this joy from us. For it is joy in the Kingdom of Life, where no death shall reign.

## NOTES TO *Obsecro Vos tamquam Advenas*\*

\* Sermon CCLXXXI.

1. I Peter 2:11 .
2. I John 2:16.
3. Cf. II Peter 2:11 .
4. Hebrews 2:7. Psalms 8:6 (8:5).
5. I Peter 2:13-14.
6. I Peter 2:16.
7. I Peter 2:17-19.
8. John 16:22.
9. John 16:10-14.
10. John 16:16.

11. Nicholas is attempting to elucidate the relationship between God the Father and God the Son by using the analogy between the human intellect and its word. The Latin term “intellectus” signifies, variously, intellect, meaning, understanding. Nicholas plays upon these different significations.

12. Hebrews 1:2.
13. I Corinthians 15:28. Ephesians 4:6. Colossians 3:11 .
14. John 16:15.
15. Psalms 2:7.
16. John 16:16.
17. John 14:28.
18. Matthew 27:46.
19. Luke 1:39-44.
20. John 16:21 .
21. Acts 5:41.

**Pater Vester Caelestis Dabit Vobis\***  
("Your Heavenly Father Will Give to You")<sup>1</sup>  
[May 23, 1457; preached at Neustift Abbey]<sup>2</sup>

[1] "Your Heavenly Father will give from Heaven the good Spirit to those who ask Him." (Luke 11 and in the Gospel-reading for today's office).

Beloved Brothers in Christ, at different times you have heard that without spirit there is no life. For so says our Savior in John 6: "It is the spirit that enlivens."<sup>3</sup> For actions are done only through movement, and movement is from the spirit. For the Creator of all things is pure Intellect, who begets from Himself His own Word (or Concept, or Idea) of creatable things. And from the Father, who is pure Intellect, and His Word there proceeds the Spirit, or Will, who moves, so that creatures are made. In a similar way, all the works of the intellectual nature are done. [2] My pure intellect wills to form in you a likeness of itself. It first conceives of itself by begetting from itself a word for its understanding. By means of this [word] it views itself, and it fashions this conception into a certain idea or exemplar-form in whose likeness it wills to form the intellectual nature that is in your inner man. And because this form is pleasing to [my intellect, my intellect] embraces it as being good. And because the good is communicative of itself, there arises in the will a motion, and [that motion] moves the tongue and all the other [functions] so that there is formed the sound which I breathe out. In this perceptible and formed sound there is present the spirit of my desire. In this [spirit] there is present the word of my conception; and in the conception there is [intellect's] understanding, which is the father of the word.

[3] Hence, in every work of the intellectual nature there shines forth a likeness of God's creation; and we see how it is that perfection requires the Trinity: namely, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now, in all creatures (as says Dionysius)<sup>4</sup> there is an *essence*, from which a *power* is begotten. From these [two] there proceeds the activity that is done through movement. Now, every movement is called spirit, just as air is called wind, or spirit, as in the following [sentence]: "The spirit has blown, and the waters will flow."<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, there is one spirit of this world, another spirit of the Heavenly world, or other world. There is one impulse in our rational nature; it motivates



us toward the activities of this world, [and] it is called desire (*concupiscentia*). There is another [impulse], which motivates us toward the activities of the other world, [and] it is called love (*caritas*). But the goal, [or final cause],<sup>6</sup> is the cause of causes, because the goal is that for the sake of which we act. With reference to the goal the spirit is tested [as to] whether it is from God or from the world,<sup>7</sup> which is seated in an evil spirit.<sup>8</sup> [4] For example, if someone enters a religious order so that he may acquire those things which are of this world—for example, bodily comforts, peacefulness, and honor, and things of this sort—he is motivated by an evil spirit. Similarly, he who is in a religious order and [then] endeavors to observe its regulations to the end that he be called holy and be honored and not be reproved by his superior: he is moved by an evil spirit. For the goal of his observance is self-love.

But those are led by the Spirit of God who separate themselves from the world, so that they are dead to the world and alive unto God.<sup>9</sup> They strive to please only God (whom they love) and not the corruptible world. They have a spirit that conveys them upwards toward God. I say “upwards” in order that we may understand that the separation [extends] from this perceptible and corruptible world [upwards] to the immortal virtues, where the habitation of the Immortal God is [found].

[5] The spirit-in-the-saints which moves the inner man toward Heavenly things is called love (*caritas*). For that love (*amor*) by which the intellectual nature is moved toward its Primary Truth—namely, toward its Beginning and Fount of Life—can never fail, because the Goodness of the Creator can never be apprehended enough and can never be loved (*amari*) enough. For the more God is apprehended ([although] never as He is comprehensible), the more He is loved; and the more He is loved, the more He is comprehended, because He is Love (*amor seu caritas*)<sup>10</sup> that is tasted and seen by loving. To taste and see<sup>11</sup> is to comprehend. *Caritas* [i.e., God] is tasted by *amor* and is loved by tasting. And this [loving-tasting] constitutes the immortality of the intellectual nature.

[6] But this spirit [which moves the inner man toward Heavenly things and] which is not of this world, but is of that world toward which it leads, cannot be possessed from any of the things that are in the world. Nor is it elicited from our own nature, which is infected because of the sin of disobedience of our First Parents, [Adam and Eve]. On account of this infectedness and this spark-of-evil-desire we

are prone to evil from the time of our youth. This proneness results from the motivation that comes from the Prince of this world.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is necessary that this good spirit<sup>13</sup> be [possessed] by the gift and grace of the Creator of our intellectual nature. [7] Therefore, it is only by a Divine gift when we who are living in this world despise the world and when our entire effort is to oppose the delights of this world and to put to death, triumphantly, those things which are of this world and to offer [them] as a sacrifice. Indeed, if we were to have this spirit, it would teach us all things; and we would not have need of another teacher, because this [spirit] would lead us unto the right land of eternal happiness. Accordingly, then, it is necessary that we have [this] spirit, because without it we will not reach the haven of salvation.

[8] We are taught by the words of the theme-text that we will have [a good spirit], i.e., that the Father of Lights will give it [to us], since “every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights.”<sup>14</sup> And the Teacher of truth teaches us in the words of our theme-text that the Heavenly Father gives this spirit to those who ask. But the Gospel-passage explains how [the Father] ought to be asked—namely, [He is to be asked] with an exhibiting of desire than which there can be none greater. For it is necessary that [our] petition be vital and pressing. [9] No soul is capable of receiving that spirit unless the whole [soul] glows with a desire to obtain [it]. A flame does not arise in green twigs unless the contrary humors have been cast out and the twigs made intensely hot. For then an illumining flame supervenes. For as long as the spirit which evaporates from the twigs is watery and earthen, the flame does not descend into it. But after those impure vapors are expelled, there arises in the warm ethereal, or aerial, spirit<sup>15</sup> that is united to the twigs a flame sent, as it were, from on high. And [the flame] tends upwards toward the sky, from which it descended. Although this is a disparate likeness of the good spirit’s descending into the soul, guiding it upwards and illumining it with the light of wisdom and making it warm with the heat of love and always remaining since its subject is incorruptible (as is said of an asbestos-stone, which once lit is never extinguished). Without doubt, if the heat is continuously applied to the twigs, then it becomes more intense, and, at length, a flame arises.

[10] But it is necessary that persistent attentiveness *precede* in order that the subject be made suitable. Hence, the reason is now known why that spirit is not given to everyone. Surely, it is because a

flame does not arise in ‘green twigs’ when one ceases from a persistent continuation [of heating, i.e., of loving and asking].

In a certain manner, God wills to be importuned. A certain Judas said to Blessed Jerome—when Jerome stopped studying the Chaldean language because it seemed exceedingly difficult to him—that enormous (*improbis*) labor overcomes all [obstacles].<sup>16</sup> Understand “*improbis*” labor to be labor that is without shamefulness but is dogged—according as here the Gospel-passage says that because of the importunity [*improbitas*] of the one asking, his friend gets up from repose [at midnight] to give him loaves of bread.<sup>17</sup> Note that the text indicates [that] if he persists, he will obtain.<sup>18</sup> For persistence is what shows that the seeker’s heart is not vacillating and inconstant. The text says [that he will give him] as many loaves of bread *as he has need of*, etc. Take note of that. For oftentimes one is asked for that which it is not known whether it is *necessary* for health and life. But to one who persists there are granted those things which *are* necessary. [11] To Solomon as king, wisdom for ruling (which he asked for) was necessary; and he obtained it. One wisdom is necessary for a religious: [namely,] that he know that obedience is what makes one a religious. And when he has this grace that he is certain that obedience is necessary, and when he has obedience very completely, he has what he was intent [on having]. For he will be judged only with respect to obedience. Therefore, if a religious asks both persistently and importunately for many things, then after he has obtained [the gift] that, without murmuring, he is obedient: then he knows that he has obtained the things he asked for.<sup>19</sup>

[12] Knowledge sometimes inflates<sup>20</sup> and is not granted if it is asked for. Likewise for eloquence and other such [excellences]. Hence, [Christ] adds: “Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and everyone who seeks, finds; and it shall be opened to one who knocks.”<sup>21</sup> But take note of where [Christ] says [that] therefore everyone who truly asks or seeks or knocks [will] doubtlessly obtain. But who is the one who asks except him who adapts himself for obtaining? Someone asks to become a carpenter. He knows that by building he becomes a carpenter. Likewise also, a religious who wishes to have the virtue of obedience: by obeying, he asks for that [virtue] and seeks it and knocks in order to arrive at it. And he then experiences that he has received [it] when he is delighted with [his] obedience. Hence,

delight is a sign that a spirit of love indwells the soul. Murmuring is a sign of indwelling pride and of a haughty spirit; but readiness-to-obey-with-joy is a sign of a good spirit.

[13] One who wills to become a son of God<sup>22</sup> follows Christ until the point that he becomes Christlike and delights in Christ's life. He puts on Christ<sup>23</sup> and asks in Christ's name and receives—as [you heard] in Sunday's<sup>24</sup> Gospel-reading. For no one except the Son—whom the Father loves and to whom He gives all things—can obtain anything from the Father. And so, it is necessary that one who wishes to be heard [by the Father] *be* Christ by partaking of Christ's form, which is a form pleasing to God because it is the form of the virtues.<sup>25</sup> St. Augustine had the form of Christ, and if you have the form of Augustine, you will also have put on the form of Christ, just as the Apostle Paul, who has the form of Christ, invited his hearers to [have] his form.<sup>26</sup> Behold, such ones are they who ask truly and who receive.

[14] Perhaps you might say: "I do not know what to ask for or what to seek," etc. It is enough for you that you ask that there be given to you that which is necessary for you, even if you do not know what that is. For the Father in Heaven knows that a good spirit is necessary for you; and He will give it, [and that spirit will] suffice. For one who has the spirit of God has goodness itself; and something other than what is good cannot be desired. And so, the spirit of goodness suffices for fulfilling your desire. David sought for a right spirit to be renewed in his heart,<sup>27</sup> knowing that the good spirit is the spirit, [or wind], that leads to the port. [The situation is] as if someone who was located at sea did not know where the port was. He would seek the wind (or spirit) leading to the unknown port.

[15] There might be many [questions] to be asked concerning these words: "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, or inquire, and it shall be opened to you."<sup>28</sup> For all these [imperatives] presuppose that the one who is asking, seeking, and knocking is not altogether ignorant. Hence, we see that within our rational spirit there is a certain living image of Divine Wisdom. When we look unto this [image], we are moved by a certain Divine impulse to ask, to seek, and to knock for those things which make perfect the image and which bring the image into conformity with its exemplar. For the tendency of an image qua image is this: [namely,] that it approach to conformity with its exemplar.

[16] But the gift [of God] is faith.<sup>29</sup> For the spirit of faith by

which we believe that Christ is the Son of God motivates us to seek a way of arriving at sonship-with-God,<sup>30</sup> which is the ultimate happiness. And this [happiness] will occur when we arrive at conformity with Christ. For this conformity, which by faith we hope we are going to have, is nothing other than sonship with God. But the way [of sonship] consists in perfect obedience that has exalted Christ above all [other] things. [17] Therefore, you Religious ought to ask that there be given to you Christlike obedience, and [then] you [will] have whatever you wish for.<sup>31</sup> For as long as you do not follow Christ, who is the Pathway of obedience, you will not come to true happiness and to eternal life. But if you resolve to obey God, in and through your [local] prelate ([i.e., obey him] even unto death—death upon the cross—i.e., unto the most horrible of horrible things), then you are perfect Christlike and religious sons of the Blessed God. And you have obtained a good spirit, namely, the spirit of Christ, whom the Father gives in order that by means of this gift He may make [you] sons-of-God who are conformed to Christ.

[18] Therefore, the gift of the Father qua Father is sonship; i.e., [the gift] is the spirit-of-the-Son-of-God, whereby we cry out “Abba, Father.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, all who truly have God the Father as their Father are sons [of God] because they have within themselves the spirit of Christ, the Son of God. And their Christlike works show the motivating spirit. And this is the singular knowledge that gives us knowledge characteristic of the sons of God, namely, Christlikeness. And the practices of every religion aim at leading to this [knowledge]. For religion is only a way of arriving at the spirit of Christ, who is not of this world.

[19] Let these [thoughts] have been expressed with loving admonition, so that you may be obedient to this religious Prelate whom (1) love for your salvation and (2) obedience has led [here] from Vienna.<sup>33</sup> He has determined to obey even unto death; and, as you see, he has barely escaped death. [Obey him] as [you would obey] the Son-of-God, our Savior. Reflect on his admonitions no less than if they were acquired from the mouth of God. Thereupon you will doubtlessly be conformed to Christ through obedience. And you will be like Him in [your] eternal Native Land, [namely, Heaven]. And you will possess with him the everlasting happiness that God—our God, [who is] the Happiness of the saints [and who is] forever Blessed—grants to all of us [believers].

## NOTES TO *Pater Vester Caelestis Dabit Vobis*\*

\* Sermon CCLXXXII.

1. Luke 11:13. The King James Version and the Revised Standard Version have “Holy Spirit” in place of “good Spirit”.
2. Kloster Neustift, or Abbazia di Novacella, is located in (what today is) Vahrn, just outside of Brixen.
3. John 6:64.
4. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, Chap. 11, (*Dionysiaca* II, p. 930, paragraph 2).
5. Cf. Psalms 147:18.
6. Aristotle’s ‘final cause’ is that for the sake of which something is done, that for the sake of which the efficient cause works.
7. I John 4:1.
8. I John 5:19.
9. Cf. Colossians 2:20. Romans 6:11 .
10. Neither here nor elsewhere does Nicholas make a systematic distinction between *caritas* and *amor*—although *caritas* is never a profane or sinful love.
11. Psalms 33:9 (34:8).
12. The Prince of this world is Satan. Cf. John 12:31.
13. This good spirit that a religious believer may have is a remote image of the Good Spirit—or Holy Spirit—in God.
14. James 1:17.
15. Here I am reading, with the printed Paris edition, “in calido ethereo seu aereo spiritu” in place of “in calidum ethereum seu aereum spiritum” in ms. V<sub>2</sub>.
16. Virgil, *Georgica* I, 145-146.
17. Luke 11:5-8.
18. Luke 11:8.
19. He has obtained them anticipatorily, because he will some day have a future life of eternal happiness. See n. 31 below. See also section **14** of the present sermon.
20. I Corinthians 8:1.
21. Luke 11:9-10.
22. John 1:12.
23. Romans 13:14.
24. “Sunday’s Gospel-reading.” That is, in the preceding sermon of May 8 (= Sermon CCLXXXI). The Gospel-reading is from John 16.
25. See Section **43** of Sermon CCLXXVI.
26. Philippians 3:17.
27. Psalms 50:12 (51:10).
28. Luke 11:9-10.
29. Ephesians 2:8.
30. See Nicholas’s treatise *De Filiatione Dei*.
31. In having eternal happiness the obedient believer has all that he wishes for.
32. Romans 8:15.
33. See Hermann J. Hallauer, “Nikolaus von Kues und das Chorherrenstift

### **Sublevatis Oculis\***

(“With Eyes Raised Upward”)<sup>1</sup>

[May 25, 1457; preached at Neustift Abbey]

[1] “With eyes raised upward toward Heaven, [Jesus] said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify [*Clarifica*] Your Son so that Your Son may glorify [*clarificet*] You.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

You have heard elsewhere that “*clarificare*” is [the same in meaning as] “*glorificare*”. Christ, in His discourse after the Last Supper, indicated to His Apostles that in the world there would be distress but that they would have peace in and through Him. And, reassuring them, He said: “Have confidence, for I have overcome [the world].”<sup>3</sup> Hence, from this [statement] we ought to understand that Christ is the Triumph over the world. Therefore, he who wishes to have peace and to be free from the distress of the world must flee for refuge to Christ, the Vanquisher of the world. And He who forsakes the world, has recourse to Christ. The world is the life of the senses. In the [domain of the] senses are hardship and distress; in [the domain of] truth, there is peacefulness.

[2] He who knows that true life is present in the intellectual nature—which alone is capable of [apprehending] truth—knows that if his inner, intellectual man puts on truth, which is eternal, then he has immortal life. For in the truth, the intellect is present in its heaven and its paradise of delights. For it lives enjoyably in truth, and truth is the nourishment of its life. For to *understand* is, for the intellect, to *live*; and to understand is only to apprehend truth, i.e., to know truth. Just as for the external power-of-sight seeing is living, so for the intellect understanding is living. If sight clearly and lucidly sees the visible, it is in its heaven and its paradise, and it desires nothing more; for therein it is delighted vitally. The situation is similar with the intellect as regards truth.

[3] However, the intellect that is of this world, i.e., that deems itself to live here among the objects of the senses, suffers oppressions and hardships. For [among such objects] there is nothing lasting; and nothing nourishes the immortal intellect except that which is immortal. Hence, things temporal and perishable oppress the intellect. Thus, when the intellect deems itself to have apprehended its [true] life by way of the senses—a life with which it is delighted—then after it expe-

riences that the form of this world and this world's lusts perish,<sup>4</sup> the intellect is sorrowful, finding itself to have been deceived. Therefore, if the intellect wishes to enjoy a peaceful state, it must esteem objects of the senses as nothing. And if the intellect has [such possessions], the intellect must remain without affection for them, so that it both possesses them and does not possess them—so that if riches abound, it does not set its heart [on them].<sup>5</sup> He who truly prefers God to the world puts on Christ,<sup>6</sup> the Vanquisher of the world. Such a one speaks as does Peter: “It is necessary to obey God rather than men.”<sup>7</sup> Hence, he has peace, because for him to die [to the world] is for him to live [unto God].

[4] There follows [in the Scriptural text]: “Jesus spoke these words and with eyes raised upward toward Heaven said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify [Your] Son so that Your Son may glorify You.’” Note the following coincidence: the Father glorifies the Son, and this is the Son’s glorifying the Father. To *glorify* is—as is said below—to *manifest*. The Father-Creator was not known to the world, for “no one has seen the Father.”<sup>8</sup> Quite reliable knowledge of this world comes by means of sight. But sight can attain only to corporeal objects and to objects visible to the senses. The Creator, however, is none of these things that He created. Perceptible things are created things. Both things visible and things invisible have been created. Accordingly, God is none of all these things. Yet, the Son of God-the-Father manifests the Father; for the Son is the Manifestation of the Father.<sup>9</sup> But this [manifesting] cannot occur unless the Father manifests the Son.

[5] Hence, God the Father, who through Jesus worked divine works,<sup>10</sup> manifested that in Jesus there is the Creator’s power, which is only where [the Creator’s] essence is. Therefore, the power that appeared in and through the miraculous works of Christ manifested that the power in Christ is co-essential with the Father. Therefore, God the Father-of-Jesus showed—in the power through which Jesus worked the divine works—that Jesus is His Son; and the Son manifested that in Himself is the Omnipotent Father. Therefore, Christ seeks to be glorified, i.e., manifested, by the Father not (a) in order to seek His own glory and to glory in the fact that He is the Son of God but (b) in order that the Father be glorified. Therefore, the purpose of the creation and of the Incarnation is [to manifest] God the Father’s glory—as you have heard elsewhere about this [topic].



[6] There follows in the text: "... just as You have given to Him power over all flesh in order that whatever You have given to Him He may give to them as eternal life."<sup>11</sup> Understand that Christ sought glorification from the Father to the end that He might advance [in His mission]. For the Father gave Him power over all flesh, i.e., over every man. For with respect to the fact that He became a human being, every human being is in His power. For if Divine Power is made a human being, that human being has within Himself all things human. And because that Power is absolute, it can bestow eternal life on every man. [7] Hence, this is the strength of Divine Power: [namely,] that those who are subject to it live more abundantly. For the Life that is also Power gives itself as nourishment to those who are subject [to it]. So law, commandment, precept, and all other such things, are the life of this Power; and to obey [these laws, etc.] is to live. Therefore, Christ seeks to be glorified in relation to His power, i.e., in order that the knowledge of Him may be so great that men may know of His power—for example, in order that they may know that all who receive Him as Son and Heir of the King-of-Life may know that they are made eternally alive by Him.

[8] There follows: "This is life eternal: that they may know You, the only true God, and may know Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."<sup>12</sup> Here He discloses how it is that He will give eternal life, namely, by virtue of the fact that He reveals the Father, in one's knowledge of whom there is eternal life. This knowledge—viz., that to know that God the Father-of-Jesus is the only true God—is eternal life. For this apprehension is understanding (i.e., is living) eternally. To know eternal life is to comprehend it in one's spirit. But because this comprehending cannot occur except through the Son's being manifested, it occurs through a knowledge of the Son. For one's knowledge of the Son is the means to this [knowledge of the Father], because the Son *is* the knowledge of the Father.<sup>13</sup> Analogously, the knowledge of a teacher's word is the means of arriving at the teacher's intellect; and whoever has no knowledge of the word does not attain to the "father" of the word, namely, the intellect.

[9] Therefore, Christ, because He is the Son, is the Legate of the knowledge of the Father. Therefore, it is necessary to know that Jesus Christ was sent from God the Father. He has the power of bestowing eternal life, i.e., of showing the Father to the intellect—a showing which is knowledge. Take note of the fact that [Jesus] says

that eternal life is to know. Living is a very delightful movement that does not occur without love. For delight is a product of love. Hence, present in eternal life is knowledge that is love. [10] For by means of a certain most natural love the intellect desires to know. And this desire is that it have truth within itself; for he who desires to know desires to know truth. Therefore, this desire to know is [the desire] to apprehend the object desired with longing. Hence, he who conceives that God is Love and is the Goal of desire, i.e., is Goodness, sees that in love's-apprehending the soul's desire is satisfied. This desire is [desire] on the part of [our] spirit, in which the powers of the rational soul are united as they are present in the soul's supreme [spirit]. (These powers are separated from one another in discursive reason.)

[11] Hence, when I say that eternal life is the knowledge of love and you consider only knowledge, there occurs to you that eternal life is present in knowledge and, thus, in the intellect. And when you consider love—i.e., consider that love (*amor seu caritas*) is present in the will or the affections—there occurs to you that eternal life is present in the will. For love qua love is known only by loving. But when you elevate yourself to that simplicity where to understand and to love are the same thing, then you conceive that these powers of our soul (namely, understanding and loving) coincide in utmost happiness. And so, insofar as a happy soul loves, it understands; and, conversely, insofar as it understands, it loves. For this happiness comes to a man from the place where understanding and loving are the same thing, and in making his soul happy, he communicates this fact about himself no more through understanding than through loving.

[12] And in order that you may grasp this point more clearly, consider how it is that in this world the rational soul has these two different powers, [namely, understanding and loving], in order that (1) through the one power it gathers all things unto itself (this is the intellect, which gathers within itself inwardly, or binds within itself inwardly, all things) and (2) through the other power through which it proceeds outside itself to all things, it binds itself to all things (this is the will, or love). Through this latter power it unites itself, and binds itself, to all things. But when [the soul] is happy, it has God, through whom it has within itself all things. And in and through Him it is united to all things. And the following is [one and] the same fact: namely, that all things are in the soul and that the soul is in all things; for the soul has God in whom are all things and who, likewise, is in all

things.<sup>14</sup>

[13] There follows in the text: “I have glorified you on earth,” etc.<sup>15</sup> I understand [this to mean] that on earth, i.e., in this world, [the Son] glorified the Father. For example, in the restoration of sight in the case of the man born blind [Christ] showed the glory of God, as also in all His works. “I have finished the work that You gave me to do.”<sup>16</sup> There were other things that He was to do and other things that He was to suffer for a manifesting of [the Father’s] glory. The things that He was to do He finished when He spoke the foregoing [sentence] after the meal was over.

[14] There follows [in the text]: “And now glorify me, O Father, with Yourself—with the glory that I had with You before the world was.”<sup>17</sup> See that by means of these [words] Christ manifests to us two things: namely, (1) that He existed before the world existed and (2) that He existed then in glory together with the Father. And there is the following difference between the rational creature and the Word of God: [namely,] that prior to the perceptible world the rational creature was in God as the Life that God was<sup>18</sup> but did not have glorious personal being as did the Son of God-the-Father. For the Son was always with God the Father and as true Son always had glorious being. But the rational creature did not have, prior to the creation, glorious being with the Father—i.e., personal, individual being. Rather, its being was the Power of God. By way of comparison, [the situation is] as if God were likened to Creative Power in which all creatable things are enfolded [and] in which the created souls that later appear do not have personal, individual, and formed being but are the Power of God. Now, through these words [in the Scriptural verse presently under consideration] Christ sought to be free of the temporal and mortal mode of being, so that He would be altogether present in eternity, as He was before His assumption of temporal and mortal [human] nature.

[15] There follows: “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given me from the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to me; and they have kept Your word.”<sup>19</sup> To manifest is to reveal. To manifest a name is to manifest knowledge; for a name *manifests*; and [Christ] says that He manifests a name. Hence, He is this Name by which God the Father is manifested. Christ manifested the knowledge that reveals the Father. In Himself He shows the Father, as elsewhere He says to Philip: “He who sees me, sees the Father also, because the Father is in me.”<sup>20</sup> [16] Hence, Christ is said to be the

Knowledge of the Father not only in the way in which God is manifested in creatures as Creator (for this is a distant and obscure showing) but also insofar as someone is known through a name (this knowledge is clear and certain). Hence, Christ is the Knowledge of His Father's name, because the Father is the *Heavenly Father* and ought to be called such. He is the Father of His Son, Jesus, through whom He created the world<sup>21</sup> and redeemed us and accomplished the salvation of men. And there is no other true and only God than the Father of Jesus—not Saturn, the Father of Jove; not Jupiter; not Sol, the Father of light and of sensory life; not the father of any saint, but only the Father of Jesus. For Jesus has no other father than God the Father, the Eternal God, of whom Jesus is the Eternal Son. None of the saints call God their father, but only Christ says “my Father”. And Him whom Christ names as His Father, He is God—whom we say to be our Father because He is our Creator and is the Begetter of Jesus.

[17] And so, among all men the Father chose some who, together with His Son, Jesus, will see the glory of the Father's Kingdom. These men are called God's own because they are His adoptive sons<sup>22</sup> chosen from the world to possess the inheritance of His Kingdom. The Father gave them to His Son, Jesus, in order that they might be His brothers and be subordinate to Him, who is the First-born and who holds the preeminence in all respects.<sup>23</sup> And they have kept the word which God willed to be manifested unto them through Jesus. [And] because they kept it, they were made Christlike and sons of God through participation. The natural Son of God-the-Father is the Father's Word (*verbum seu sermo*), or Logos. Those who adhere to the teaching of the Word are sons of adoption, or sons by participation. By way of comparison, fire by nature is hot, and the objects that receive its heat are hot by participation. And they pass over into conformity to heat, which is common to them and the fire—although in the fire heat is present as in its natural source, but in the hot objects heat is present as beyond these objects' own cold nature through the grace of its communion with these objects that have been heated.

[18] There follows: “And now they know that all the things that You have given me are from You, because the words that You gave to me I gave to them. And they received [them] and know, assuredly, that I have come from You. And they have believed that You sent me.”<sup>24</sup> Here, then, is that which on occasion you have heard from me regarding him who receives the words of Jesus as the words of the Son

of God-the-Father—words which the Father speaks in Christ Jesus. Such persons, after receiving [these words] by means of faith, arrive at true, certain, and undoubted knowledge of their own faith, namely, that Jesus is the Son of God, who went out from the Father and, having been sent, came to us. Herefrom you know that understanding succeeds, [not precedes], faith.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, he who has true, certain, and undoubted faith that our Gospel is the Gospel of God's Son—a Gospel sent to us by the Father through the Son, in whom is a revelation of the Kingdom of God and “in whom are all the treasures of wisdom”<sup>26</sup>—such a one knows, according to the measure of his faith, that which he believes.

[19] Therefore, a true theologian must be a true Christian and must read the Scriptures in terms of that which he believes inwardly by faith, and then he will understand. No one can read the Scriptures and understand them unless he looks to his own internal understanding, in accordance with which he interprets his understanding of the external writing. Just as someone warms himself by means of clothing, in such a way that if he were to lack all [body-]heat he could never keep warm by means of clothing, so too someone instructs himself by means of a book in such a way that he [already] has within himself some understanding. For were he altogether ignorant, he could never be instructed by means of the book. Therefore, with the enlightenment that he has he enters into the book, and by means of his enlightenment he draws the nourishment of wisdom from the book.

[20] See, then, the reason that an *unbeliever* can find in the Gospel no nourishment for his spirit; [namely,] because he is lacking all light. But the *believer*—having in himself the light of faith [and] holding most assuredly [to the belief] that those words [in the Gospel] are the concealed words of the Son of the Living God—comes by means of the Gospel to a knowledge of the concealed [meanings]. For he arrives at an insight, so that beneath the writing he sees most assuredly the things which he was seeking by the light of faith. [He sees these things] not in a discursive, rational manner or in an argumentative or persuasive manner but in an intuitive and most assured way.

[21] There follows [the sentence]: “I pray for them.”<sup>27</sup> Jesus prays that they will not be drawn away from the known truth. For after they have tasted of the knowledge and have departed [from it], then being sinners against the known truth, they will not return [to it]. For

this is the unpardonable sin, about which Paul [writes] to the Hebrews.<sup>28</sup> Note that the elect human beings stand steadfast in their election only by grace obtained from Jesus, who has merited to be hearkened to [by the Father] on their behalf.

There follows [the phrase]: "... not for the world."<sup>29</sup> Christ does not pray for the world, because the world is not capable of having a knowledge of God; for it neither knows nor can know [Him]. Moreover, the world cannot grasp the Spirit of truth,<sup>30</sup> for that Spirit is not of this world, nor does truth belong to this corruptible world.

Next comes: "... but for those whom You have given me, because they are Yours."<sup>31</sup> [Christ] prays for Christian believers. They are sons of God-the-Father and are members of Christ.

[22] Next comes: "And all things mine are Yours, and all things Yours are mine."<sup>32</sup> See that there is a single Kingdom of Father and Son, in which all things are the Father's and all things are the Son's. *There* [in that Kingdom] *mine* and *yours* do not differ. For the Son is the most true Son of the Father, because [He is] from the essence of the Father. [He is from the Father's essence] not by way of participation in the essence; for the essence is altogether simple and is indivisible. Nor [is the Son from the Father's essence] by way of an extending and a multiplying of the essence, because the essence is infinite, and "of its greatness there is no end."<sup>33</sup> Rather, [the Father] gives His essence undividedly to the Son; and His Kingdom is His essence, because there is no other Kingdom of God the Father than His essence. Therefore, if the Father's Kingdom and the Son's are the same Kingdom, then the things that are the Father's are also the Son's, and the things that are the Son's are also the Father's. But the things that are the Son's are the Son's by the Father's bestowing.<sup>34</sup> And so, the Son has [these things] from the Father, who gives to the Son even the Son's own being and, in the being, all the Son's own things.

[23] There follows [the statement]: "And I am glorified in them."<sup>35</sup> The Father is glorified in the Son; and the Son is glorified in the holy believers. For how glorious the Son is is shown by the saints, who believe the Son to be the Son of God and who are obedient to Him as the Son of God—[obedient even] unto death.<sup>36</sup>

Then comes [the statement]: "And now I am not in the world, but these are in the world, and I come unto You."<sup>37</sup> For when He spoke these words regarding the *Kingdom of God*, He was *there* in His intent and was not in the world, from which He was going to depart immi-

nently. Understand [what He means] when He says “*et iam*”. He does not say “*nunc*”.<sup>38</sup> “*Iam*” indicates that He will come immediately, as [when] we say “*iam iam veniet*” [“now, forthwith, He will come”]; i.e., He will come exceedingly soon. Hence, understand [the words] “and now I am not in the world” [to mean], namely, [“I am not] going to remain [in the world].” And [understand the words] “but these are in the world” [to mean], namely, that they will remain [in the world], although they are not of the world,<sup>39</sup> because they are Christians. [Jesus] rightly concludes [His thought by saying]: “And I come unto You,”<sup>40</sup> namely, by way of death on the Cross. For He had to suffer in this way and to enter into glory, as He declared to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus after the Resurrection.<sup>41</sup>

[24] The foregoing [remarks] have been made at this time as somewhat of an explanation of the Gospel-reading, until God will reveal deeper [insights] at another time. But because we have come together on this last day of Rogations and because no other sermon was preached by me during this period, then in order that I may comply in some way with [the duties of] my office, I will take up—from the three Gospel-readings (for Sunday and for the second and the fourth days of the week)<sup>42</sup>—a few teachings for our instruction. First of all, the Gospel-reading for Sunday, [namely,] from John 16, says: “Ask and you shall receive.”<sup>43</sup> The Gospel-reading for the second day of the week, [namely,] from Luke 11, says: “Everyone who asks receives.”<sup>44</sup> Today’s Gospel-reading, from John 17, says: “I pray for them.”<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, we are altogether assured that if we ask rightly, we shall receive. This [asking rightly] is [asking] in the name of Christ, our Savior. And then when we persist: because every such petitioner *receives*, then He to whom God the Father denies nothing, namely, Christ, intercedes for us.

[25] The Church instituted these rogations and litanies for reasons often told you. Surely, it is oftentimes useful to turn away from joys that begin from spiritual things but that veer toward temporal joys—to turn toward a kind of renewal of our mindfulness of our [future] passage from this world.<sup>46</sup> But since in the [present] memorial service Christ is [viewed as] going to ascend out of this world, and we willingly with Him, a certain being-made-suitable ought to precede [the memorial service]—[precede it] by means of fasting (or abstinence) and pilgrimaging and prayer. Thereupon, with an increasing mindfulness of the joyous ascension, [the participants] would stand

gazing continuously toward heaven as if astonished and amazed at the receding of Christ.<sup>47</sup> [They would stand gazing] at the hidden things and at the place of the raptured Word of Life—until they received the Comforter<sup>48</sup> and were indued with power from on high,<sup>49</sup> i.e., with the Spirit of God, without whom no one can follow the ascending Christ. By means of this Spirit, received once again with wondrous, gladsome light, there is a return to fastings, lest these joys veer toward sensory states of gladness. Thus, with the allurements of the world cut off in this way, our spirit would be strengthened—to which spirit the delights of this world are at odds.

[26] Let us speak, then, very briefly about the Gospel-texts. As regards the first Gospel-reading ([the one] for Sunday): let us note that before His death Christ, being willing to manifest Himself, to the extent befitting the capability of the Disciples—did in their sight all things through which to draw them unto the belief that He was the expected Messiah, the Son of God. [He worked these works] in order to rend man from the captivity of the Prince of this world<sup>50</sup>—not as the Jews commonly believed, namely, that He would rend them from the captivity of the Romans (or of others who were holding world-dominion at that time) so that they would be free and not be subjected. Rather, [Christ meant] that the freeing would be with respect to the salvation of the rational spirit, which Satan was holding captive.

[27] Hence, after the many signs and miracles that Christ made, the Disciples still did not understand the things that were of the Spirit. And so, after the Last Supper Christ revealed to them all concealed matters: namely, that He was the Knower of hearts and that His Father was God and was in Him, and that He had come into the world to destroy Satan's dominion, and that he was going to return to the Father, from whom He had gone out, and that they too were to follow Him, and that they could experience what manner of being there would be with the Father. [They could have this experience] by asking in His name. For hitherto they had not asked in His name. And they were to be certain that they would obtain what they sought.

[28] Let us note, too, from the first Gospel-reading (the one for Sunday) the assurance of the fact that he who asks in Christ's name is hearkened to [by God]. [Christ] says: "Verily, verily I say unto you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you."<sup>51</sup> Here we must note that our asking is to be only substantial asking. Indeed, we ought to ask for super-substantial bread, namely, for the



nourishment of incorruptible life. And [this incorruptible life] is wisdom, which is not an accident but is quiddity or is the Quiddity of quiddities. Hence, no such thing is to be sought that falls for us under a kind, or a category, [of accident]. For the categories of accident do not signify quiddity. Hence, neither things large or quantitative or qualitative or relational or spatial or temporal or any [combination] of these things are to be sought. Rather, [we are to seek] absolute quiddity, which bestows being. Therefore, we are to seek that which we do not have knowledge of,<sup>52</sup> for quiddity is not known. Hence, lacking knowledge, we seek knowledge that enlivens. For the intellectual spirit, which understands that it is alive with an incorruptible life, is happy.

[29] Secondly, let us note that [Christ] says: “Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you shall receive, in order that your joy may be full.”<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, we are taught that from the prayer that we make in the name of Christ we obtain full joy. Therefore, in the name of Christ we are to seek sonship with God,<sup>54</sup> or utmost happiness, because we will obtain this. For full joy is happiness, i.e., is sonship-with-God, which no one obtains except in and through the Son’s name. For only the Son obtains from the Father all that is asked for. And so, we who put on Christ<sup>55</sup> and who *ask* will *obtain* in and through His name. Moreover, note that our joy is full when we experience that in and through the name of the Son the things we have asked for are given to us. For to have God qua Son of God present in the nature of our humanity—[the Son], whom we can obey and through whom to obtain happiness—is full joy.

[30] Thirdly, let us note that [Christ] says: “These things have I spoken to you in proverbs. The hour comes when [I shall] no longer [speak] in proverbs,”<sup>56</sup> etc. For all the words that Christ spoke in a human manner for proclaiming to the [Disciples] the Father, the Fount of Life, were only proverbs. Unless these words are stripped of their human meaning, they do not show the Father; for the Father is not any of the things which can be named. Nor does any human concept attain to that which we are taught to seek.<sup>57</sup> For example, the peace-that-makes-happy exceeds all understanding.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, [Jesus] was able to speak to men only in a human manner. But the hour comes when He will proclaim lucidly [truths] about the Father—namely, in a Face-to-face vision that occurs by means of His proclamation. At that time an entreaty will be made for the showing, by the Son, of the [Father’s] Face. The Son will have no need to ask the Father to show [His Face];

but because [the Father] loves those who are Christlike, He will show it. Now, “those who are Christlike”— to whom [the Father] will disclose [Himself]—He indicates to be those who love Christ and who believe Him to be the Son of God. For to love Christ as the Son of God unites the one-who-loves to the [Christ]likeness that the Father loves.

[31] Fourthly, let us note *there* [i.e., in the text]: “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and I go to the Father.”<sup>59</sup> For in the perceptible world to exist is to have come forth from the Father—i.e., to enter into an earthly place of ignorance and to have left behind heavenly and lucid understanding. To depart from the world in such a way that the world is entirely left behind is to approach unto the Father. For in the inner recesses of our intellectual spirit we find the Word of Truth, in whom is the Father.

[32] Fifthly, let us note *there* [i.e., in the text]: “Behold, now You speak plainly . . .”<sup>60</sup> That is, [Jesus said] that He was going to go back to the Father, from whom He was sent. And in [saying] this, He used no proverb. And within themselves the Disciples thought, in this regard, “Where is He going to go?” when He said “Yet a little while and you will not see me” and when He responded to this [unexpressed query of theirs]. Therefore, they said that it was not necessary that anyone ask Him, because He knows all the things that are in men’s thoughts. And for this reason they came to conclude that He had come forth from God. See that up to that hour they did not understand Him to have come forth from God as power comes forth from an essence. But because they experienced Him to know all things, they began then to believe that from God the Father He came forth as being the One who has in His own power all the power of the Father, who sent Him.

Let the foregoing [remarks] suffice regarding this Gospel-passage [in John 16]. Regarding the other Gospel-passage, in Luke [11], look earlier in the collection [of sermons].<sup>61</sup> Likewise, as regards the third Gospel-passage, [from John 17], look at [what was said] immediately preceding [this present discussion of John 16].<sup>62</sup>

## NOTES TO Sublevatis Oculis\*

\*Sermon CCLXXXIII.

1. John 17:1.
2. John 17:1.
3. John 16:33.
4. I Corinthians 7:31. I John 2:17.
5. Psalms 61:11 (62:10).
6. Romans 13:14. Galatians 3:27.
7. Acts 5:29.
8. John 1:18. I John 4:12.
9. John 12:45. John 14:9.
10. John 14:10.
11. John 17:2: Douay translation of these Latin words: “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.”
12. John 17:3.
13. John 14:9-11 .
14. Colossians 3:11 .
15. John 17:4.
16. John 17:4.
17. John 17:5.
18. In God all things are God prior to their creation—as in a cause the effects are the cause. See Nicholas’s *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae*, end of margin number 16.
19. John 17:6.
20. John 14:9-10.
21. John 1:3. Colossians 1:16.
22. Galatians 4:5. Ephesians 1:5.
23. Colossians 1:15 and 1:18.
24. John 17:7-8.
25. Here Nicholas stands in the Augustinian-Anselmian tradition of *crede ut intelligas* and *fides quaerens intellectum*.
26. Colossians 2:3.
27. John 17:9.
28. Hebrews 10:26.
29. John 17:9.
30. John 14:16-17.
31. John 17:9.
32. John 17:10.
33. Psalms 144:3 (145:3).
34. Alternative translation: “... these are [by gift] of the Father such that they are the Son’s.”
35. John 17:10.
36. Cf. Philippians 2:8.
37. John 17:11 .

38. But in John 17:13 Jesus does say “*nunc*”.
39. I John 4:5-6.
40. John 17:11 .
41. Luke 24:13 and 25-26.
42. That is, for Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday.
43. John 16:24.
44. Luke 11:10.
45. John 17:9.
46. Nicholas is celebrating the Feast of the Ascension.
47. Cf. Acts 1:11 .
48. John 15:26.
49. Luke 24:49.
50. I.e., the Devil. John 14:30 and 12:31.
51. John 16:23.
52. See Nicholas’s treatise *De Deo Abscondito*.
53. John 16:24.
54. See Nicholas’s treatise *De Filiatione Dei*.
55. Romans 13:14.
56. John 16:25.
57. Here at 30:10 I am reading “*petere*” in place of “*peti*”.
58. Philippians 4:7.
59. John 16:28.
60. John 16:29.
61. Sermon CCLXXXII (279).
62. See, above, the sections with the margin numbers 21-23.

**Assumptus Est in Caelum\***  
("He Was Taken Up into Heaven")<sup>1</sup>  
[May 26, 1457; preached in Brixen]<sup>2</sup>

[1] "He was taken up into Heaven, and He is seated at the right hand of God." ( [Recorded] at the end of Mark's [Gospel] ).

See the account of Christ's assumption-into-Heaven [as found] in the Scholastic History.<sup>3</sup> And for an explication, see the example recorded elsewhere, [namely,] in the sermon at Erfurt; for [that example] is suitable enough.<sup>4</sup>

[2] Mark states that the Apostles did not believe those who saw Christ after the Resurrection. Consequently, Mark adds: "At length, He appeared to the eleven as they were at table."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Jesus, while eating and supping with them, etc., as Luke says,<sup>6</sup> reproached [them for] their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen that He had risen from the dead.<sup>7</sup> Note that unbelief comes from hardness of heart. Now, that heart is hard which is not pliable or soft or tempered-for-receiving-influence.

[3] [Here the word] "heart" is taken to mean *inner man*. Accordingly, the inner man must be teachable; otherwise, it does not receive the form of wisdom. But why are the Apostles called unbelieving and hard-[hearted]? Surely, [Christ] permitted them to be such for the sake of their greater salvation. For readily to believe these proofs<sup>8</sup> by means of which Christ showed Himself to have arisen was not suitable for our salvation. For the proofs ought to have been many and varied, since no one proof, in its form, disclosed Christ as He was. For the variety of God's works—no one of which suffices to show His omnipotence—occurs in order that [His omnipotence] may [thereby] be better disclosed.

The text states: "... those who saw that He had arisen from the dead."<sup>9</sup> I understand that they saw—[saw] from the manner of the dead, who remain motionlessly where they are placed—that He had arisen when He appeared to them alive. [They recognized His aliveness] by means of the works that befit the living; for they saw Him walking, speaking, eating, and so on.

[4] He made them to believe that just as from the womb of the Virgin the Divine Nature assumed into a union with itself a true, a liv-

ing human nature, consisting of a body and a soul, so too—with [the Divine Nature] retaining its same unitedness [with the human nature], the soul (being still united to the Divine Nature by the power of the divinity) assumed again the mortal body (which was separated from the soul through death) from the sepulcher,<sup>10</sup> once mortality had been shaken off. Thereafter, He said: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”<sup>11</sup> That is, go at the time when this faith will have been confirmed by the Holy Spirit, who will very soon descend upon you, as Luke relates.<sup>12</sup> For no one is fit for preaching the gospel unless he has that Spirit, who causes the soul to be fervent with this divine love, once all unbelief is cast off. As a result, the preacher’s words are an eloquent fervor that is ignited—strongly ignited—by God. For at that time [the Holy Spirit] by means of [the preacher’s] word breathes such a fire into the hearts of the hearers. Regarding this [occurrence] the Savior says: “I have come [in order] to cast fire upon the earth. What will I but that it flame up?”<sup>13</sup> And [this fire] is a fire of love, when the whole man is ardent with yearning for the Kingdom of eternal life.

[5] [Christ] says: “... into all the world”<sup>14</sup> because He willed that all men be saved.<sup>15</sup> And so, He wrought salvation in the midst of the world, so that [the Apostles] *preached*, going out circularly from center to circumference. Likewise, we sing in church: “Go into the world ...,” etc. See how it is that our King established the extent of His Kingdom; for He sent His law to the whole world. Therefore, God’s Church—whose King, Head, and Teacher is Christ—is not limited to a given place but is extended to the ends of the earth; and there is no end of the King’s dominion. And if Christ is still not received in some location in the world, surely He will be received, because the whole world is His possession. Christ would not have commanded the Apostles—and in and through them their successors—to go into all the world unless He had foreseen in every part of the world that there would be believers and those predestined for the Kingdom of God. And the reason that the Catholic Church is said to be this Kingdom of Christ is that “catholic” means *universal*, [and the Kingdom of Christ is universal].

[6] [Christ] says: “Preach the gospel.” Preaching can also be called prophesying, for the preacher proclaims the nature of the future Kingdom, i.e., of the forthcoming Kingdom. Elsewhere, [the preacher] is called a prophet, because he manifests things concealed and unknown. To preach the gospel is to evangelize; for to preach, to evan-

gelize, and to prophesy are the same thing. For proclaiming immortal life is the bringing of good news, or is a good proclamation. For the fact that mortal men can deservedly—and by the teaching of the Savior, the Son of God—pass from death to life is the best of news.

[Christ] says: "... to every creature."<sup>16</sup> This good news is to be preached to every creature that is capable of understanding the language. For no creature capable of understanding the language—whether he be a barbarian, a Sythian, a Greek, or a Latin—is excluded, no matter where he is in the entire world.

[7] There follows [in the text]: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved."<sup>17</sup> This is the gospel: namely, believing in Christ as the Son of God. And he who puts on Christ through baptism will obtain that which he believes, namely, immortal life and salvation with Christ. One who believes in Jesus becomes Jesus, i.e., becomes saved. For Jesus is the Savior.<sup>18</sup> Matthew adds other things: namely, that [the Apostles] ought to teach the doctrine of Christ.<sup>19</sup> But those who are now baptized or those who come to faith through a struggle are immediately saved. And so, this is properly the good news (*evangelium*) of salvation, namely, that faith gives immortality in the Kingdom of Christ.

[8] Next comes: "But he who does not believe shall be condemned."<sup>20</sup> [Jesus] does not say "he who does not believe or he who believes but is not baptized shall be condemned." For faith is a necessity; baptism is the sacrament of faith. Therefore, he who has faith but cannot obtain the sacrament (as, for example, the thief on the cross)<sup>21</sup>—his faith suffices. But the fact that one who does not believe in Christ (who promises eternal life to believers) is condemned (i.e., is damned with eternal death) is evident from the following [consideration]: Our spirit does not obtain that which it neither hopes for nor loves. For love joins our spirit to the Beloved. But he who does not *believe*—he neither *hopes for* nor *loves*. And so, he who does not believe that he can obtain eternal life remains in eternal death.

[9] [Jesus] says "he will be condemned" because after the gospel is preached and is scorned, [the unbeliever] will be justly condemned, because he has scorned the Son of God and has not believed Him. He will be condemned by the word that speaks in the conscience of the unbeliever, who says within himself: "I could have been alive [through Christ], and I impute to myself the [eternal] death that I suffer." And so, he will be condemned by his own judgment; and he will

be eternally tormented; for by blaming on himself his [state of] death, he brings torment on himself. And so, those to whom the gospel is not proclaimed do not in this way bring torment on themselves and condemn themselves eternally. In comparison with unbelievers, these individuals—if at other times they have not acted against a nagging conscience—are said not to have sin (even as Christ said to the Jews, namely: “If I had not come . . . , they would not have sin.”<sup>22</sup>)

[10] Now, if you rightly consider the worm-of-conscience, which does not die<sup>23</sup> but always gnaws, you will find that it is the judgment of the God’s word. For this word which judges within our reason [and] whose judgment is called the dictate of conscience is only that light which enlightens every man, namely, the [light of] God’s word. And within himself [a man] reads the judgment in and through this light [of conscience].

[11] Next comes: “These signs shall follow those who believe: in my name they shall cast out devils,” etc.<sup>24</sup> Christ willed these perceptible signs to be sacraments of that Heavenly Spirit who is given to believers. For one and the same Spirit shows Himself in different powers in different believers, just as one human nature shows itself to the senses in different ways in different men. Hence, the power of the nature that is intellectual and that is of the essence of human nature shows itself in one man in one way—e.g., in the art of writing—[and] in another man in the art of speaking; in another, in the art of building; in another, in the art of governing. And so, in various ways the power<sup>25</sup> of the intellectual nature shines forth. Likewise, in the various supernatural gifts the Divine Supernatural Spirit, or Spirit of grace, who is given to believers, shows His power. [12] For when the soul receives this power from on high, then by means of signs that can only be made by that Spirit, the soul shows that it has received this power. And for this reason Paul said that when Christ ascended on high and led together with Himself the captivity that was captive,<sup>26</sup> He gave gifts to men—[gifts] which he enumerated.<sup>27</sup> And these are Divine gifts that signify the presence of the Spirit [and] that assure that we are admitted into fellowship with Christ because we have His Spirit.

[13] Moreover, note that just as the intellect by its presence brings it about that the animal body is assumed into fellowship with the intellect’s nature (i.e., that the ignorance and darkness of the animal nature puts on the light of human wisdom), so too the rational soul passes into fellowship with the Divinity by means of its union with the



Spirit of God. But recognize a difference. For the intellectual spirit is created in the animal nature by a breathing-into, because what is animal is prior to what is spiritual, as says the Apostle.<sup>28</sup> But when the spirit is breathed in, it is not *created* but is *communicated*. And so, there are different created spirits in different men; but the Uncreated Spirit is one and the same. [14] And so, in Christians, in whom there is a single faith, there is also a single Spirit, because faith is only a gift of the Spirit. For when the intellectual nature is elevated beyond its own nature, so that it beholds a truth which it does not understand—i.e., when beyond the intellectual nature it apprehends in a more certain manner a truth which it knows to be its own life, the [apprehending] must result from a higher power. And this power, which is higher than the created intellectual power, must be Divine. For between the intellectual nature and the Divine nature no other power can be intermediate.

[15] Now, regarding the signs which come to believers, the following is certain: [namely,] that the Spirit of faith removes devils, i.e., adversarial powers, and brings with it a new discourse, namely, a heavenly and powerful discourse, which is contained in the Creed of faith. It removes serpents, i.e., vain promptings, through which the old man,<sup>29</sup> having become worthless, was infected. It removes the poisonous things—such as erroneous doctrines—that are opposed to the life of the spirit. [Such doctrines] when imbibed or heard will not harm the spirit, because once that Heavenly Spirit has been tasted, He does not permit the soul to vacillate so as to be inclined toward a different doctrine, since it [already] has the best doctrine. And by His powerful Hand [the Heavenly Spirit] cures the sicknesses-of-soul contracted from the flesh—[cures them] by reigning in the lasciviousness of the senses and by chastising the body, so that the body obeys Him. The Spirit accomplishes this in all believers. And in the name of Jesus some believers, thus strengthened by faith, show these [gifts of the Spirit] by means of external signs when they cast out devils, and so on. [16] Accordingly, take note [of the following]: Because we find these [actions] to have been done by believers who had this Spirit, we who have this same Spirit of faith do not doubt that the Spirit works in all of us, invisibly, these things which He shows perceptibly in others for the manifesting of His power through believers. In this world we can be led to things immaterial only by means of things perceptible.

[17] “And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God.”<sup>30</sup> I under-

stand that the human nature in Christ was taken up into Heaven, i.e., into Incorruptibility and Immortality. For Jesus said that no one would ascend into Heaven except Him who descended from Heaven—indicating that He is the Son of man, who is in Heaven (John 3).<sup>31</sup> Hence, when the Son of man spoke these [words], He had not yet ascended into the Heaven of Incorruptibility in accordance with His human nature. For His mortal nature had not then laid aside the possibility of dying, a possibility which He proposed to lay aside, as was fitting, by means of His death. However, the person who spoke was in Heaven, to be sure, with respect to His Divine nature, which is immortal. Likewise, the Heavenly Father dwells in Immortality, as says Paul.<sup>32</sup> [18] But Christ after His resurrection from death ascended unto the Heaven of His Father's dwelling place, i.e., unto Immortality. To rise again from death and from corruption is to put on a [human] nature that is incorruptible and that cannot disintegrate into [any] pre-existing material. In a similar way, in the general resurrection good persons and evil persons arise. Then, from among these, certain ones ascend more highly—unto happiness. And they ascend all the way to Immortality, wherein the Heavenly Father dwells.<sup>33</sup> And they will enter into eternal life, while the others will remain in the lower parts of the earth, namely, in Hell. But in Christ the human nature arose from death, never again going to die. Then it ascended above all heavens<sup>34</sup> until it was seated (i.e., was at rest) at the right hand of the Father<sup>35</sup> (i.e., in the strength of the Immortal Power).

[19] Moreover, take note of why John the Evangelist and Matthew do not speak of ascension: [namely,] because they saw that in Christ resurrection is also ascension. To be sure, the other individuals, in whom resurrection is not ascension, arise; and Christ, the Judge, determines whether they are to ascend or to descend. But in Christ, the Judge, resurrection and ascension occur together. And because the [ascending] does not hold true for any except those who are Christlike: [Christ] divulged, for our instruction, that He would prolong the proofs of His ascension for forty days in order that in the meantime proofs of His resurrection might be multiplied. Nevertheless, [the proofs were multiplied] on different occasions, in order that they might be better grasped. However, He did not determine that after forty days He would *not* manifest that He had arisen. For, a little while thereafter, He showed to the Apostle Paul that He had arisen. Therefore, it is evident that the ascension was accomplished in and through perceptible signs in order that by means of these perceptible signs we might arrive at the

truth of resurrection, which in Christ is also ascension.

[20] Someone might perhaps ask: “Because resurrection is common to all, say in what manner this [resurrecting] occurs and why.” I reply that the manner is not known. But according to some people we can say that in man there is a corporeal nature that is quite celestial, just as in man there is a spirit that is quite divine. Furthermore, [it can be said] that this celestial nature—which is said to be a fifth essence and which unites within itself the elemental [nature]—remains after the elements have been corrupted. Similarly, if there were gold that had lead united to itself, then the gold would remain after the lead had been dissolved. And [I say] that the spirit of man is inclined toward this its [elemental] nature and is joined to it at the end of the world’s motion, so that the [Divine] judgment is made about the spirit united to such a celestial and incorruptible body, of both of which a man consists. And the man will receive *ascent* as his reward or will receive *descent* as his penalty.

[21] You might ask, furthermore: “Why does the text say that Christ was taken up ...,” and so on?<sup>36</sup> I reply: Because Christ frequently calls Himself one who was sent from the Father and because He now returns as Victor, He is taken up to the extent of being seated beside the Father. [The situation is] as if our lord Pope Calixtus were to summon up the returning legate of Holy Angel’s<sup>37</sup> to sit beside himself (just as we read<sup>38</sup> that Peter took Linus up in order that Linus, together with him, would be in an equal position governing over, and judging, all things), provided that (1) the legate had manifested faith in God and had manifested the glory of God, and provided that (2) he had conquered the adversary, namely, the Turk, and had freed the Christians held captive by the Turk, and provided that (3) with victory [in hand] he would return, leading the captivity that had been captive, and would present the redeemed [to the Pope] after a triumphal parade.

[22] Understand, then, that [Christ’s] ascension occurs with this likeness to the legate—although a remote likeness. For [in the illustration] the Pope, serving as God’s representative, received a relatively unimportant man, to whom he committed his own representative authority, so that [that man] would be not just a private man but would be also a man with the fullest power that belongs to a legate of the Prince-of-the-religion. And then the Pope made him—in accordance with the exalted level of the dignity and in accordance with the merits of his fidelity—to ascend above all heavens and all hierarchical grada-

tions of the Church (i.e., above all orderings and dignities, all principalities, powers, and other such things) unto fellowship with himself. And the Pope made him to be a judge and gave to him all his own [privileges]—as we read about Joseph, who ascended in this way in Egypt,<sup>39</sup> and read about Melchisedech, who came to an exaltation, so that he was a king and a priest [and] who was a type of Christ.<sup>40</sup> Hence, since Christ assumed a human nature into a union with His Divinity [and] unto Immortality and unto the point of being God the Father's Right-Hand-of-Power, it is evident that His human nature was elevated above all intellectual heavens (i.e., above all powers, thrones, and forces) unto a being-seated-with-God-the-Father. Today is the Feast of Christ's ascension—a Feast that is deservedly gladsome to every man.

## NOTES TO *Assumptus Est in Caelum*\*

\*Sermon CCLXXXIV. May 26 was the Feast Day of the Ascension.

1. Mark 16:19.
2. Mark 16:19.
3. Peter Comestor, *Scholastica Historia* (PL 198:1644 B-C).
4. Sermon LXXXV.
5. Mark 16:14.
6. Luke 24:41-43.
7. Mark 16:14.
8. Acts 1:3.
9. Cf. Mark 16:14.
10. Here at 4:7-8 I am deleting the word "*corpus*" in accordance with Ms.

L.

11. Mark 16:15.
12. Acts 1:8.
13. Luke 12:49.
14. Mark 16:15.
15. II Peter 3:9.
16. Mark 16:15.
17. Mark 16:16.
18. Matthew 1:21.
19. Mark 28:19 re teaching all nations.
20. Mark 16:16.
21. Luke 23:39-43.
22. John 15:22.
23. This expression is borrowed from Mark 9:43 (9:44), for example.
24. Mark 16:17.
25. Here the one English word "power" translates the Latin "*potentia seu virtus*" at 11:14-15.
26. Ephesians 4:8.
27. Romans 12:6-8. Ephesians 4:11-12.
28. I Corinthians 15:46.
29. Romans 6:6.
30. Mark 16:19.
31. John 13:13.
32. I Timothy 6:16.
33. I Timothy 6:16.
34. Ephesians 4:10.
35. Mark 16:19.
36. I.e., that Christ was taken up into Heaven.
37. The Spaniard Juan de Carvajal was Cardinal of the titular church "Sant'Angelo in Pescheria" at Rome.
38. *Liber Pontificalis*, Chapter 1.
39. Genesis 41:39-46.
40. Hebrews 7:1-10. Genesis 14:18-20.

**Alleluia. Veni, Sancte Spiritus\***  
("Hallelujah. Come, Holy Spirit")<sup>1</sup>  
[June 5, 1457; preached in Brixen]<sup>2</sup>

[1] "Hallelujah. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of those who believe in You, and kindle in them the fire of Your love."

To the sermons which you have oftentimes heard from me I will now add a brief exposition of the foregoing prayer. On bent knees the Church prays with a hallelujah, i.e., with a song of gladness, that the Holy Spirit come. Let us consider each individual word [of the prayer], because [the prayer] is a summoning of the Holy Spirit, who governs the Catholic Church. [2] To begin with, the Holy Spirit does the teaching, because He is most noble and best. And so, He wills to be invited; accordingly, "Come" is said. For He presents Himself by making His dwelling in our free spirit only if He is invoked. As says the wise man: "I called, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me."<sup>3</sup> Behold, when He wills to be invited, He is already present. For how would He be invited unless He moved the [human] spirit that desires Him? But (as is added subsequently) He is invited by believers.

[3] Every believer has the spirit of faith,<sup>4</sup> because of which he calls out to God, who is Spirit. Now, faith can be received by our free spirit because we can believe or not believe. Therefore, if we receive faith, surely the spirit [of faith] is present in it. And this spirit teaches us to ask for the Spirit. By way of illustration: At first, bread is received from one's father, to whom it is credited that he gives good things to his son.<sup>5</sup> Then the taste of the delicious bread teaches the children to ask for bread in order to be refected. Accordingly, the tasting, which comes after faith [in our father] has been undertaken, stimulates us to seek the spirit of pleasantness. Bread refects; the pleasantness of its taste whets the desire. [4] The sweet spirit of wisdom is that spirit which proceeds from God the Father and from His Wisdom. And it turns the soul toward Wisdom<sup>6</sup> and toward Wisdom's Begetter. The spirit is the sensing of the pleasantness of that Bread of Wisdom. This sensing, or spirit, reveals the hidden features of Wisdom,<sup>7</sup> i.e., [reveals] the pleasantness of the Bread of Life.<sup>8</sup> And it glorifies<sup>9</sup> the Wisdom and its Omnipotent Begetter—just as the taste or aroma reveals the excellent quality of the wheaten bread and of the wheat from which the bread has taken its essence.

[5] Moreover, our affection calls out: “Come, Holy Spirit.” When it names that Spirit “holy” [and] worships Him as its God, then our spirit, which desires only that the Holy Spirit come to it, is surely holy. One who is just, insofar as he is just, cherishes only justice; and the Holy Spirit cherishes the spirit which is holiness itself. For [the Holy Spirit] is the Holy of holies. But holiness is the simplicity that is furthest removed from all defilement, because it is infinite purity and cleanliness. [6] Therefore, the one who calls upon that Holy Spirit, who is Holiness, to come to his own spirit will surely need to be capable of receiving so great a purity. Therefore, where that Spirit is asked to be received, there must at least be such a preliminary disposition that, with respect to the one issuing the invitation, all things are prepared for the reception—i.e., that his will is prone for all things possible. Then the Holy Spirit ordains by His coming those things that befit His own excellent nature. (Similarly, we say that a poor rustic, if he is a [civilian] volunteer<sup>10</sup> and does what he can, is the legal host of the emperor, who on his arrival brings with himself whatever things are needed.) But since the Holy Spirit is not visible and is not knowable in this present world, which is situated in wickedness,<sup>11</sup> the soul that is capable of receiving the Holy Spirit must be free<sup>12</sup> from this world’s [entanglements].

[7] But from where does the [Holy] Spirit come? Certainly not from some *place*, because He is non-spatial. But because we, by nature, are only children of wrath,<sup>13</sup> then by the gift of God we are transferred from our natural condition unto the Kingdom of God-the-Son’s-love. We do not doubt that the Spirit of God has come by grace—just as the grace-of-adoption (which is non-spatial), if it comes to the son of a rustic, transforms him into the son and heir of the emperor, and just as the spirit of wisdom, if it comes to an ignorant man, transfers him from his native state of ignorance unto intellectual light.

[8] Now, the Spirit, who is Love, is sent from the Father and the Son. For He is the primary and fontal Love and Friendship of the Father and the Son. From this loving Natural Union—which is holy, pure, and clean, with no defiling blemish—proceeds all holy love. But why is He called *Spirit*? (1) I think that it is because breathing-out is *emitting a spirit*.<sup>14</sup> (For He proceeds from the Father and the Son in the fashion of their will. Moreover, (2) [He is called *Spirit*] because of the fact that He breathes-out a vital motion, (for when the wind blows,

then the moved air seems to be alive; similarly, we speak of a *living* fountain because of its motion). And (3) [He is called *Spirit*] from His effect, because He makes men spiritual<sup>15</sup> and holy.<sup>16</sup> Someone can be knowledgeable and intelligent but together with this can be carnal and a sinner. But no one who has this [Holy] Spirit is of this world,<sup>17</sup> i.e., is a sinner. Moreover, a union of love is immaterial.<sup>18</sup> [9] He is called *Holy Spirit*, who is *ruha* and who is *pneuma*—as if He were of every gender and of no gender.<sup>19</sup> (Similarly, someone who considers an object in which there is *heat* [masculine gender] [will recognize that] its *hotness* [feminine gender] and its *being hot* [neuter gender] are the same thing [as its heat].<sup>20</sup> And the case is similar with *good* [masculine gender], *goodness* [feminine gender], and *being good* [neuter gender]<sup>21</sup>). For the [Holy] Spirit is spiritual heat that makes the [human] spirit alive with that loving and divine heat. And the [Holy] Spirit is a good [Spirit] that leads [the human spirit] unto rest.

[10] There follows [in the text]: “Fill the hearts of those who believe in You.” The coming of the [Holy] Spirit is the filling of the hearts of believers, just as the coming of love is the filling of the hearts of those who love. I understand the hearts of the believers to be their [respective] inner man,<sup>22</sup> which has the nature of intellectual life. For believing is found to be present only in a living intellect. But when a believer receives within his intellectual nature the divine seed of sonship with God and of conformity to his [Heavenly] Father, then that seed of conformity can perfect the intellect only by a spiritual motion that is given by the [Holy] Spirit.

[11] Faith is that power about which John the Evangelist speaks: “As many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become sons of God.”<sup>23</sup> This power is the potentiality for the intellectual nature to attain to that which it believes. Someone believes that Christ is a man and is the Son of God and that he himself can be made Christlike. [12] This assured faith is a power in the intellective soul, and it has within itself the form of Christ in potentiality (just as in the power of a seed there is enfolded the form of a tree). [The soul] aspires to conformity with this [form of Christ]. Hence, this power of faith—with respect to what is heard through the word of Christ—is received in the intellect, i.e., is received as the seed of the word of God and of the Tree of eternal life. Analogously, in a dove’s egg there is the power of conforming itself to a dove. This power is present there determinately, because it is inborn. But in the intellectual nature of free will



the power is free and is not determined by nature. Nevertheless, it can determine itself through its choices, because it is of an intellectual nature. And when one hears the word of Christ and believes, he chooses by faith the Divine Form, to which he wishes to be conformed. And within himself he receives from the certitude of faith the power by means of which he can attain to conformity to God.

[13] This power of the believer's soul, a power which is from the received faith, is divine and not innate; and it is immaterial, just as the power in a dove's egg is a celestial and invisible power (but *is* innate). Now, if a dove's egg is to reach the point at which the dove's form, which exists potentially, comes into actuality, then that egg must be filled with perceptible and temperate warmth, by means of which the seminal power proceeds from potency to actuality. Something similar is necessary in the case of the [believer's] intellectual nature, where the divine form is received by faith, in the previously stated way, and exists in potency there where it has been received. If [this form] is to come into actuality, so that it is brought to conformity with the Divine Form—brought from potency into actuality—then [the intellectual nature] must be filled with divine warmth, so that thereby the *conceptus* [i.e., the newly begotten faith] is changed and is perfected.

[14] Now, there is said [in the text]: "... of those who believe in You." For believers are taken into possession by the Holy Spirit. But from the prayer [that is now under discussion] we must note that the reason the Holy Spirit is said to fill hearts is that one's spiritual perfections have nothing from the subject [in which they are present], but, conversely, the subjects obtain everything from the perfections. The situation is otherwise as regards physical objects, e.g., whiteness and flavor and such things. For corporeal things become corrupted, and they cease to exist when their subjects cease to exist; for from their subjects they receive their *existing* and their *existing as one thing*. Immaterial perfections exist in the opposite way. For from the subjects [in which they are present] they do not receive either their being or their differentiation or their number; rather, they give to their subject the subject's entire being insofar as the subject is a thing of such a kind—as is evident in the case of justice and a just man. And so, [the immaterial perfections] are things that are prior to their subjects, and the subjects are in them. [15] A just man insofar as he is just receives his entire being from justice, so that justice is truly the parent and

father of the one who is just. By analogy, the soul gives existence to the body; and the body is, properly speaking, in the soul—and not vice versa. And so, when a man’s body is destroyed, his soul is not destroyed. Likewise, we [commonly] say that justice is everlasting and immortal. It is obvious that justice and wisdom and other things of this kind do not perish with the just man or with the wise man, even though to the ignorant the contrary seems to be the case. Likewise, one Spirit fills the hearts of believers, to whom He gives immaterial being. [This Spirit] is *one* above oneness and number. And so, you know that justice is related in one way to a just man and that whiteness is related in another way to a white object. For whiteness receives its being from the white thing, but justice does not [receive its being] from the just man (but vice versa).

[16] Strong dispositions of the virtues are present in those who are virtuous. But [these strong dispositions] are certain conformities to, and befigurings of, justice and of God Himself, from whom they are. I say “befigurings” [but not in the sense of] something that is befigured intrinsically and that has a permanent fixedness and a root in the virtuous person but [in the sense that] they are in a continual state of becoming—just as splendor is in a medium and just as an image is in a mirror, according to the word of the Apostle where He says to the Corinthians that we are “transformed into this same image as by the Spirit of the Lord.”<sup>24</sup> Similarly, he says of Christ, [who is] the foremost just man, that He is the figure of [God’s] substance and the brightness of [God’s] glory . . .,” etc.<sup>25</sup>

[17] Moreover, note that the Holy Spirit, who is likewise God, fills all things. “All things are full of Jupiter.”<sup>26</sup> For fullness fills. But filling is perfecting. A thing has its *being* from God; [and] it has its *being this thing* [from God]. It has perfect, i.e., full, being [from God]. From God the Father [a thing] has *being* because it is a *oneness*; from God the Son it has *determinate being* because it is an *equality*; from God the Holy Spirit it has *perfect being* because it is a *union*.<sup>27</sup> For example, suppose that someone considers a hand: It has, in the first place, *being* that is common to all existing things; next, it has *determinate being*, so that it is no more or no less than a hand; next, it has *perfect being*, because it is the hand of a given man through a union. [18] The union, or spirit, which is in the arm and in the hand is one [spirit, or union]. It connects the hand and the arm. And just as all the members of a man are connected by one spirit, so too the parts of the uni-

verse are connected by one spirit, so that there is one universe. Now, in the universe there are various creatures—immaterial and corporeal—and they are connected through one Omnipotent Spirit, who fills all things. Therefore, that Spirit—who is the loving bond of all creatures, because in Him all things have peace and because by Him all things exist—is also the union which in the intellectual nature unites the concepts of all things. And He is that union, or that grace, which unites the intellectual nature to the Cause of all things.

[19] Moreover, consider along the lines of what was said earlier about the egg. The egg is, first of all, from the Creator; next, a bird is formed; thereafter, [the bird] is perfected so that it is made capable of flying. The case is similar with the intellectual nature, which is a likeness to the Creator. For just as God, who is Being-itself, calls the creature from not-being unto a likeness to Himself so that the creature exists (and, thus, calling is understanding, and understanding is existing), so too the intellectual nature gathers into itself the likenesses of things and makes itself to be like the things.<sup>28</sup> Hence, man's created intellect, being instructed by the Word of God, conceives of God, so that it makes itself to be like Him and puts on, through regeneration, the Divine form of its Creator—just as the egg is reborn as a dove. But [the intellect] does not yet come to perfection so that it is a spirit. Rather, it is perfected from its vital movement until [the stage when] it arrives at an equality—even as the dove, hatched from the egg without yet having wings, is, at length, perfected, so that it flies and arrives at a likeness to the bird from which it has its origin.

[20] Hence, in the species of the flying dove the Holy Spirit is seen. The flying dove rightly befigures the simplicity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> Like the dove our spirit becomes progressively spiritual, so that it arrives at that Divine Form from which it went forth through creation. See how it is that the egg, whose natural movement is downward, becomes alive, and after it has begun to eat life-sustaining food is strengthened as regards its vital spirit, and acquires wings. And by means of the wings it elevates itself and is moved upwards and explores lofty things. [21] Similarly, our soul, inclined downwards according to the generation of the flesh, is born anew and is made living. After the food of immaterial life is tasted, the soul acquires wings of love and of contemplation and soars to lofty things. [The situation is] like [that of] those saints of whom the Prophet Isaias [speaks].<sup>30</sup> And in church we sing: “These are they who fly as clouds . . .,” etc. And

Jeremias and Habacuc have compared that spirit, as it is present in saints, to the flight of an eagle.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, too, we read in the Book of the Apocalypse that to the woman, i.e., to the Church, are given two wings like an eagle's, so that she may fly into the desert, namely, of contemplation.<sup>32</sup>

[22] There follows [in the text]: "... and kindle in them the fire of Your love." Believers ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit and ask that the Spirit kindle in their hearts the fire of His love. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit is a Living Love and a Vital and Life-giving Warmth who kindles the fire of His love in the spirit of a believing man. By way of illustration, if absolute hotness is conceived as igniting a fire containing its hotness, the fire will not be the *hotness* but will be *hot* by the gift of, or participation in, the hotness. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is Love who kindles in the spirit of a man's desire a fire of His love, so that the man glows with that Divine love. [23] However, this Divine love that is present in the soul which has been warmed [by it] causes not desiccation but liquifaction and life, not a consuming but a perfecting—even as a hot perceptible fire that has been received by gold does not dry it out but liquifies it. And where[as] the gold was [previously] without movement, it is [now] released, so that it is moved, as if alive, in accordance with the movement of the heat. And although in the gold the heat does not appear to be moved when the gold is melted, nevertheless it is not for this reason less moved but is more moved. Infinite motion coincides with rest, as we see in the case of a top which appears to be the less moved the more, and more quickly, it is spun around. And if it were spun so quickly that it could not be spun more quickly, then in its movement there would be rest.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in work that is the work of the Holy Spirit there is effortlessness. For love is a vital movement in which there is a state of rest and of delight.

[24] But note that love kindles a fire of its own love. When love kindles [in the soul] a fire of its own love, then the soul is ardent with a living and incorruptible love, so that it attains to the Divine Form. For [that Form] attracts the soul to conformity to itself. And if the kindled fire were not to cease but were continually to increase (because it desires more and more to be made like the Absolute Heat, which is said to be a Consuming Fire),<sup>34</sup> then the soul would be ardent [with love], so that it would obtain the form of incorruptible life.

[25] Love is the form of the incorruptible virtues. It shines forth in formed justice, in formed devoutness, in formed mercy, and in

individual virtues that have been perfected and formed. Hence, the soul that has been kindled with the fire of Divine love is ardent, so that it becomes *just* by means of true Justice, in whose Form, which is Love, it seeks to be made happy. In this way, [the soul] is aglow with love for wisdom, love for truth, and for all the virtues. For in them is the Form that it seeks. [The situation is] as if the virtues were to name that one Form in different ways in accordance with different aspects, since that Form is not understandable by man in accordance with its one and infinite aspect.

[26] By way of illustration, there is the vegetative life, which seeks to be made happy but cannot be made happy as long as it does not take on a higher form, namely, that of the sensory life. For as long as any [given] vegetative life is not transformed into the sensory life, it can [always] be a more perfect vegetative life. Therefore, the sensory life kindles its fiery love in the vegetative life so that the sensory life is desired as the final happiness of the vegetative life. This vegetative life, being aglow with love for the sensory life, desires to see, to hear, to scent, to taste, to touch, and whatever other [activities] there are in which the form of the sensory life shines forth. For [these] are powers<sup>35</sup> of the sensory life. They are formed by the form of the sensory life in such a way that if they lacked this form, they would not exist. For example, there is no seeing without sensing—and so on as regards the other senses. [27] Therefore, the vegetative life takes on these powers in order to attain unto their form, in which to find rest. The case is similar with regard to sensing, because sensing seeks to find happiness in the act of understanding. For sensory discrimination cannot rest as being happy before [attaining to] the intellectual form—as was said regarding the vegetative [life] prior to [its attaining to] the sensory [life]. And so, [the sensory life] is aflame with love for the intellectual [life] and takes on the intellectual powers—in particular, the cognitive power, the power of remembering, the inferential power, the decisional power, and other such powers that are formed with the intellectual form—in order to attain in them unto the form in which to find rest. Similarly, the intellectual [power] finds happiness only in the Divine Form; and it is ardent with love for that Form, putting on theological and divine powers in order to attain thereunto.

## NOTES TO *Alleluia. Veni, Sancte Spiritus*\*

\*Sermon CCLXXXV. June 5 was the Sunday of Pentecost.

1. See the Roman Missal for Pentecost.
2. See, for example, the Roman Missal of 1962. [*The Daily Missal and Liturgical Manual with Vespers for Sundays and Feasts* (London: Baronius Press, 2004), p. 709.
3. Wisdom 7:7.
4. II Corinthians 4:13.
5. Matthew 7:9-11.
6. I Corinthians 1:24.
7. I Corinthians 1:24.
8. John 6:48.
9. The one English word “glorifies” translates the Latin words “glorificat seu clarificat”.
10. Here at 6:10, I delete “esse”, which is omitted in mss. *L* and *U*<sub>1</sub>.
11. I John 5:19.
12. Here at 6:16 the one English word “free” translates the Latin “liberam et absolutam”.
13. Ephesians 2:3.
14. Among the cognate meanings of the Latin the word “spiritus” are both *spirit* and *breath*. I have altered the punctuation of the printed Latin text at 8:6-12 so as to correspond to my understanding of it.
15. Among the cognate meanings of the Latin word “spiritalis” (plural: “spiritalis”) are both *spiritual* and *immaterial*.
16. I have repunctuated 8:9-12.
17. John 8:23 and 17:14.
18. See n. 14 above.
19. “Ruha” (or “ruach”) is a feminine Syriac/Hebrew word for *spirit*; “*pneuma*” is a neuter Greek word for *spirit*.
20. The Latin words are “calor”, “caliditas”, and “calidum”.
21. The Latin words are “bonus”, “bonitas”, and “bonum”.
22. Ephesians 3:16.
23. John 1:12.
24. II Corinthians 3:18.
25. Hebrews 1:3.
26. See Augustine, *City of God* IV, 9.
27. Cf. Cusa, *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 9 (26).
28. Nicholas here alludes to the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of perception.
29. Here at 20:2-3, I follow the reading of the Paris printed edition.
30. Isaias (Isaiah) 60:8.
31. Habacuc (Habakkuk) 1:8. Jeremias (Jeremiah) 98:40 and 49:22. These verses do not quite fit Nicholas’s expressed thought.
32. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:14.

33. See Cusa's *De Possess*, n. 18-19, where a similar example of the spinning top is used.

34. Deuteronomy 4:24. Hebrews 12:29.

35. The one English word "powers" translates the Latin phrase "virtutes sive potentiae".

**Pange, Lingua, Gloriosi Corporis Mysterium\***  
("Sing, O Tongue, of the Mystery of the Glorious Body.")<sup>1</sup>  
[June 16, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Sing, O tongue, of the mystery of the glorious Body and of the precious Blood that the Fruit of a noble womb, the King of the nations, shed as a ransom for the world."

I was thinking that something had to be said especially about the Eucharist. And although it is not useless to repeat the things that you have often heard, nevertheless I have chosen to expound a hymn in order that our memory may be fixed on it and that this assuredly glorious hymn may convey to me what to say.

First of all, let us consider that we are celebrating the solemn feast of the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, i.e., [the Sacrament] of good grace. For [the Eucharist] is a vessel of grace, just as a gomor is a sufficient measure of manna, for it was sufficient for each person (Exodus 16).<sup>2</sup> Likewise, this Sacrament contains fullness of grace that suffices for all; and it is a golden urn that contains manna (Hebrews 9)—an urn that is placed within the Holy of Holies.<sup>3</sup> Everything that God in His gentle kindness has prepared for the poor is a grace and is contained in this Sacrament. It is indeed a grace, because it cannot be procured by any meritorious work or by any payment. Hence, since it is a Sacrament that contains within itself Christ, who is the Treasure of goodness and of all desire,<sup>4</sup> it is rightly called *eucharist*.<sup>5</sup> (Read Albertus [Magnus, who has written] extensively on this topic, in his *Summa de Sacramento Eucharistiae*, at the beginning.)

[2], The soul that is nourished by the Flesh of Christ and uplifted by the wine of His blood says to the outer man:<sup>6</sup> "O you tongue of my physical flesh, sing<sup>7</sup> of the mystery of the glorious Body and of the precious Blood of Him, namely, who is present mystically in the Sacrament. This is the Blood which the King of the nations (who is the Fruit of the noble womb of the Virgin Mary) shed for the ransom of the world." [The hymn] says "mystery" (in Greek "*mistirium*") because the Blood is present in the Sacrament only mystically (although truly); for it is not perceptible by any of the senses. Therefore, it is exceedingly hidden, as if beneath the form of the wine I were to see, [only] with my intellectual eye, the very noble Blood. [I



would see it] not because it is present in the potentiality of the wine (as if I were seeing a dove in the potency of an egg) but because it is present truly and actually by way of transubstantiation. Similarly, when Christ turned water into wine: if we examine the ordering intellectually in a human manner, [we see that] the substance of the water was transubstantiated into the substance of the wine before the odor, color, taste, and the other accidents came to the substance. At that moment the transubstantiation would have been recognized by faith alone, because, in particular, He who is Truth had said so. Therefore, hypothesize that Christ would not have allowed [the wine's] own accidents to have emanated from this substance but that just as the transubstantiation was brought about prior to the accidents of the water having perished through the order of nature, and thus the accidents would have remained without fail, [so too] there would have been the substance of the wine but [hidden] beneath the accidents of the water. [In this hypothetical example] the senses, which reason *a posteriori*, would deny this [occurrence] to be true; but the intellect—strengthened by faith and believing the Word, i.e., the Son of God—would affirm that beneath the accidents of the water there was the substance of the wine.

[3] But why is so hidden a mystery present in the Sacrament? Surely, it is in order that we may be taught that through faith we attain unto inner [realities] even if the senses gainsay this. For things outward, which are of the perceptible world, continually deny the things which are of faith. And so, faith has merit not only there where there is no experience that supports faith but [even there where experience] resists faith. (This faith overcomes the world.)<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, because of the merit of faith there are some things that are evident and other things that are taken on faith. And when they are believed on the basis of the authority of the speaker, then we believe Him who speaks to be the Son of God and believe the [spoken] truth to be a truth which is not of this world but is from on high.<sup>9</sup>

[4] Next, note [the place] where [the hymn] says that the Blood was shed as a ransom for the world. In this [passage] we must note that the merit of the shedding of Christ's Blood is the payment with which the [Heavenly] meal of refection is purchased. For the shedding of the sensory life, which is in the blood,<sup>10</sup> has merited eternal life—as you know from elsewhere. Note, too, that a *King* has shed [His Blood]. A king is a public person who enfolds within his royal power all his subjects. Accordingly, there is merited, for all, as much

as each one needs. [The situation is] as if all men were captives and were condemned to death, and as if the king gave himself over to death for the redemption of them all, and as if he instituted the sacrament of this love as his final act of departing. Of such a kind is this Sacrament.

[5] There follows [in the hymn]: “Born for us, given to us, from a chaste virgin, and having dwelt in this world, then once the seed of His word was sown, He concluded in a wondrous way the period of His sojourn.” Christ was born for us and given to us, as we sing: “Unto us a Child is born; and unto us a Son is given”<sup>11</sup> — from a chaste Virgin. For just as by Divine power the virginal substance was transformed into the Son, so too by Divine power the substance of the bread is transubstantiated into the Son. Yet, the transubstantiation is wondrous because although the appearance of the bread remains, along with the [accidents] that accompany the bread’s substance, the bread’s substance passes over into the substance of the Son. But in the case of the Virgin, the virginal substance did not preserve its [outward] form but [did preserve] its substance, or essence. For the Son is of the same essence, or humanity, as the mother; but, nevertheless, He has His own form, into which the virginal flesh has been transformed.

## NOTES TO *Pange, Lingua, Gloriosi Corporis Mysterium*\*

\*Sermon CCLXXXVI. Thursday, June 16 was the feast day of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

1. A hymn written by Thomas Aquinas.
2. Exodus 16:16 ff.
3. Hebrews 9:3-4.
4. Cf. Colossians 2:3, where Christ is said to be the Treasure of all wisdom and knowledge.
5. The Greek word "*eucharistía*" means *thanksgiving*.
6. II Corinthians 4:16.
7. The one word "sing" translates "canta et pange".
8. I John 5:4.
9. John 8:23.
10. Leviticus 17:11.
11. Isaias (Isaiah) 9:6.

**Beatus Es, Simon Bar Iona\***

(“Blessed Are You, Simon Bar-Jona”)<sup>1</sup>  
[June 29, 1457; preached in Innsbruck]<sup>2</sup>

[1] “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona.” [This text is contained] in the Gospel whose reading you have just heard in a certain measure.

“Simon” means *obedient*; “Bar-Jona” means *son of a dove*. For the soul that obeys with such obedience as results from dove-like simplicity is blessed—even as is the rational soul that obeys out of faith. *That* [soul] can be called *Peter*, i.e., *knowing*. For it is necessary that a happy soul be a knowing soul; for a soul that cannot be knowing—as [the soul] of a beast is [not knowing]—cannot obtain happiness. For happiness consists in knowledge. For example, a stone, even if it had incorruptible being, would not be happy, because it would not know that it had [incorruptible being]. Only a nature whose being is to understand and to know is capable of happiness.

[2] However, the knowledge that makes one happy does not arise from perceptible things or from the power of the created nature. For [the knowledge that makes one happy] is knowledge of the Beginning. Nothing can know its own beginning—i.e., know whence and how it came into existence—except by revelation. A child placed on an island during infancy would not in and of himself come to know his father and the manner in which he himself was born. [Similarly,] the intellectual nature knows its own beginning [only] by revelation. And its knowing is its being. And so, when it understands, it has within itself the beginning of its being; and so, it exists amid immortal happiness. By way of illustration: if a certain pond—being established within its own limits [and] having arisen from a living fount springing up within it centrally—were of an intellectual nature and were to know that within it there was the living fount from which it emanated, the pond would be happy, because it would know that it had incorruptible being.

[3] Now, we know from the Gospel that Christ is the Revelation of the Beginning, i.e., of the Father. [He is Revelation] not in the way that ordinary people conceive of seers and prophets as making revelations but in the way in which the Son, who is the Image and Form of the Father’s substance,<sup>3</sup> reveals. John [the Baptist], the last priest of the Old Testament, first revealed Christ.<sup>4</sup> Peter, the first [priest] of the

New Testament, likewise revealed Christ but on the basis of revelation from the Father.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the whole of the Old Testament concludes with the revelation of Christ; and the whole of the New Testament begins with it. Hence, by means of John and of Peter, the Heavenly Father first drew all men unto a revelation of His Son. Jesus well said: “No man can come unto me unless my Father draw him.”<sup>6</sup> However, no one can come to the Father except by the Son’s revelation.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, if we accept the fact that Peter’s confession (viz., that Christ is the Son of the Living God)<sup>8</sup> was revealed to him by the Father, then we are blessed. For Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; [and] Christ says that this is a revelation from the Father.<sup>9</sup> If we admit the former, then the latter is certain—since the Son of God, who is Truth, has spoken it.<sup>10</sup>

[4] Now, if the Father reveals to Peter hidden truth, how is it that He would not reveal to His Son all things? Consider, then, as you very often have, [the following]: he who acknowledges that Christ is the Son of God surely believes in Him and believes that He was sent by God the Father and that He speaks God’s words. Surely, he does not sin, because he keeps [Christ’s] commandments. Who would not keep the Son of God’s commandments, which promise eternal life and promise that to die to this world is to live in the Kingdom of God?<sup>11</sup> Therefore, a sign that someone readily sins is that he does not believe in Christ as the Word of God. But if someone truly believes, then he has within himself the word of God, because there speaks in him only Christ, whom he obeys [and] who is the King who rules him and leads him to the promised inheritance of life.

Note that the Church is founded on Peter’s confession. For the Church is the mystical Body of Christ,<sup>12</sup> which has existing within itself Christ the Son of the Living God. In this Body is the full power of binding and loosening;<sup>13</sup> this power in Christ is from the Father. For just as Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, includes within Himself all the power of the Father, so the word of Christ in Peter includes all the power of Christ. I say “word of Christ” insofar as Christ is understood as existing mystically and really. For insofar as “Christ” is construed in a mystical sense, i.e., [is construed] as designating the Church, which is the mystical Body of Christ: in this Body Peter, being the Head, has all the power of the Body because [He is] the rector who governs by means of the revelation from the Word of God. Moreover, Peter has the full power of Christ in order to be able to build the

Church, which is not yet [fully] built. Even as Christ said “Upon this rock I will build my Church,” so by the word of Christ Peter builds and governs the Church. This is to say that Christ builds the Church by means of Peter and that by means of Peter He governs the Church once it has been built. Furthermore, “Peter” stands for every believer, for every believer has only Peter’s faith. Therefore, from Christ we are called Christians; from Peter we are called believers. In Peter there is the enfolding of all believers and there is every principality and there is all power of binding and loosening. And so, he is called blessed. And no one can be blessed unless he follows our patron saint Peter, who is the patron saint of every church and of this church of ours in Brixen.

## NOTES TO *Beatus Es, Simon Bar Iona*

\* Sermon CCLXXXVII.

1. Matthew 16:17.
2. This was the feast-day of the Apostles Peter and Paul.
3. II Corinthians 4:4. Colossians 1:15. Hebrews 1:3.
4. Matthew 11:13 and 3:13-17. John 1:35-37.
5. Matthew 16:15-17.
6. John 6:44.
7. John 14:6.
8. Matthew 16:16.
9. Matthew 16:17.
10. That is, if we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, then we will admit that Peter's revealing of this fact is from the Father, because Jesus (who is the Son of God) tells us that the revelation is from the Father.
11. See Romans 6:11.
12. Ephesians 1:22-23.
13. Matthew 16:19.

**Qui Me Invenerit (2)\***

(“He Who Finds Me”) <sup>1</sup>

[September 8, 1458; preached in Bruneck]

[1] “He who finds me shall find life and shall acquire salvation from the Lord.” (Proverbs 8 and in the reading of the office of the mass.)<sup>2</sup>

Solomon speaks of Wisdom,<sup>3</sup> which he shows to have preceded all created things. [He shows it] through the [consideration] that all things were created by means of Wisdom.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, [Wisdom] was prior to all [other] things and, thus, was eternal. But he says that it was *conceived*.<sup>5</sup> I understand this conceiving to be in the way in which the intellect conceives, and begets from itself, an inner word. By way of illustration: If someone were first to invent a number and [then] were to number all things by means of it, that number would have been a conception of reason or of intellect. And because it would be prior to everything numerable, it would not have been any of the numerable objects. Accordingly, [it would not be] either time or an age or an era or duration or substance or quantity or anything that is characteristic of numerable objects. For the *origin* of things numerable is not any of the numerable things, i.e., [is not any] of the things *originated* from itself.

To number is to think discursively. All things that are done well are done by means of reason. Thus, Solomon here [in Proverbs 8] says that God created all things by means of Reason, or Wisdom. For to weigh (*appendere seu ponderare*), to measure, to determine, to arrange, to put in place—[all of] which we experience, with regard to creatures, as having preceded the positioning of the universe—were conceived of beforehand in Reason. And when all things sprang into being, they all existed by a singular law: namely, that heavy things are at the center, light things are on the circumference, and in-between things are in the middle. Heavy things were without heaviness in Reason, and light things were without lightness; and all things were, [in Reason], only Reason. But when they went forth by way of creation, so that they became creatures, some were made perceptible, others intellectual, others living, and so on. For Reason required that it be thus.

By way of illustration: In the simple conception of a painter’s reason is a man. In this [conception] the foot does not exist expressly as a foot or the head expressly as a head; rather, all things are one sim-



ple form. But when [the conceived man] is painted, then even though he is copied from that immortal conception, nevertheless reason requires (1) that the head have its own distinct form [and be] proportioned to the body and (2) that the foot [have] its own [distinct form]— and so on for each [visible body-part]. And if the painting is to be a good one, then it is necessary that it be made in accordance with reason, so that the wisdom and reason of the painter who has the complete art [of painting] shine forth well both in the image as a whole and in each part of it.

Therefore, Wisdom or Reason is that without which nothing is made and in which all things are Life itself. For in that Reason time is eternity, and, to be brief, [in that Reason] the creature is the Creator.<sup>6</sup>

But all things exist through that through which they come into being. Hence, it is evident that everything that exists well exists by means of Reason, as Solomon rightly states.<sup>7</sup> For (1) the deliberations of the wise and (2) the good governance that preserves the common good have their goodness from nowhere else than from reason. For when they would deviate from reason, they would go to ruin. Therefore, Wisdom furnishes to all things life and duration.

[2] Now, among all created things which there are in the perceptible world, only man is capable of having true wisdom. Animals thrive by means of great resourcefulness for living. For they hunt in order to live. But that hunting is aimed at the perceptible life, to which it is ordered. However, man has a twofold pursuit: one that is animal; another that is intellectual. For he pursues in order to live in an animal way and, likewise, in order to be delighted and to live in an intellectual way. Delight is the motivating impulse of the [intellectual] life. Thus, we experience that Aristotle rightly said<sup>8</sup> that by nature we desire to know and that we have sight not only in order to obtain the things that conduce to the preservation of this present life but also in order to know the differences among things. And contemplatives have knowledge of how great a delight there is in the apprehension of the true. Solomon says that Wisdom delights to be present with the children of men.<sup>9</sup> For all things were created with this purpose: that the Creator be glorified. And so, Wisdom is delighted to be present with the children of men because thereby [the Creator] is known and glorified.

Therefore, the apprehension of Wisdom is the obtaining of [our] goal and is happiness and eternal life, because it is the apprehending of

the Omnipotent Art and of the Art of Immortal Life—just as if some mortal were to obtain an art that bestowed immortal life and immortal gladness. Solomon rightly said: “He who finds me, [i.e., Wisdom], shall find life and shall acquire salvation from the Lord.” Therefore, [Wisdom] can indeed be found when it is sought as being life. For unless it is thus sought, it is not found [to be present] as life. Wondrous is the following: [that] Wisdom is found in the way in which it is sought. Suppose, then, that you believe that you cannot live without wisdom and that you would wish rather to die than not to obtain it (just as a man would wish to be dead rather than to be deprived of reason or to be a stone). [If so,] then you accept all advice about finding wisdom, and you keep all the commandments, even if they seem very difficult. And you abstain from all uncleanness and malice, because you know that Wisdom does not enter a malicious soul;<sup>10</sup> and you observe very strictly all of the Gospel’s rules, the observance of which promises indwelling wisdom.

[3] But who is that Lord about whom Solomon speaks in the words of our theme-verse, when he says “and he shall acquire salvation *from the Lord*”? Surely, it is He who is Savior and is called the Lord Jesus. For Jesus the Savior saves. He who seeks salvation in and through Wisdom acquires salvation from Jesus. For Jesus is Incarnate Wisdom, or Humanified Wisdom. God made the world through Him also.<sup>11</sup> Jesus, the Son of God-the-Creator, has the same Creative Art and Omnipotence as the Father has. Art is begotten from intellect. The Father-Intellect had, eternally, Wisdom and the Creative Art. Through the Creative Art He created within time the man Jesus, [and] He called Him to the Creative Art. All human beings partake of the Creative Art in a likeness. But Jesus obtained the Art itself. And this gift which the Father gave to Him is greater than all [other gifts], because [He gave it] not in part and in a measured portion but in fullness, so that whatever [Jesus] saw the Father do, He too could do. Just as a fleshly father naturally begets a son and herewith gives him the same nature of begetting, so too God the Father created Jesus and therewith gave Him the same Art of creating. For just as the Father enlivens whom He wills to, so also He gave to the Son to be able to enliven whom the Son willed to. And because [the Son] came in order to teach us the way to an apprehending of His Spirit, namely, the Spirit of Wisdom and of Immortality, then we are to obtain from the Son salvation, as from the Lord of Salvation.

But we read the foregoing things [also] as regards the glorious Virgin. For he who shall so find her as being the Mother of the Savior shall find, in her, *life* and shall acquire salvation from the Lord Jesus, [our] Savior [and] her ever-blessed son.

[4] Because it is maintained above that man is capable of having wisdom, which furnishes immortality, you might perhaps want to know how you can experience this fact. I answer: in many ways. For you have a free spirit, and it does not pursue works of nature and of the flesh out of necessity. [Our] animal body desires those things which other animals also desire, namely, devouring, seeking inordinate pleasures, etc. [Our] spirit forbids [these things] because (1) the works of the flesh are oftentimes contrary to cleanliness and to religion and custom and (2) mortification and fasting [are contrary to those works of the flesh] and (3) there is shame in the works of animality (for example, in urinating in front of others and in behaving licentiously, etc.).<sup>12</sup> And so, reason forbids that man follow animality. Moreover, in [our] spirit, which abhors uncleannesses and sins, we experience that there is the capability of having wisdom and immortality. For [our] spirit is inclined toward those things that are incorruptible; and it embraces them, as we see in the arts. For it grasps the immortal art, in particular, of numbering (as [numbering] is handed down in mathematics) and of measuring (in geometry), and so on. And this [mathematical reasoning the human spirit] could not do if it did not have a soul that could turn itself from the corruptible particulars of experience to the universal form of such [particulars] and in this way acquire the art [of mathematics]. Now, [for the soul] to be able to turn itself to the universal form of particulars is a sign that the soul which can [do] this is not bound to the corruptible corporeal instrument, as are the organs of the senses. And so, [the soul] is capable of knowledge and of the arts and of wisdom—[all of] which are separated from corruptible particulars. And, hence, the soul does not perish when the body perishes (since it does not depend on the body), as sight perishes when the eye, to which it is bound, is destroyed. [But] since the power [of sight] still remains in the soul, the soul could see if the eye were restored.

[5] Moreover, we experience that imagination is higher than the senses, because we imagine more subtly (even with the object absent) than we sense. But imagination often errs concerning the truth, as when we imagine that persons living at the opposite end of the earth from us fall off [the earth]. Hence, there is a more subtle power, which

corrects the imagination: namely, reason, which says that that falling off would be for something heavy to ascend.<sup>13</sup> And so, [reason] concludes that they can no more fall off than we can ascend. Still, discursive reason often errs; and this error [our] intellectual vision corrects, as is touched upon in [my] short treatise *De Beryllo*. Moreover, because our soul has an “eye” by means of which it looks unto the Beginning, which precedes all contrariety and, thus, all corruption, then [our soul] is incorruptible. For corruptible things [are attained] by a corruptible eye, composite things by a composite [eye], material things by a material [eye]; and like is attained by like. Similarly, incorruptible things are seen by an incorruptible [eye], simple things by a simple [eye], immaterial things by an immaterial [eye]. Hereby you know that the intellect is simple and incorruptible because it sees the simple and indivisible (in any manner of division) *First Beginning of creatures*. And in the [First Beginning] are present all things originable; but the First Beginning is none of all the originated things—about which [topic you have heard] in this same [sermon].<sup>14</sup>

[6] Moreover, the soul—by means of the disposition of faith [and] in accordance with the teaching of the Savior—sees beyond the intellectual nature. And [this seeing] is the farthest point to which the intellect can be elevated. And there are miracles, which confirm by means of faith that the intellect is active and can proceed to all things credible. [7] And so, there can be easily understood, by considering that the intellect is not the senses, that we perceive many things which we do not understand, and vice versa. And with eyes closed and when we do not hear anything, we can [still] understand. And so, the soul by virtue of the fact that it is bound to the body, perceives; but by means of its essence [and] as it is in itself (i.e., as separated from animating the body) it is in a certain way free from particular contractedness, and it beholds universal beginnings as they are contracted, and it is capable of receiving wisdom and immortal life.

[8] When the intellect considers, with respect to the cognitive power of the senses, how it is that this [power] insofar as it depends on a failing organ [fails] but does not fail insofar as it is a power of the soul (because when the organ is restored, [the power] senses as beforehand, without there being created a new power (*potentia seu vis*) of sensing), then [the intellect] also sees the following: (1) that there happens with regard to the imaginative power that in the case of a less suited organ the rational soul imagines less clearly and (2) that for a time

a man loses his memory (when the organ is hindered) and later recovers it. So there remains in the rational soul the power-of-memory, although it ceases from activity, which it cannot exercise without a fit organ. Just as a writer without a pen cannot write, so the rational power fails with respect to its activity when the organ fails; yet, [the rational power] remains in the intellect. The intellect does not use, with respect to its own “seeing,” the sensory organ when it views intelligible objects. Rather, only when [it views] perceptible objects does it use the sensory organ. The case is similar when [the intellect views] imaginable objects, since they are of a perceptible nature. The situation is also similar when the intellect is motivated and reasons inferentially, since it moves between those [images] which it draws from perceptible objects. (For with respect to these [perceptible] things [the intellect] uses the sensory organs according as they are more or less subtle and suited for being exercised.) But with regard to “seeing” intelligible objects that are not signifiable by anything perceptible because of their extreme simplicity and the incontractibility of their absolute nature, [the intellect] does not use any sensory organ but uses only its own simplicity—[a simplicity] that is conformable to the nature of intelligible objects. Hence, since [the foregoing observations are true], the power-of-sight does not fail in the intellect. And since [that power] does not depend on the organ, nothing can prevent its always being able to see freely. Similarly, if the eye and the soul’s power-of-sight were the same thing, namely the soul itself, then sight would never suffer impairment from old age or from the indisposition of a [bodily] member.

[9] Moreover, note that the intellect looks at rational considerations and judges which consideration is true and which one establishes immortality and which one [is] not [true and does not establish immortality]. Therefore, [the intellect] sees its own immortality when it sees that one rational consideration comes closer to the apprehending of immortality than does another and sees that in one [consideration] immortality shines forth, and is shown, more accurately than in another. But the intellect could not make this judgment if it did not at all see its own immortality. Therefore, the intellect sees itself to be immortal when it sees that by no formable or expressible rational consideration is immortality so explicable that it cannot be better and more accurately explained and demonstrated. Therefore, [the intellect] from its seeing of immortality judges the rational consideration and does not, conversely, judge immortality on the basis of the rational consideration. And if some rational consideration were to prove immortality,

still this [fact of immortality] would be unknown unless the intellect judged it to be true. And the intellect, in making this judgment, would look not only at the rational consideration but [also] at truth; according to conformity-with-truth that is detected in the rational consideration the intellect would judge the consideration to hold true. Therefore, when all matters are rightly considered, we see that the intellect sees within itself, not with respect to the rational consideration, the incorruptible nature of its own simplicity.

[10] Next, consider that this intellectual power comes not at all from procreation. For if it were from procreating, it would follow the nature and condition of other things that are from procreating. For example, just as the eye by nature stands in relation to color, and the senses to objects, something similar would have to be said about the intellect: namely, that it does not stand in relation *freely* to willing, remembering, and understanding but that it is *compelled* by nature—or that it could be compelled by another man. But we experience the opposite of this latter [alternative] because [the intellect] is free to love and to will and to understand, etc. Moreover, [the intellect] does not age as do the senses. And so, it is not of a mortal and corruptible [nature]. For we see that the elderly, when their senses fail, flourish in terms of intellect and wisdom. Moreover, a man is saturated by, and comes to an end with respect to, those [faculties] that he has from procreation, because sometimes he does not wish either to see or to hear those things which he sees or hears. But [the situation is] not so with respect to understanding and willing. For that which he understands he would wish always to understand better; and that which he loves [he would wish] to love more, etc. And the entire world does not suffice for him, because it does not totally satisfy his desire to understand, in the way that one object suffices for the sense [to be full]. Therefore, nothing satisfies the intellect except God, from whom [the intellect] has being and in whose image it is. For the living image, an intellectual life, cannot find rest either within itself or in anything else but only in its Exemplar, as in its Origin, Cause, and Truth.

[11] Moreover, if the soul were from procreation, then all its works would be natural works, and it could have no moral work—e.g., justice, prudence. Hence, a father does not beget a prudent son by means of his own prudence; and a son is not naturally prudent. Rather he has from God a spirit that is capable of having immortal virtue because it is from an Immortal Father. For if man were naturally virtu-

ous, then every man would be virtuous, just as every man is capable of laughter. The intellectual nature is immaterial and thus is not procreatable. For if it were procreatable, then it would be also corruptible—just as when flesh is made from bread, the species bread is corrupted, [through digestion], and flesh is generated. However, the species of an immaterial nature cannot thus be corrupted as can the species of a corporeal nature, which nature has a *subject* and a *matter* that are capable of receiving different species.

Moreover, the last and most potent reason that the rational soul does not come from procreating is that it has an end-goal (for the sake of which it exists)—namely, understanding and loving God, etc.—that is higher than is man's form of being. Therefore, the intellect comes from creating, [not from procreating].

[12] But if the soul is created, how is it from God's essence? Solution: God, as Avicenna claims,<sup>15</sup> does not act or create through any accident,<sup>16</sup> since [accident] does not befall Him, who is most simple. For [God] does not act as fire acts through heat; rather, He acts as heat that makes hot from its own essence. However, He does not impart Himself by way of contractedness, [or delimitedness, on His part], since He is simple and unpartakeable and unintermixable—just as the ray of the sun is not intermixable with any foulness. Therefore, God remains absolute, and He creates by His will, just as a king creates officials by his will and moves all things by an immovable law. And when he gives being to officials and rulers, he impresses by his will a likeness of his authority on the rulers so that they are partakers of his imperial likeness, while the unpartaken imperial reality remains with the king. Similarly, if a seal were to impress its likeness on wax, the letters in the wax would not be unpartakeably from the essence of the letters of the seal but would be *like* the essential letters. For God impresses likenesses of his forms. In a similar way He imparts to the intellectual nature. Etc.

Moreover, note the fact that a likeness of God's Infinity (in particular, since God is, actually, Infinite Strength) is found in [man's] intellect in the way in which a likeness of Infinity is capable of [partaking of] that Strength. Analogously, [there is in the intellect] a [participatory] likeness of eternity, which exists at once as a whole in an actual way. And so, to be able always to understand more and more without end is a likeness of Eternal Wisdom. And from this fact, infer that [the intellect] is a living image that conforms itself endlessly to the

Creator. And so, it is teachable [endlessly], etc., as you know from elsewhere.<sup>17</sup>



## NOTES TO *Qui Me Invenerit* (2)

\* Sermon CCLXXXVIII. Distinguish from an earlier sermon (CCIII) with the same title.

1. Proverbs 8:35.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. Proverbs 8, throughout.
4. Proverbs 8:22 & 30.
5. Proverbs 8:24.
6. Nicholas holds the view that in God everything is God, so that although all created things may be said to exist in God (as an effect exists in its cause), they do not in God exist as themselves.
7. Proverbs 8:30.
8. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I, 1 (980<sup>a</sup>21-27).
9. Proverbs 8:30-31.
10. Wisdom 1:4.
11. Hebrews 1:2.
12. The Latin passage at 4:8-12 is malformed by Nicholas.
13. I.e., from the point of view of the people living at the bottom of the earth, they would be ascending, whereas the people living at the top of the earth would imagine them as falling.
14. See, above, the section marked by margin number 1.
15. Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysii De Divinis Nominibus*, Chap. 4.
16. Nicholas here refers to accident in the Aristotelian sense of accidents that belong to substances.
17. E.g., Sermon CCLXXIX (8).

**Sic Currite ut Comprehendatis (2)\***  
 (“So Run that You May Obtain”) <sup>1</sup>  
 [January 27, 1459; preached in Rome]

[1] “So run that you may obtain.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the obligation befalls me to accomplish, with God guiding, the visitation assigned to me by our Pontiff: the words of our teacher Paul—[words] which he wrote to the Corinthians and which are read in church today—furnish me with material for saying some things about so holy a matter. Paul, through whom Christ speaks, speaks to you Brothers through me, saying: “So run that you may obtain.”

[2] In this world we are pilgrims and exiles with respect to the inner man. We have no lasting city<sup>3</sup> [but] we run toward some goal determined for us—[a goal] which everyone who runs desires. For no one runs [just] in order to be running. That which is moved is moved for the sake of rest. But the movement of nature is one [kind of] movement; the movement of the intellect is another [kind of] movement. For example, both a horse and its rider are moved. The horse, under the direction of the rider, is constrained; the rider [is moved] by choice. But why does [the rider] force the horse to run? Surely, [it is] in order to obtain [his goal]. Therefore, the goal is the cause of causes, for whose sake all things occur.<sup>4</sup>

[3] Now, that which acts for the sake of a goal is called an intellect, which thus is the beginning-of-movement that ordains, and disposes, all things to its intent. Therefore, by means of the orderliness that we experience in nature we see a First Intelligence, or First Creator-Intellect, that is a Mover. It causes motion, [and] Paul calls it God, who is the Cause of order. [Paul] says: The things that are from God are ordained.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, just as when we see a horse keeping to the right way [that leads] to the city and not wandering off into a field in accordance with its desires, we know that this [steadfastness] occurs because a rider thus directs the horse to the place that the rider desires [to go]: so too when we see that our animal body is moved toward the lasting city of Heavenly citizens, we know that this movement occurs because of the directing on the part of the intellectual spirit, which directs the animal [body].

[4] But what directs the intellect? Assuredly, faith [does]. For

unless a runner believed that the end of his race would be an obtaining, and unless he hoped that his race would reach its goal, he would not run. For he who sows sows in hope.<sup>6</sup> But during a race what animates the faith, and the hope, which we have? (For without soul or spirit there is no motion.) Assuredly, love [does]. For love (*caritas*) is the spirit of life, of faith, and of hope. [5] And note that that Divine power which moves the intellect toward the incorruptible Divine goal is to be seen by an elevation from the visible man to the invisible [man]—according to the teaching of the Apostle [Paul] to the Romans (at the beginning-section).<sup>7</sup> In man we experience a body and experience that, of itself, the body is not alive; for we see that the body lacks life when it does not sense. Therefore, it has life from a sensing power. But in man we [also] experience that the sensing power is directed toward things—for example, toward chastity and abstinence—that are opposed to its desires. Therefore, we know that there is that higher power which the sensing power obeys. This [higher power] is free will. But free will can be present only in an intellectual nature. For *decision* presupposes *understanding*, since there is choosing. Choosing involves comparing and discerning. Thus, I say that that lofty power which directs the nature of free decision includes hope, which lives from faith; [and it includes] faith, which is moved from love. Therefore, [that lofty power] has love [*caritas*]. But just as in man the intellect is a living form that forms and enlivens all things, so love is present in this triune power.<sup>8</sup> Hence, just as when the body dies and the sensing power ceases, the intellect does not fail: so too love remains when faith and hope cease.

[6] But what is that love? I answer: an obtaining, or a union, by which a Christian is united to Divine Immortality;<sup>9</sup> ultimate happiness consists of this [union]. You might ask: Since the supreme [feature] of man is free intellect, how does a man arrive at that Spirit which thus directs the intellect to attainment of an End that is above intellect? I reply that just as carnal man—being of his own nature corruptible and mortal [and] altogether ignorant and blind—is made by the intellectual power to be seeing and knowing, (like unto angels and gods, as Moses calls them),<sup>10</sup> and just as this [seeing and knowing] results from intellectual teaching, so too our intellectual nature is made happy by the Divine Spirit and by Divine Love. For the intellect's happiness does not consist of knowing, since to know admits of more and less. For that which can be greater and lesser does not make happy. For it can be abolished if it can be lesser; and it is not perfect if it can be

greater. But happiness is, without doubt, the final stage of perfection-in-a-fixed-eternity. Hence, just as whenever we have not seen an object, a degree of complete cognitive perception is lacking to us, so too as long as we know only truth and do not behold it by means of that seeing which is ultimate cognitive fruition, we have not yet attained the goal of our desires. Therefore, happiness consists in the intellect's beholding of the Creator of all things.

[7] But it is evident what the teaching of that Divine Spirit is. For it is the gospel, i.e., the good news. It is not philosophy or logic or discursive reasoning or rational persuasion or rational discourse. Rather, it is the announcing of the Son of God—[an announcing] that is made manifest by the power of [His] works. By means of this teaching one comes to this Spirit who directs us to happiness and not to anything else. Therefore, Paul says that he does all things in order to be made a partaker of the gospel,<sup>11</sup> wherein this Spirit is present, teaching us the way to that life. Therefore, we know that we ought so to run as being partakers of the gospel. For then we are certain that we will arrive at the attainment of an immortal crown. We must consider intently the fact that Paul did all things for the gospel's sake, in order to be made a partaker of the gospel. Therefore, the gospel is the Divine teaching of Christ, the Son of God. This [teaching] can be understood in such a way that someone is made a partaker of the teaching; and through partaking of the teaching his intellectual nature becomes knowledgeable beyond [the capability of] its own nature. [It becomes knowledgeable] by means of a Divine knowledge that is of a spiritual nature since it moves the intellect; for a spirit is a mover.

[8] Therefore, love (*caritas*), which is the teaching of Christ, is shed abroad in the hearts of the Christlike by the Holy Spirit, as says the Apostle.<sup>12</sup> Behold, what a difference there is between a 'living' Christian, who has the spirit of love, and a 'dead' [Christian], who lacks the spirit [of love]! There are those who have Christ in their sensory body, as it were. That is, [they partake of Him] with unformed faith. They believe all the things that the Gospel says about Christ—even as do the devils, who tremble.<sup>13</sup> But they do not have the Living Christ—[do not have] life which is receivable not by the senses but by the rational spirit, or intellect.

[9] You might ask: "How do I experience that Christ's Spirit dwells in my heart, or inner man?" I reply: You will be able to experience [this Spirit] within yourself from the movement of your desire—

namely, if the movement of your desire is Christlike. For example, [it is Christlike] when the motion of desire is so greatly inclined toward obedience to God (1) that you are ardent to obey the Divine precepts even unto death and (2) that you rejoice in all hardship that you suffer in order only to please God. [10] You might ask: “How, then, ought one to act who does not sense within himself that Spirit?” I reply that he ought to attend to his vocation and to run within it very attentively, because, assuredly, he will arrive at attainment. For the Apostle says: “So run that you may obtain.” He is speaking to a runner who is striving for the goal—just as a canon ought to run toward his goal in such a way that he obtains [it]. In a Christian’s every race there is a pathway that leads to attainment. You are called to run as canons. Run, then, as such.

[11] If someone doubts how it is that a canon ought to run, let him look to the meaning of the name: “canon” in Greek means *regula* in Latin. A canon, thus called from “regula” [i.e., “rule”], ought to live, to be moved, and to run with respect to an observance of rules, or canons. The rule is the measure of uprightness and justice. Therefore, let a canon measure whether [or not] he is rightly running his race—[measure it] from his observance of the canons, [or rules]. If he finds this to be so, then he may know that he is on the pathway of attainment. [12] “But wherein does that uprightness consist?” I answer: in regulating the motion of concupiscence, which is animal. And [that motion] is threefold: namely, of pride, of greed, and of licentiousness.<sup>14</sup> This [movement] is repressed by religion, which is clean and undefiled.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, by means of the rule of obedience [a canon] obtains mastery over pride and haughtiness; by means of the rule of poverty, mastery over greed; and by means of the rule of chastity, mastery over licentiousness. Every Christian is guided by the rule of the gospel, lest concupiscence reign in him. But in their own order canons are more [specifically guided]. They have bound themselves more particularly to canons [i.e., to rules] by a vow; and in order to devote themselves only to Divine lauds, they have decided to work in the sacrarium; and so, they eat from the sacrarium.<sup>16</sup>

[13] Next, the Apostle says that this race of attainment ought to be made as in the case of a contest and the pursuit of a prize, i.e., with supreme vigilance and carefulness—as when someone struggles to have what is better than gold and better than every desirable thing of this world. An example is a crown of honor for the acquiring of which

one has left behind all hindrances. For a runner so unburdens himself that he is not hindered even by the weight of gold. If, then, for glory (which is a certain remembrance-of-praise even after death [and] which has a certain image of immortality) certain people undergo even physical death: what, then, ought one to do who is striving to obtain immortality not in an image but in truth? Surely, he ought to struggle as one who struggles with the world, which he strives completely to overcome even if he must die [trying]. [14] But it is necessary that a Christian by means of victory over this world become a king and a co-heir with Christ. However, the world is not overcome except in the Spirit of Christ, which is not of this world and which dwells not in one who is slothful but in one who is zealous [and] obedient and most vigilant unto death, even unto a most contemptible death on a cross.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, a true combatant leaves behind all things, even his life [*anima seu vita*], in order to obtain (1) the prize of true immortality and (2) an incorruptible crown.

[15] And since not all individuals obey the gospel, *visitation* and *giving-guidance* are necessary for me (as you hear from the reading of the Apostolic bull). They were assigned to me for your salvation. I accede to them in the name of God by means of these few [words] that have been set forth for an exposition of the theme-text.

## NOTES TO *Sic Currite ut Comprehendatis* (2)

\* Sermon CCLXXXIX. Distinguish this sermon from an earlier sermon (CCLXVIII) with the same title.

1. I Corinthians 9:24.

2. *Loc. cit.*

3. Hebrews 13:14.

4. Here Nicholas alludes to Aristotle's notion of final cause as that for the sake of which the efficient cause operates.

5. Cf. Romans 13:1.

6. Cf. I Corinthians 9:10.

7. Romans 1:20.

8. The intellectual power is trine insofar as it trusts, hopes, and loves—i.e., has faith, hope, and *caritas*.

9. I Timothy 6:16.

10. Cf. Genesis 3:5. See also Nicholas's *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae*, margin number 8 (in my translation).

11. I Corinthians 9:23.

12. Romans 5:5.

13. James 2:17-19.

14. Cf. I John 2:16.

15. James 1:27.

16. I Corinthians 9:13.

17. Philippians 2:8.

**Dum Sanctificatus Fuero in Vobis\***  
("When I Shall Be Sanctified in You")<sup>1</sup>  
[February 10, 1459; preached in Rome]

[1] "When I shall be sanctified in you, I will gather you together from the whole earth, and I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed . . .," etc.<sup>2</sup>

These are the words which the Word of the Lord spoke through the Prophet Ezechiel, as is read in Ezechiel, Chapter 36. And we have heard these [words] chanted in the introit of the mass. They will give us an entrance to the obligation which now, with God guiding, we have undertaken to be discharged. Very dearly beloved Brothers, these prophetic words can, not inappropriately, be taken as having been proclaimed a long time ago about this synodal gathering of ours. That is, our God has made known to us that at this sacred time when he will be sanctified in us through [our] obedience of fasting and of penance, He has determined to gather us together from this whole earth and to pour upon us clean water. And [He has determined] that we shall be cleansed from all our defilements and that He will give us a new spirit.

[2] These [words], O Brothers, we may hope to be for our salvation when—with God alone (by whom every good is given) inspiring [them]—we come together today with a holy purpose. God has furnished to us these words in the introit of the office [of the mass] as being a brief summary of things to be done. For when, wanting to foresee how I would guide the synod today, I opened the missal: these words which I [now] set forth caught my eye at first glance, so that I understood myself to be instructed by them. Likewise, to the [Ethiopian] Eunuch, when opening the Book of Isaias, the words presented themselves [to him] as written for his salvation.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, it happened to Augustine when he opened the Apostolic codex, as he writes in the *Book of the Confessions*.<sup>4</sup> I think that if one who is seeking God with all his heart asks by what pathway he is to reach God, he will soon find [the answer] when Sacred Scripture is opened. [He will find it] if he steadfastly believes that the words which present themselves contain the will of God which he desires to know in order to comply [with them]. Johannes Climacus said that when a monk is in doubt, he ought to ask someone else and ought to accept his response as divine [i.e., as God's]. For when with this faith he asks a man in



place of God, then not the man but God, through the man, answers. The situation is similar as regards [a passage of] Sacred Scripture that presents itself to the eyes when one opens<sup>5</sup> the codex: it can be believed. For God answers all those who inquire of Him for the sake of their salvation—[answers] in the manner in which those who are calling upon Him with steadfast faith expect to be answered.

[3] You might ask: “Is it not forbidden in the Book of Psalms to seek responses by drawing lots?”<sup>6</sup> I reply: Indeed! But there is a difference between matters of idle curiosity and matters related to salvation of the soul. You might say: “Perhaps the gods were thought—by the priests of the [Grecian] temples, [as is recorded] in the books of Sibyl and of divinations—to answer in this way [i.e., by lot]. I reply that the books-of-oracles were venerated as sacred in many temples; and idolaters thought that answers were given there by the god of the temple. These answers were frequently obscure, since those evil spirits had no certain knowledge of future events, which were only in the power of God. About these matters [you may read] more extensively elsewhere. Let it suffice to know that the Christian who is concerned about the salvation of his soul is not abandoned by the Teacher, who is the Word contained in Divine Scripture. For the things written there were, assuredly, written for our learning.<sup>7</sup> And so, [they were written] for the instruction of each one, even if Scripture seems to have restricted itself to one particular individual. As the Teacher says: “That which I say to one, I say to all.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, may our Christ grant that we may truly be able to say, when we depart from here today (just as He said when He opened the Book of Isaias, as we read in Luke 4): namely, “today this Scripture is fulfilled in your eyes.”<sup>9</sup>

[4] Therefore, with the sacred words of the introit received as a Divine response regarding things to be done, let us measure the weight of the words carefully, paying attention to the things that are assumed when there is said “When I shall be sanctified in you.” These words, as they are read in Ezechiel 36, God spoke through Ezechiel to those who of the Israelite people dwelt among the Gentiles as those of *Israel*—i.e., as those seeing God.<sup>10</sup> For God was known only to them, as the Prophet David says: “God is known in Judea . . .,” etc.<sup>11</sup> Through sanctification they made God known to the Gentiles. But if they would do this, [God] promised them that He would gather them together from the whole earth and would pour . . ., etc.

First, let us note that the word was spoken to believers, and those

chosen by God, [who were] dispersed among [their] enemies and [their] strong and numerous persecutors. And it was the word about God's sanctification. [5] Here, at first, there is doubt as to how God can be sanctified in a creature in time, since He is eternal and incomprehensible. For He says "When I shall be sanctified . . .," etc. I think that we must understand that He is sanctified temporally in believers when He is received with formed faith as the Holy One of holy ones. For He turns toward Himself a soul which, having been sanctified, sanctifies the Sanctifier—just as when heat has been received in a heatable object, [the heat] turns toward itself the heatable object, so that from the object made hot nothing is emitted except the radiation (*vis*) of the heat that was received. One who is cold [and] who is agreeably made warm cannot praise warmth sufficiently. It has freed him from an enemy of life, namely, cold, and has conserved him. And he is safeguarded by it for as long as it remains with him. These laudations of warmth and the [recipient's] concern for retaining warmth eternally by his every effort—[retaining it] as a life-giver—are analogous to sanctification. It is not the case that the sanctifier [i.e., the one in whom God is sanctified] gives something; rather, he recognizes that he has received from the Giver those [gifts] which sanctify him.

[6] See how it is that God is the Goal, [or Final Cause], of all His works. He sanctifies in order to be sanctified; He instructs in order to be understood; He justifies in order to be justified; He glorifies in order to be glorified; He loves in order to be loved, and so on. Thus, conversely, those who love God are loved [by God]; those who know [God] are known [by God]; those who discern are discerned; and those who do not know are not known; those who disregard are disregarded. [Found] in chapter *Si*, according to *Distinctio XXXVIII*.<sup>12</sup> For he who has seen that God is holy in all His works has seen that God is sanctified in them all. But to sanctify is to give to oneself all honor of all spiritual goods, by which the spirit is delighted—[the spirit] which seeks things clean and undefiled and accurate and pure and perfect. For such things we call holy. Therefore, nothing except the spirit of sanctification is had by him who shows by his work that he loves these things and who sanctifies only the Giver of these things.

[7] But sanctification comes about from undoubted knowledge, which is present through assured faith. Therefore, the sanctifying of God shows that the one who sanctifies has undoubted faith. Therefore, if he who has such faith is a Jew who believes that the words of the

prophets are the words of God, surely he knows that he is obliged to obey them; and by obeying, he sanctifies Him as being a Great God, whose authority (proclaimed by the prophet sent by Him) he shows is to be obeyed even unto [one's own] death. Thus, Christ sanctified above all [others] His own Father. He showed in and through Himself that this [authority] is to be obeyed even unto death on the Cross. [8] And if you consider carefully, you see that sanctifying and being sanctified coincide—[you see] that, in the *maximum*, sanctifying coincides maximally with being sanctified and that in the *minimum* [it coincides] minimally [with the minimum]. Hence, we know that one who maximally sanctifies God is maximally sanctified by God. God is sanctified with respect to the fact that we obey the words of Christ (which we believe to be the words of God the Father) [and] esteem all [else] as altogether nothing in comparison with that [obedience].

[9] You might say: “Christ taught us to ask in prayer for sanctification of the name of God the Father.<sup>13</sup> This is said with regard to sanctifying God.” I reply: A name conveys knowledge, as Christ said that Paul carries His name before kings<sup>14</sup>—i.e., [carries] knowledge [of Him]. The Son is the Knowledge of the Father or the Name of the Knowledge [of the Father]. No one knows the Father as Father except the Son. And so, in sanctifying the Son, or Name of the Father, we acknowledge that we have come to a knowledge-of-the-Father that was revealed to us by the Son.<sup>15</sup> This [revelation] is the cause of the sanctification. Therefore, by means of sanctification of the Name-of-the-Knowledge of the Word, or Son, who is God, we sanctify the Father in the Son. For, otherwise, [the Father] is not rightly sanctified because He is not known—just as it is not possible that fatherhood be sanctified as fatherhood if it is not known. But [the fatherhood] is not known when it is not revealed by a son. For whom I do not know to have a son, I do not know to be a father. But in the Son, in whom I see the works as the Son's [works], I see the Father as Father, from whom the Son has all things. Accordingly, the Son says that His works are His Father's, as well as being His own [works] as [works] of the Son. [For] He says: “My Father works until now, and I work.”<sup>16</sup>

[10] You might ask: “How can it be understood that Jesus in revealing the Father showed Himself to be the Son of God?” I answer that Christ came as sent from God [and] with all the power (even the creative power) of God [and] as universal Heir with all fullness [of the Godhead], (as the Apostle conveys to the Hebrews).<sup>17</sup> And [Christ's]

works show this fact. But let a king send whatsoever legates: no one [of them] has royal power that [makes him] in every respect equal to the king with the result that there is no one left who is more closely joined to the king [and] who can be sent. Now, no one is more closely united to a father than is a son. Therefore, [the Son], who is sent with all the fullness of power because of equality in every respect—than which equality no [other] sonship can be greater—is rightly said to be, *qua* being sent, a Son of equal essence and nature with the Sender. Similarly, if a pope could send a legate with fullness of papal power, surely that legate would be of the papal nature and would be nothing other in essence and in nature and would not be lesser [in nature]; rather, there would be one and the same dignity, authority, and undivided papacy in both of them. This [sameness], because of its maximality, is unmultipliable, although the person of the sender and that of the one sent would be distinct. Hence, when Jesus dwelt in this world, but without any stain, He manifested Himself as Son of God the Father—which Father was unknown to all, as being Him whom no one had ever seen.<sup>18</sup> [Jesus manifested the Father] through [His own] works, which the Jewish faith ascribes to the Father alone. [He manifested] Himself as the true Son; [and] He revealed the Unknown Father, the Creator of all things, whose Word and Power He showed Himself to be.

[11] Moreover, let us Christians apply the [afore-]said words of the introit to Christ. We believe that Christ speaks to us in the following way: “When I shall be sanctified in you as Son of God, I will gather . . .,” etc. And this is the gist of the gospel: namely, to believe that Jesus is the Son of God—to believe it] with living and formed and firmly-fixed faith in such a way that God the Son of God is sanctified in us. Thereupon [a Christian] will, most assuredly, do those things that follow in our theme-text. For in him in whom Christ is thus sanctified, there lives only Christ. This [Christian], who is transformed into [the image of] Christ,<sup>19</sup> is moved by the Spirit of Christ toward fulfillment of all the things that the Gospel commands. For he who believes the words of Christ to be the words of the Son of God knows [them] to be words of eternal life; and he does not turn back but follows Christ even unto death. He is full of light, and when his works shine before men, men glorify the Father who is in Heaven. And this glorifying is the glorifying or sanctifying that God requires.

[12] You might ask: “Why does [God] require of us sanctification?” I answer: because [He is] Light in which there is no dark-

ness<sup>20</sup>—namely, Spiritual Light, or Intellectual Light. For just as the more *noble* perceptible light is, the *better* it is and the farther it diffuses itself because of the nature of its perfect goodness, so too regarding intellectual light; for the intellect wants to be understood and known. For just as a great king, if he is not known in his splendor, is no more a king than is a non-royal, and so, his royal highness desires to be known in his splendor, because he is a king: so too the intellect, which is a king of kings (for that which governs in everyone who truly governs is the intellect) wants to be known. And the more noble [the intellect is], the more [it wants to be known]—as we experience with regard to the books of the teachers. Similarly, the Creator of the intellect—since He is infinitely good [and] wills to be known because He is Infinite Intellect—created all things in order to be known, or seen, in His glory and in order to be sanctified. It is as if the sun produced visible light in order that it itself would be seen in its splendor and would be glorified, or sanctified. Therefore, because God wills to be sanctified, there exist all the things that He created. But because He is God, He wills that which He wills.

[13] You might ask: “Since holiness is likeness to God, how is it acquired?” I reply: in and through Christlikeness. For since God is unknown to us: in order to draw us unto His likeness, He sent His Son [endowed] with our nature. Since the Son is a human being, He can be approached by us, so that just as He put on our mortal nature freed from all sin, we might know (if we are freed from sin) that [we] can put on Christ. And, thus, just as He became the Son of man, so we can become sons of God. For once we have become free of sin, we are [not] of the world. To be free of sin is to be holy and undefiled. And this [condition] exists when we have the Spirit of Christ, who is not of this world, because if He were of this world, surely the world would love Him and He [would love] the things which are of the world.

[14] You might ask: “Whereby is the Spirit [of Christ] known?” I answer: [It is known] in and through poverty with respect to the world of the flesh—[poverty] which with respect to the world of the spirit is abundance. For to possess nothing at all of this world as one’s own is called poverty. This spirit [of poverty] is not infected with love either of praise or of temporal goods or of things carnal; rather, it uses the world as a ship by which it sails the sea in order swiftly and safely to reach port. And this [renunciation of temporal goods] is a sign that that spirit [of poverty], which is not without the motion of love, is turned

toward love of things eternal. Hence, as Dionysius says:<sup>21</sup> since we desire to pass over unto God, each [of us] endeavors to do this in order to be made as like to God as he can be. [15] But God, who is Spirit, can be approached only by a spirit. But our spirit—which has an intellectual power and a volitive power—cannot pass over unto God by means of the intellectual [power], since He surpasses all understanding,<sup>22</sup> nor by means of the volitive [power], i.e., love, since what is unknown is not loved.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, it is evident that [our spirit] cannot by its own means arrive at a passing over unto God. And so, [this passage can happen only] by means of a mediator. For God the Father by means of a Mediator attracts our spirit, as what is desired [attracts] the desirer.<sup>24</sup> For when [our] spirit receives the word and teaching of Jesus, and observes His sayings, it loves Christ as the Son of God and, in Christ, [loves] the Father. And the Father loves our spirit through the Son's love [for our spirit]—as the Gospel teaches.<sup>25</sup> But God is Love (*caritas*), which is known by love [*amor*], and is loved (*amatur*) by knowing.<sup>26</sup> In this way the spirit arrives at God in and through a oneness of the two aforesaid powers—[namely, the intellectual and the volitive].

[16] Moreover, Brothers, let us note that Peter commands that the Lord Jesus be sanctified in our hearts. He also [commands] that we be prepared to give a reason for the hope and faith that are within us.<sup>27</sup> Since this [commandment] is to be understood more with regard to us, who are priests and teachers, let us add some [thoughts] about this [topic]. Let us who are active in the legation of Christ ponder our very holy office. For [Christ] said: “Just as the Living Father sent me, so send I you.”<sup>28</sup> For through the laying on of hand[s] we have received the Spirit of Christ, i.e., [the Spirit] of truth, so that we are obligated to preach the gospel and to give a reason for [our] faith. First, let us set before [our] eyes [the question of] whether [or not] we have rightly entered [our legation] and with what vow and what charge [we have entered]. Next, [let us ponder] how it is that we who are endued with Christ are obligated (1) to sanctify God in [our] heart (i.e., with all strength of desire and of will) and thereafter (2) to give, in word and in deed, a good reason for the faith and hope that are within us—[give it] to everyone who asks for a reason. For he has clear reasons who understands (a) his faith and (b) all the things pursuant to it and (c) the Sacred Scriptures in such a way that he wills to sanctify God with his whole heart.

[17] Note the following. For Peter our Patron speaks as follows:

“Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, being ready always to satisfy everyone who asks you for a reason for that faith and hope which are in you. But [do so] with modesty and fear, having a good conscience ...,” etc.<sup>29</sup> Priests represent Christ. For it is not they who work the priestly mysteries, but it is Christ in and through them—[Christ] in whom is the Father. Therefore, in and through the priests the Spirit of the Father speaks, as Christ says: “For it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”<sup>30</sup> Who baptizes, who confirms, who consecrates, who preaches the gospel in and through the legate qua legate? Surely, it is He who has sent the legate. What spirit or what authority is there of the apostolic legate? Surely, it is Peter’s [authority], because it is the pope’s authority, in which the apostolic spirit is present—as Jerome says that the apostolic spirit is never lacking in the see of Peter.<sup>31</sup> For just as there is one authority of a see, so [the see] is enlivened by one apostolic spirit. The apostolic spirit belongs to the legation of Christ. Therefore, just as Christ was the Legate of the Father with the full power of the Father (for [the Father] gave all things into Christ’s power),<sup>32</sup> so too Christ [gave] to Peter full power. Likewise, Christ gave His own power to the other apostles; but additionally he gave the preeminence to Peter by saying: “You are Peter,”<sup>33</sup> i.e., [You are] the Head of the household.

[18] For there is a certain lineage—but of a royal and priestly house. Specifically, [the lineage] is called the House of God or the Apostolic Church. It is present within the Kingdom of Christ, or the Universal Church. It does not exist by natural propagation but is selected by grace for the priesthood of God, so that in its administration it has the gospel of Christ, to whom God gave all power. And Peter, and he who by the gift of God succeeds him, is the Head of this House. But he who is regarded and revered by that House as successor must be held to be the successor. [19] All who are present in this House have followed the Divine vocation, and they succeed to God’s heritage which He has retained for Himself: namely, to tithes, sacrifices, and first-fruits. And they dwell in the Apostolic House, or House of Legation; and they live from the goods of Christ, for whom they discharge the office of legate. For unless we are degenerate sons, we are, assuredly, bound to sanctify Christ in our hearts, since without Him we are nothing.<sup>34</sup> Let us consider what Christ does through us, [consider] that through us, His legates, He transports human beings unto Himself so that in Christ they are as Christ.<sup>35</sup> They are adoptive sons of God and are Christ’s co-heirs. [Let us consider] that the children of Adam

arrive at conformity with Christ [and consider] that the eucharist is sacramental truth where the substance of the bread is transubstantiated into the Body of Christ, with the perceptible characteristics remaining. And [the eucharist] signifies that believers thus pass over spiritually into the mystical Body of Christ. Therefore, we can sanctify no one except Christ, who works this [mystery] in us and of whom is our priesthood. Therefore, this is sanctification (which is recited to everyone who asks for a reason for our faith) when we give to Christ the honor of all [our] priestly activities.

[20] Let us now take note of what things are promised to us who sanctify God. First, there is a congregating from the whole earth. “[H]agios” [in Greek] means *sanctus* [in Latin]; and it is said in the sense of “[holiness] apart from the earth”. Saints are separated from the earth, which is the dregs of light and so is obscure darkness and is unclean with respect to light. Therefore, the elect are separated from the earth and are gathered together into light which is light of the intellect—i.e., [is light] illumining the intellect and giving enlivening wisdom to little ones, just as a famous intellect gathers students from the whole earth in order to enlighten those gathered together for apprehending [that intellect]. [The famous intellect] pours forth, in words, the water of wholesome wisdom,<sup>36</sup> as in the case of dew coming down from the sky there is the enlivenment of things born of the earth. And in accordance with the nature of water there follows cleansing, or purifying. For clean [water] cleanses; living [water] enlivens; wisdom-filled [water] makes wise; and so, the word of God cleanses as being most pure water. Hence, Christ said to [His] apostles: “You are clean because of the word which you have heard.”<sup>37</sup>

[21] After the washing away of all contaminations from the soul, which is made capable of receiving the Divine Spirit, a new spirit is given. And it is called new because it will never be able to fail, since it is always new. Thus, it is an incorruptible fire and sunray, because it is always renewed—just as the spirit that is called *love* is always renewed by an infinite lovable presence in the love-filled motion of a delightful life. When this soul hears within itself Christ speaking, it surges with a joyous hymn of praise, singing: “I will bless the Lord, then, at all times. Praise of Him shall be always in my mouth.”<sup>38</sup> And after [the soul] has sung glory to the trine God, it repeats the words of its Savior, saying: “O how good and sweet You are, O Lord”—saying “when I shall be sanctified . . .,” etc.<sup>39</sup>



## NOTES TO *Dum Sanctificatus Fuero in Vobis*

- \* Sermon CCXC.
1. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 36:23.
  2. Exechiel (Ezekiel) 36:23-25.
  3. Acts 8:27 ff.
  4. Augustine, *Confessions* VIII, 12. This is the famous “Tolle, lege” passage.
  5. Here at 2:24 I am reading, with ms. *L* “aperiente” in place of “aperienti”.
  6. Cf. Micheas (Micah) 5:11 (5:12). Jeremias (Jeremiah) 27:9. There appears to be nothing in the Psalms or in the Psalter.
  7. Romans 15:4.
  8. Mark 13:37.
  9. Luke 4:21. Nicholas *alludes* and does not aim to quote exactly.
  10. Nicholas regards “Israel” as meaning “one who sees God.” E.g., Sermons CCX (3:7-8). CCXLIII (2 7:5). CCLXII (11:12-13).
  11. Psalms 75:2 (76:1).
  12. *Corpus Iuris Canonici (Pars Prior: Decretum Magistri Gratiani)*, edited by Aemilius Friedberg & reprinted in Graz, Austria (Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1959). See *Discreti Prima Pars*, Distinctio XXXVIII, C. X [Friedberg, p. 143]. Also found in *PL* 187:210B. Gratian quotes from Gregory’s *Pastorales*.
  13. In the Lord’s Prayer one prays: “Hallowed be Thy name.”
  14. Cf. Acts 9:15.
  15. Luke 10:22.
  16. John 5:17.
  17. Hebrews 1:2. See also Colossians 2:9.
  18. John 1:18 and 6:46.
  19. Cf. Romans 8:29. II Corinthians 3:18.
  20. I John 1:5.
  21. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, c. 1.75 & 77 (*Dionysiaca* 1091<sup>1</sup> - 1092<sup>3</sup> and 1105<sup>2-3</sup>).
  22. Isaias (Isaiah) 55:9.
  23. Nicholas here borrows from Augustine’s *De Trinitate*. E.g., *DT* X.1.1 and X.2.4.
  24. Nicholas here makes the Aristotelian point that God moves the world (and the things in the world) as the beloved moves the lover.
  25. John 14:23.
  26. See n. 10 of Sermon CCLXXXII (*Pater Vester Caelestis Dabit Vobis*) and n. 20 of Sermon CCLXXIX (*Descendit ad Inferna*).
  27. I Peter 3:15.
  28. John 20:21.
  29. I Peter 3:15-16.
  30. Matthew 10:20.
  31. This reference has not been found in Jerome.
  32. Matthew 28:18.

33. Matthew 16:18. The Greek word "*petros*," from which Peter takes his name, means *rock*.
34. Cf. John 5:15.
35. I John 3:2.
36. Ecclesiasticus 15:3.
37. John 15:3.
38. Psalms 33:2 (34:1).
39. Nicholas has made clear that we sanctify God when we glorify Him, obey Him, love Him, acknowledge His Holiness and act conformably to it.

### **Homo Erat Pater Familias\***

(“There Was a Man, a Householder”)<sup>1</sup>

[February 23, 1459; preached in Rome]

[1] You have heard, Brothers, that Pius II, our holy and chief Pontiff, committed to us the visitation of this leading church of the city.<sup>2</sup> For thus it pleased His Holiness, whom we are obliged to obey—at least with a sign of effort and with every expenditure of effort—even in matters impossible for us. And according to the holy custom let us mention at the outset the Gospel-passage<sup>3</sup> of the divine office that was just gone through. By this [text] we are taught (a) with what concern the Church of the God of hosts<sup>4</sup> was established, (b) why the husbandmen are dismissed, and (c) to whom the cultivating will be committed.

[2] First, let us elicit from the text the fact that God is befigured by a householder who plants a vineyard and leases it to husbandmen for [cultivating] fruit. Let us note what the way is for ascending from the householder to the Creator as from an image to the exemplar. In the [figure of the] simple householder multiple [kinds of] fatherhood coincide. For example, [the householder] is a father because he is the begetter of a son; he is a father, [or head of household], because he is in charge of all [the others] and because he is an overseer and an elder to whom all honor is due. Now, all fatherhood that is found in Heaven and on earth is from God the Father. But we are taught by Jesus, the Son of God, that that one is Father whom the Jews call God. Therefore, this God is Absolute Fatherhood that is also the Father. Hence, that which every perfect householder is, he has from God the Father of fathers. Therefore, God has a Son of the same nature [as Himself], an Heir to all things.<sup>5</sup> He has a special household and has providential care for, and governance over, all [members]. To Him all honor is due. Therefore, those who deny that God has a Son of the same Divine nature, but who nevertheless believe that He takes care of all things, profess (1) that He is a Householder of lesser perfection than is found in the world and (2) that the Giver of fatherhood lacks the perfection which He gives to others.

[3] [The text of the parable] says: “... who planted a vineyard.” Consider how the First Planter of a vineyard stood in relation to planting. For the planting presupposes having vine-branches. So how did a First [Planter] plant the first vineyard? Surely, planting is an act of the

intellect. Brute animals do not plant. [Planting] is done by an intellect and is done in relation to a goal. However, the planting on the part of the First Intellect is a creating, about which the Prophet says: “He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? Or He who formed the eye, does He not examine [with His eye]?”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, that which the First Intellect plants, forms, or creates He does not receive from someone else in order to plant, but He has [it] with Himself. Therefore, He plants of Himself [i.e., of His own resources] in another. Just as one who is wise and who teaches students receives from himself that which he plants in another, so too the First Intellect—which has within Itself (as in a Cause or Beginning) every formable thing and which is an intelligible and eternal world—receives from Itself, or from Eternity, that which It has planted in the perceptible, temporal world.

[4] By way of illustration: The intellect of a mathematician has within itself an intellectual, [or mental], circle which it plants, or forms, in a perceptible object. But that intellectual circle is not a [space-time] circle but is intellect. If a circle is to be seen, then it is necessary that it be seen by means of a circle that is both a maximum and a minimum circle. It is not the case that [these] are two formable circles; rather, they are prior to all duality of formable circles. And so, the intellect, which is the source of all formable circles, is not a circle. But all formable circles have the fact that they are circles from that circle [which] is the exemplar-cause of them all. Therefore, if [that circle] is to be named in accordance with those offshoots, or images, then it is named both maximal [circle] and minimal [circle], since it is the adequate exemplar and precise measure of them all. Hence, when a mathematician forms a circle in bronze, he plants an intellectual [circle] in a perceptible material. And when he makes another larger or smaller circle, he plants only the same intellectual [circle], which with respect to all formable [circles] is simple and is both maximal and minimal. Similarly, the First Intellect plants every creature. About this [topic you may read] more extensively elsewhere.

[5] But why does the Teacher introduce [the parable about] the planting of the vineyard? I answer: Because He wanted to teach about the reason for creation. For the householder plants in order to obtain fruit; and it is [his] fruit because it rises up into an association with him. The case is similar with regard to the Creator. For wine, which is the goal and perfection of the plant, is taken into an association with the householder-planter, or with the intellectual nature, when it is

turned into blood [via digestion] and is enlivened by the intellectual soul. [The intellectual soul] rejoices and is gladdened because of the fact that it senses that the wine has been turned into an association with the soul. Similarly, the First Intellect plants the intellectual nature in order that its perfection may pass over into an association with the Intellect's Divinity. [6] The Teacher adds that the householder surrounded the planted vineyard with an *exterior* safeguard by means of a hedge (as if he had custody of a noble plant), so that it would be a protection from animals' tearing it apart. And he dug in [the vineyard] a [wine-]press, namely, for the separation of the earthliness and the hidden expression of nobility that is the heavenly nature which has the center of its motion upwards—as we experience in regard to the evaporation of wine. Hence, we experience to be hidden in the grapes the spirit of the ethereal [and intoxicating] nature that descends from above [and] that is formed by sunray[s]. And [we experience it] more closely in the squeezed-out moisture of the grapes. But the tower [that is mentioned in the parable] is the *interior* safeguard of the planted vineyard. And so that the Teacher might apply this likeness more closely to His purpose with respect to His hearers, He intended for the vineyard to be the royal city Jerusalem, surrounded by a wall [and having] a temple and a summit. In this [city] He planted noble vines, [i.e.,] chosen intellectual natures that were worshipping God—about which [city] many prophets speak. And He leased out the vineyard to husbandmen (i.e., to priests), who were cultivators of the Divine field, and he went into a foreign country (i.e., by withdrawing himself from the *knowledge* of perceptible things). For Sion, where the God of gods is seen,<sup>7</sup> is very far distant from perceptible Mount Sion, where earthly Jerusalem is [located]. (Or you may explain the meaning in another way, in accordance with St. Ambrose in his *Homilies*.<sup>8</sup> He speaks not of *knowledge* but of *love*. Nevertheless, the point is basically the same.)

[7] There follows [in the text]: “And when the time of the [harvesting of] the fruit drew near, [the householder] sent his servants to the husbandmen ...,” etc. We can understand the husbandmen to be those hirelings (about which [topic] Christ speaks elsewhere)<sup>9</sup> to whom the care of the vineyard was leased with an agreement about the making of payment. But [we can understand] the servants to be those who are of the household of God—as are saints and preachers and prophets—who are sent for collecting the fruit [and] who, instead of a collecting of the fruit, are beaten and killed. About these Christ [laments]: “O Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets . . .,” etc.<sup>10</sup>

There follows [in the text]: “Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the earlier ones; and [the husbandmen] did similarly to them.” And so, you have demands made two times. Luke says that there were three times prior to the sending of the son; Mark [mentions] several times successively.<sup>11</sup> Matthew says that many servants were sent in a group a first and a second time. (And there remains a third sending, because everything trine is perfect.) And there follows: “Last of all he sent his son to them, saying: they will reverence my son.” Accordingly, you know that no one will come after Christ. For He is the one who was sent last of all, after all [others]. [He was sent] not as a hired servant, or servants, but as one who excels all others, collectively, who are in the household—because He is the Son. But all those who for the sake of truth suffered prior to Christ, suffered from husbandmen and from those who were seen to have charge of the vineyard; and those [who were sent] were of the servants of God. But [the husbandmen] did not spare the Son, whom they cast out of the vineyard and killed as Heir—as Paul, writing to the Hebrews, also clearly attests that Christ, the Son of God, was crucified outside the gate of Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

[8] But the three Gospel writers are seen to differ with regard to this parable as concerns the things that follow. And St. Augustine in his book *De Concordantia Evangelistarum* harmonizes them. But let it be the case that to the question “What will the lord do? . . .,” etc., Christ applied [the words] “He will bring those evil men to an evil end and will rent out his vineyard to other husbandmen who shall give him the fruit . . .,” etc.<sup>13</sup> (In that case, this is a prophecy that the Church was to be established among the Gentiles, with the Synagogue left behind.) To this [statement], as Luke reports, certain [of the Apostles] said: “God forbid”<sup>14</sup>—namely, that the son be cast out of the vineyard. For they understood Christ to be speaking about them. To these things Christ [said]: “Have you never read: ‘The stone which the builders rejected . . .,’” etc.<sup>15</sup> It is as if he were to say: ‘According to Scripture it is necessary that the stone (about which Paul [said] that the Rock was Christ)<sup>16</sup> be rejected, and thereafter it will be the cornerstone joining both walls—[that of] the Jews and [that of] the Gentiles. Note that the Teacher clarifies the Scriptures, which are about Him.

[9] And [Jesus] adds: “Therefore, I say to you that the Kingdom shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruit

thereof.”<sup>17</sup> For as Matthew and Luke report, [Christ] added that “everyone who falls upon this stone shall be broken, but on whom it falls, it will grind him to powder.”<sup>18</sup> It is as if He were to say: ‘Christ the Judge will bring those evil men to an evil end; and from them the Kingdom shall be taken because the Stone was rejected. It cannot be crushed. Rather, the more it is despised, the more it is exalted.’ Therefore, all who will endeavor to kill the son and steal the inheritance of the father shall perish, just as do a potter’s vessels that either fall on a stone or on which a stone falls; for howsoever this happens, the vessels (not the stone) will be broken, shattered, demolished, and ground to powder. For when justice is condemned, it condemns; and when it is provoked, it demolishes. Christ is Justice. Therefore, the Kingdom of Christ, who is Justice, is incorruptible and eternal. The Vineyard, or Kingdom of Christ, who is the King of Justice,<sup>19</sup> is given to the Gentile[s]. The Vineyard will bear the fruit of its Kingdom, namely, [the fruit] of justice. For *where* the true justice of Christ reigns, *there* immortality and incorruptibility reign.

[10] Let the foregoing [thoughts] suffice for our beginning, in order that we may know that if we (who are not the Lord’s vineyards but are His husbandmen, who by an assured agreement have received the rental with regard to fruit that is to be paid for by a tax or with a periodic payment) do not pay and humble ourselves [and] admonish ourselves [but] even cast out the Word of God and, as much as we can, crucify [Him] anew: then we shall be cast out by Him whom we have cast out. And we shall be ruined and deprived of the honor of the royal priesthood. And we shall be broken and ground to powder.

## NOTES TO *Homo Erat Pater Familias*

\* Sermon CCXCI.

1. Matthew 21:33.
2. This sermon was preached at St. John Lateran in Rome. In speaking of 'us', Nicholas is using the magisterial 'we', referring to himself alone.
3. Matthew 21:33-46.
4. Regarding "God of Sabaoth" see Jeremias (Jeremiah) 11:20. Romans 9:29. Isaias (Isaiah) 1:9.
5. Hebrews 1:2.
6. Psalms 93:9 (94:9).
7. Psalms 83:8.
8. Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* (PL 15:1890D), re Luke 20:9. (See the 1887 Paris edition of *PL*.) Or see *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, Vol. XIV, p. 339, lines 210-213.
9. John 10:12-13.
10. Luke 13:34.
11. Mark also mentions *three* times. Cf. Mark 12:1-9 with Luke 20:9-19.
12. Hebrews 13:12.
13. Matthew 21:41.
14. Luke 20:16.
15. Matthew 21:42. Luke 20:17. Psalms 117:22 (118:22).
16. I Corinthians 10:4.
17. Matthew 21:43.
18. Luke 20:18. See also Matthew 21:44.
19. Cf. Hebrews 7:2.



**Iam autem Die Festo Mediante** \*<sup>1</sup>

(“Now, about the Middle of the Feast, . . . .”) <sup>2</sup>

[March 6, 1459; preached in Rome]

[1] Just as recently<sup>3</sup> when we held an assembly you heard the command given to me about making visitations, so now I am present and will begin [my visitation]<sup>4</sup> with [some] prefacing remarks. Yet, nothing more effective can be taken [as a text] than can the Gospel—which was written for our learning.<sup>5</sup> [Today] in the office of the mass we read, from John 7, the Gospel-passage which goes as follows: “*Now, about the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught.*”<sup>6</sup> [2] We [ourselves] are taught that in the midst of the feast-day we are to go up into the temple, surely a place of contemplation and of prayer. Therefore, feast-days are reminders that urge [us] to go up to the temple. And since very many people came together at that time, Jesus taught [them]. Note that Jesus teaches the word of God. And although [in the Gospel-passage] He does not indicate whom He taught, nonetheless it is sufficiently understood that He taught those who were going up into the temple—i.e., those who with an eagerness to approach unto things divine sought out the place dedicated to God. These are they who are teachable by God and who are eager to receive divine and heavenly teachings, which no one was better able to convey than was the Heavenly Teacher who is above all others. Jesus *taught*. What except salvation was He who is Jesus, or Savior,<sup>7</sup> able to teach? What except meekness [was He] who is meek, [able to teach]?<sup>8</sup> What except deep humility, He who is humble in heart?<sup>9</sup> What except an understanding of all the Scriptures, He who is Truth?<sup>10</sup> What except life, He who is Resurrection and Life?<sup>11</sup>

[3] “*And the Jews wondered, saying: ‘How does this man know letters, when He has never learned?’*”<sup>12</sup> Surely it was wondrous and unheard-of that someone knew writings who had not learned letters. Here you have a text [that attests] that Christ naturally knew all the things that other men scarcely at all attain with [much] study. Christ was able to be known in and through this alone: viz., in and through the excellence of all men. For everything that all men who thrive mentally *can* know, Christ *was* actually. Men can know languages, and one man [knows] more of them than does another man; but Christ is the Living Word of God.<sup>13</sup> Men can be learned; Christ is Living Wisdom.<sup>14</sup> Men can live by rational life; Christ is Rational Life

itself.<sup>15</sup> Men can put on immortal life; Christ is Immortal Life.<sup>16</sup> Men can put on incorruption; Christ is Incorruption.<sup>17</sup> Men can arise from the dead; Christ is Resurrection.<sup>18</sup> The case is similar regarding every perfection acquirable by man, since, as is true, Christ is *actually* every perfection.<sup>19</sup> And you know that no one is so perfect that he could not be more perfect. And so, since the perfection of all men admits of more and less, it is not proportional to the perfection of Christ. For Christ's perfection is very lofty; no perfection can be greater or higher than it. Now, the maximum, than which there cannot be a greater, is in an actual way all things. For in its maximality it enfolds in an actual way whatever things can admit of more and less.<sup>20</sup> Hence, all possibility of perfection is derived from, and perfected from, that maximality and fullness.

[4] Moreover, consider the following: viz., that we have a con-created capability for perfection, in accordance with which we can dispose ourselves to be more perfect. Yet, we cannot bring ourselves from potency to actuality. For nothing that is in potency can bring itself into actuality, since potency is actualized by means of the actual. For example, that which is potentially hot is brought into actuality by that which is actually hot. In particular, by fire, which is actually hot, that which is capable of being made hot becomes actually hot. Now, the zenith of a student's perfection is that he be like his teacher. The zenith [of perfection] of the intellectual nature is that it be conformed to the Divine Word and Divine Intellect. Therefore, no teacher whatsoever except the Word of God can conduct our intellectual nature unto its own highest perfection. Therefore, no man can be happy except him who is Christ-like. No spirit [can be] happy unless it is conformed to the Spirit of Christ.

[5] Note that the text states that the Jews asked: "*How is it that He knows letters, when he has never learned?*"<sup>21</sup> Therefore, skill at letters is both from art and by nature. For if the art [of reading and writing] is absent, [letters] are not known; and if intelligence is absent, [letters] are not learned. Hence, in Christ—who is the Word<sup>22</sup> and who is the Omnipotent Art through which God made the world<sup>23</sup>—art and nature are seen to coincide. Hence, [Christ] knew all things because [in Him] art accorded with intelligence; He is Art itself and is the Understanding of all things knowable. The Jews would not have been amazed if they had believed that Christ was the Living Word of all formable words. By way of analogy: if someone were to conceive of a

certain piece of writing as alive with an intellectual life, he would not be amazed if the writing understood itself without a teacher, since he would notice that the writing's being was a living intellectual word.

[6] “*Jesus answered them and said: ‘My doctrine is not mine but is His who sent me.’*”<sup>24</sup> [It is] as if He were to have said: “You wonder from where I know letters and have a learning that can be had only from one who [already] has it and passes it along. But what if I have been sent to you? In that case, my doctrine would not be mine but would be the sender’s.” And note that Christ said to the Apostles, “It is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, just as someone omniscient who is sent by him of whom he speaks does not need study in order to acquire an art—and, thus, he speaks on his own, [apart from having learned]— so [Christ] dissolved wonder. [It is] as if He were to have said: “God, who sends me, speaks through me, His Emissary.” God, the Creator, who is Spirit, speaks through Understanding, or Wisdom.<sup>26</sup> Christ is said to be the Right Hand of the Father.<sup>27</sup> For just as the hand is the organ through which a man does all his works, so the intellect is related to the soul, because [the intellect] is like [the soul’s] hand. For [the soul] does all its works by means of the intellect. Analogously, God [works all things] through His Wisdom, which is Christ.<sup>28</sup>

[7] And note that [Christ] says: “*My doctrine is not mine.*” [It is] as if He were to say: “My [doctrine] is mine in such a way that it is not mine, because I have been sent.” Similarly, the sending is of Himself<sup>29</sup> in such a way that it is not of Himself, since [the sending] is done not by Himself but by the Sender. Therefore, Christ wanted to show that He was sent by God, whom the Jews did not doubt to know all things. As the Jews were claiming, no one, apart from any studying on his own part, knows so much that he would be able to teach. And this [truth] has its sole exception in the case of an envoy, who teaches not his own doctrine but the doctrine of the sender, who speaks through the envoy. If so, then, [says Christ], I must have been sent and my doctrine must be the doctrine of the Sender. Similarly, the doctrine of the Son *is* His own and *is not* His own but is the Father’s. For insofar as He is the Son, all that He has is of His Father. This fact is understood if the Son is conceived to be the Sonship. Assuredly, this revelation of the divinity is great—viz., [the revelation] that the begottenness by which God the Father begets the Son must be conceived as the Supreme Power’s sending Himself. For in that case the Sender sends from His whole essence and

nature Him who is sent. And so, [the one sent] is called the Son because He has the rational being, and the co-essential being, of the Sender.

[8] Next, Christ shows that the Sender is God. And he shows this fact not in any other way than on the basis of experience, which is a teacher of things. And He says: “*If anyone wills to do His will, [i.e., the Father’s will], he knows, on the basis of the doctrine [itself], whether it be from God or whether I speak [it] of myself.*”<sup>30</sup> Note both of these points. The Word very simply and very clearly indicates the fact that He is the Word of God. He says: ‘If anyone [wills] to do the will of Him who sent me, and if he purposes to do so in every respect, then (with this fact presupposed) when he takes up the aforesaid doctrine, he knows concerning the doctrine whether it is from God. For the doctrine is of such great efficacy that within it is contained a light that is manifested to him who receives the doctrine. Therefore, he will know whether [the doctrine] is from God or whether I speak [it] of myself as a private individual and not as one sent from God.’ For the Jews, who had already received God’s precepts that were revealed to them by Moses, who was sent by God, were readily able to understand whether [or not] Christ’s doctrine was from God, since Christ came [in order] to fulfill the Law.<sup>31</sup>

[9] Moreover, [Christ] adds how it is that this [distinguishing of doctrines] will be done: ‘*He who speaks of himself seeks his own glory. He who seeks his own interests speaks unto his own advantage and makes himself the goal of his teaching. But he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is truthful, and there is no injustice in him.*’<sup>32</sup> Now, since [Christ’s] every teaching was only unto the glory and manifestation of God the Father and was the perfection of the teaching of Moses and of the prophets, [Christ] could be adjudged only as a true and just emissary. For a legate who gives all honor to his sender, and who sticks to his commission, is truthful and just. For even if the command of the sender were unjust, there would be no injustice in the legate, since he would not be arrogating anything to himself and would in no respect fail in doing his duty. All of the foregoing pertains to the fact that the Father, who sent Jesus, gave Him the commission to save by showing at all times works of mercy, even on the day of the Sabbath. And Christ, in curing a man on the Sabbath, wanted to show that He was not a violator of the Sabbath, because God commissioned [Him to act] in that way.

[10] There follows [in the Scriptural text]: “*Did not Moses give*

*you the Law, and [yet] none of you keep the Law?*"<sup>33</sup>—as is corroborated below. There follows: "*Why do you seek to kill me—on the grounds, namely, that I have not kept the law concerning the Sabbath?*" (For [in the Law of Moses] it was commanded that such a transgressor be stoned.) Now, Christ, who willed to die, first took care to remove all occasions [for dying. He did so] in order [later] to show that He willingly, but unjustly, died [i.e., was put to death] for the salvation of all men. "*The multitude answered and said: 'You have a devil. Who seeks to kill You?'*"<sup>34</sup>—as if [Christ] worked miracles not by means of a human art or by means of a divine art but rather by means of a thousand contrivances of a lying devil and as if, nonetheless, it were not the case that [the Jews] were for this reason seeking to kill Him. They denied this [intent] because of a fear of the people, on account of whom they did not at that time dare to admit that they sought His death.

[11] Jesus answered and said to them: "*I have done one work, and you all marvel.*"<sup>35</sup> He is speaking of the man whom He cured on the Sabbath at the pond [called] Probatia—about which [one reads] earlier, in Chapter 5.<sup>36</sup> "*Therefore, Moses gave you circumcision (not because it is from Moses [himself] but [because it is] from the fathers); and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man.*"<sup>37</sup> Originally, circumcision arose from the fathers, or patriarchs; later it was given by Moses, who also gave the law of the Sabbath. But the law of the Sabbath did not preclude [the law of] circumcision, which was commanded to be done on the eighth day of birth, which was possible to be the Sabbath. [12] "*If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath in order that the Law of Moses not be broken, are you angry at me, who have healed the whole man on the Sabbath?*"<sup>38</sup> God's law, as well as the law of nature (which preceded circumcision [and] which commands that we do to another what we would want done unto us), was not broken by the instigators of circumcision but was, instead, confirmed—just as circumcision [was confirmed] by Moses. Therefore, the law of the Sabbath does not infringe upon the law of God that is the eternal law. And no one ought to be angry about the fact that that [eternal] law is obeyed [when one is circumcised on the Sabbath]. Now, in fulfilling the eternal law in regard to healing the whole man on the Sabbath, Christ acted in accordance with the command of Him who sent Him. Therefore, . . . , etc.

[13] Moreover, consider [the following]: Not without very great

mystery is mention here [in the Gospel] made of the law of circumcision, of the law of the Sabbath, and of the healing of the whole man. For circumcision and the Sabbath rest upon covenants and agreements. But the healing of the whole man was mandated not by laws, etc., or by sacred signs of a covenant and of agreements, but by Christ, who alone healed the whole man. And [He did] this on the Sabbath because the Sabbath was instituted so that Christ, the Son of the Sabbath, would on His own day<sup>39</sup> heal the whole man. Note [the expression] “the whole man”: [Jesus healed] not with respect only to the soul or with respect only to the body but with respect to both.

[14] “*Do not judge according to the appearance, but make a just judgment.*”<sup>40</sup> He who looks at what appears and at the surface, or outer-covering, judges according to the appearance. But he makes a just judgment who looks not at the letter but at the intent; for the intent is the Law’s meaning and quiddity. Here [in the passage above] we are taught that Christ revealed inward things and revealed the spirit of the letter; for He was the Message that was hidden in Scripture. Likewise, then, someone who according to the appearance judges that Christ is human, surely does not know Him. Rather, he must turn from [Christ’s] teaching and works unto inner matters in order to see the essence from which this power derives; and in this way he apprehends the deity hidden beneath the humanity. The case is similar, then, concerning the Law’s surface-statements and its hidden life-giving message.

[15] “*But certain ones from Jerusalem said: ‘Is this not He whom the Jews seek to kill? And, lo, He speaks openly, and they say nothing to Him.’*”<sup>41</sup> Note [that] He speaks openly, because [He speaks] with the light of truth, which [the Jews] could not gainsay. “*Have the rulers truly known that this is the Christ?*”<sup>42</sup> Yet, how would they know? For if they knew, they also would not know. For Christ cannot be known. “*But we know this man, whence He is; but when the Christ comes, no one [will] know whence He is.*”<sup>43</sup> In the immediately succeeding chapter Christ answers, saying: “*I know whence I come and whither I go; but you do not know whence I come.*”<sup>44</sup> For although they knew according to the appearance, they nevertheless did not regarding this matter make a just judgment, in accordance with the invisible nature.

[16] “*Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying: ‘You know me and know whence I am’*”<sup>45</sup>—[you know it], that is, in judging according to the flesh,<sup>46</sup> as is [indicated] in the immediate-

ly succeeding chapter. “*And I have not come on my own but I was sent, as I showed earlier on the basis of your admission that I teach but have not learned letters. But one who is sent is not sent from himself and does not come on his own; rather, He who sent me is true; Him you do not know.*”<sup>47</sup> Behold, [Christ] shows that God alone is true and that He, from whom Christ comes originally, is unknown to the Jews. And so, [Christ] infers again that what is known according to the flesh is not opposed to the judgment that He is the Christ. [17] “*I know Him.*”<sup>48</sup> The Son alone knows the Father.<sup>49</sup> “*And if I shall say that I know Him not, I shall be a liar like you.*”<sup>50</sup> Note that the Jews who adhere to the outward letter [of the Law] are liars and that those who are like them are made liars. The father of the lie is the Devil.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, all liars pass over into a likeness of the Devil. One who is true can speak only the truth in and through the true one sent by him, since [the one sent] speaks the words of the sender. “*But I know Him, since I am from Him and since He sent me.*” Note the conclusion that from Him-who-is-true Jesus has, in an essential way, His being and His being sent. Likewise, Paul says that God sent His Son.<sup>52</sup>

[18] “*They sought, therefore, to apprehend Him; but no one laid hands on Him, because His hour had not yet come. But of the people many believed in Him.*”<sup>53</sup> I understand “his hour” to mean the time when the consummation [of His mission] arrived. For Christ was first supposed to show two things: viz., (1) that He who was the Son of man was Son of God and (2) that He was going to undergo a voluntary death for the sake of our salvation. He showed the first thing by His words and by very true works of the kind that no people ascribe to anyone other than to God. He showed, secondly, that, being without sin, He was not justly worthy of condemnation but that [He underwent death] voluntarily on account of obedience<sup>54</sup> that redounded to our salvation. As long as these [two] things were not sufficiently shown, the time for undergoing death had not come.

[19] That He could be believed to be the Son of God had to be shown, because this belief renders certain His teaching and His promises concerning future things that are supernatural. Since these [future] things are such that they are not *seen* to be possible, it was necessary that Christ teach them on the basis of unquestionably reliable<sup>55</sup> authority. Now, no one doubts that God is truthful in His every word, no matter what He is speaking of. Yet, because of false apostles and prophets there can be doubt about whether or not someone is speak-

ing God's words. But He who by His works shows that not only is He a truthful prophet of God but also is the Son with the full power of God the Father—assuredly, He provides a firm foundation for belief in His teaching. [20] To one who reflects, a second thing shows itself to be necessary: [viz.,] that since Christ, as God's Son and Messenger, taught that sonship with God can be obtained for those who are without sin<sup>56</sup> and who willingly obey God even to the point of [undergoing] a most shameful death, then the reward for that death can be only eternal life and a life than which none other is better—as is that life which *understands*<sup>57</sup> that it is alive. For how could it be that God (who is *just* according to the unreserved belief of all men) would as a reward give—to a believer-in-Him who dies for His sake—less than immortal life?

[21] It was necessary that Christ display in regard to Himself the following: viz., (1) that the Son of God is without sin and (2) that He willingly was going to obey the Father even to the point of death on the Cross and (3) that in this way He would obtain a glorious resurrection from the dead and would enter into glory and (4) that every believer would be made a partaker of His death and a partaker of His resurrection. But *that* believer who with consummate desire determines to will to be obedient (conformably to Christ) even to the point of death—[he] has already become a participant in Christ's death, even if it would not happen that he suffer physical martyrdom, as [such martyrdom] is true of St. Martin and of other holy ones who profess [Christ]. And I recall that elsewhere (with Christ teaching [through me]) I said something analogous (1) regarding consummate hatred (on account of which someone is a murderer [in his heart])<sup>58</sup> and (2) regarding consummate concupiscence of heart (on account of which someone is an adulterer).<sup>59</sup>

[22] From the passage in the Gospel of John the Evangelist the foregoing points are clearly manifested, especially to one who is intent on finding them. Let these things—which have been said about the Gospel in the foregoing way very briefly and preliminarily—suffice.



## NOTES TO *Iam autem Die Festo Mediante*

\* Sermon CCXCII.

1. This title is supplied by the editors of the printed edition of the Latin text since the manuscripts have no title. The Paris edition uses the title “Sicut nuper dum”, the first words of the text. In the Paris edition folio CXC is mislabeled as CLXXXVIII.

2. John 7:14.
3. “... recently”: i.e., in February of this same year (1459).
4. Nicholas is making a pastoral visitation to Santa Maria Maior in Rome.
5. Romans 15:4.
6. John 7:14.
7. “Jesus” means *Savior*. Matthew 1:21.
8. Matthew 11:29.
9. Matthew 11:29.
10. John 14:6.
11. John 11:25.
12. John 7:15. “... know letters” : i.e., know how to read and to write and know certain texts and writings.
13. John 1:1.
14. I Corinthians 1:24.
15. Isaias (Isaiah) 1:18 (as applicable to Christ). I Corinthians 2:16.
16. I Timothy 6:16. Here (at 3:16) I am reading “vita” with the Paris edition, in place of “virtus” with mss. *V*<sub>2</sub> and *L*.
17. I Corinthians 15:53.
18. John 11:25.
19. Matthew 5:48 as applicable also to the Son.
20. *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 5 and II, 1 (96).
21. John 7:15.
22. John 1:1.
23. Hebrews 1:2.
24. John 7:16.
25. Matthew 10:20.
26. I Corinthians 1:24.
27. Christ sits at the Right Hand of the Father. Matthew 22:44 and 26:64. From this belief arose the reference to Christ as the Right Hand of the Father.
28. I Corinthians 1:24.
29. “... is of Himself”: i.e., He is the one who is sent.
30. John 7:17.
31. Matthew 5:17.
32. This is a paraphrase of John 7:18.
33. John 7:19.
34. John 7:20.
35. John 7:21.
36. John 5:1-18.
37. John 7:22.

38. John 7:23. The whole man (*totus homo*) is man qua both body and soul.
39. Matthew 12:8. Mark 2:28. Luke 6:5.
40. John 7:24.
41. John 7:25-26.
42. John 7:26.
43. John 7:27.
44. John 8:14.
45. John 7:28.
46. John 8:15.
47. John 7:28.
48. John 7:29.
49. Luke 10:22. John 8:55.
50. John 8:55.
51. John 8:44.
52. Galatians 4:4.
53. John 7:30-31.
54. Philippians 2:8.
55. Regarding Nicholas's use of "*infallibilis*" and its variants and cognates, 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).
56. "... without sin": i.e., without sin because it has been forgiven.
57. Cf. Sermon CCLXXXVII (1-2).
58. I John 3:15.
59. Matthew 5:27-28.

## **Sermo Montis Oliveti\***

(Sermon at Monte Oliveto)<sup>1</sup>

[June 5, 1463; preached at the Abbey of Monte Oliveto]

### PROLOGUE

[1] In order that there be rightly fulfilled that which is said in the Psalms ([namely,] “My words shall not pass away”)<sup>2</sup> for the usefulness of our religion —so that those well-instructed ones who want to enter our religion may obtain an increase of wisdom and understanding and, as a result, an increase of fervor and devotion—it seemed to me good and useful to record in a book the things written below. [It seemed useful to do so] lest men’s weak memory experience a failure because of the following: if one were to perceive such an admonition only orally.

Here ends the Prologue. Here begins the sermon of the most reverend lord, Lord Cardinal Nicholas—[a sermon] held at the Monastery of Monte Oliveto for a certain novice before [the Cardinal] invested him.

### SERMON

[2] Therefore, let it be known to all that the most reverend father and lord in Christ, Lord Nicholas, Cardinal (by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See) of the Holy Roman church [and] most worthy of the title of St. Peter in Chains—came to this our Monastery of Monte Oliveto on the third day of July, 1463. He was received with great devoutness by the Father General and by all the other monks residing here. And he traveled with two bishops (and their entire entourage) attending him very praiseworthy until he was in this Monastery. For they presented themselves humbly, devoutly, honorably, and modestly (as if they were monks) by standing during the divine offices and being silent, so that all the monks marveled. And [they amazed the monks] by fasting on those days—on which days four times [for fasting] occurred. And the most reverend Lord Cardinal celebrated [mass] every day, even when he arrived and when he departed from us.

[3] Hence, on the [feast-]day of the Most Holy Trinity, which at that time occurred on the fifth day of July, 1463, he assented (because of his revered gentleness and humility) to the importunings of the monks that he should celebrate high mass. And after he had sat down—being already clothed in vestments befitting such a solemn occasion—in front of the main altar in the seat prepared for him for

this purpose, he began to deliver his sermon in the following manner: “What does this young man who has kneeled before us<sup>3</sup> seek?” And a monk to whom it was assigned answered: “Most reverend Lord, this is a student who comes from Bononia and who strongly desires to become a monk. Hence, he beseeches Your most reverend Lordship to deign to give him the habit of novices.” And the Lord Cardinal asked: “What say you, my Son?” And the young man answered: “My Lord, I ask, I beseech, and I beg to be invested with the holy habit of the novices of Monte Oliveto, although I am not worthy [of it]. But I hope that by the grace of God and by the supporting prayers of these fathers I will act in such a way that I may be made worthy.”

[4] The Lord Cardinal replied to him: “I am exceedingly amazed at, and more than I am indicating I admire, the fact that you are asking such things, if you know and understand what you are asking. And if you do not know or do not understand, I am also amazed that you are asking about things you do not know. And because we<sup>4</sup> are ignorant with what state of mind you are asking—whether [or not] you are led by a good spirit (which is evident only to God, who is the Searcher of hearts,<sup>5</sup> as [is said] in the chapter *Novit* of the Judgments)—but because I think that as unknowing you are asking what you are asking (for if you did know, you presumably would not be asking), and because it is necessary that you not be ignorant of this [information]: I want to iterate, explain, and disclose to you what your request implies. And when you understand your request, perhaps you will stop [having] such a desire or will not ask so boldly and fervently. [5] Therefore, listen closely and understand well what your request implies. And afterwards, when you have understood, you will tell me whether you [still] wish to obtain what you asked for. For you have asked, if I rightly understood, that there be given to you the habit of the novice monks of Monte Oliveto because you have contemplated becoming a monk—a monk of Monte Oliveto. So it is necessary that you know before all things, if you wish to become a monk, what the name ‘monk’ entails, so that you can be eager to become that which you will be called and that which you are named. [It is necessary that you *know*,] so that you do not make use of a false name, lest you be a hypocrite and have only the name of holiness but are not holy. Indeed, it is better to be a monk (or someone holy) in reality and not to be called, or named, [a monk] than to be called and named [a monk] but not to be [a monk] in reality and in truth.

[6] “Why, then, do you seek such a habit, since from it you are not made better or holier, because ‘a habit does not make a monk’? Rather, one’s prized and praiseworthy life and behavior do—as [is stated] in the Chapter *Porrectum* regarding those who are in religious orders. And you know that from the habit, if you assume it, no small burden will befall you, because it is necessary that each person strive to be that which he is said to be and is called. And [it is necessary] that he do what the meaning of his name conveys. For each person will be judged in accordance with his name, i.e., the name of his office. For the pope (who is called the ‘Father of fathers’) and the bishop (i.e., ‘one existing above others’) and the presbyter (i.e., ‘one showing the way to others’) and the Christian ([named] from ‘Christ’) and—in concluding quickly—likewise about other [offices and their names]: all persons ought to imitate what is signified by their name and to imitate the designation of their office and ought to carry out [the office’s] meaning and to have from the office an earnest desire of making improvement in their deeds. [Such would be] in accordance with the text of Cicero, who says in Book One of his *De Officiis*: ‘Every system of thought that is engaged-in regarding any matter ought to set out from a rational conception and a definition.’<sup>6</sup> [7] That very Christian Emperor Justinian imitated Cicero’s practice. When he wanted to deal with *justice* and *the right* in the Book of his *Institutes*, he stated at the outset what the right is. And, likewise, a lawyer who was going to write about testaments in the law, showed at the beginning what a testament is. Stimulated by their examples, we who are going to deal with the monastic life want to state at the outset what a monk is.

[8] “Moreover, I say to you, my Son—you who wish to become a monk: You ought to know what a monk is. As is contained in [Causa] XVI, Question 1, Chapter 8 [of the *Decretals*]:<sup>7</sup> the word ‘*monachus*’ [i.e., ‘monk’] is derived from ‘*monos*’, which means *alone*, and ‘*chus*’. And so, a monk is supposed to be alone so that he can better devote himself to God and can better pray to God. And he ought to remain in solitude in order that he may be more unrestrictedly and more quietly focused on contemplation of Heavenly things and may be in the company of the angels and may be devoted to the divine office. [9] From the *Lives of the Fathers*<sup>8</sup> we know what those holy fathers and ancient monks did. And we know about our glorious Father Benedict, who remained alone and remained separated from the commotions of human beings and who did as is written in the Book of the Prophet Jeremias: ‘He shall sit solitary and hold his peace and will raise him-

self above himself.’<sup>9</sup> For the Lord God comes more quickly and more willingly to a mind and to a soul which is at rest [and] separated from the tumult, according to the word of the Prophet Osee in Chapter 2: ‘I shall lead her unto solitude, and I shall speak to her heart.’<sup>10</sup> And many other [texts] could be adduced and indicated with regard to this topic. We have these [texts] in the Old Testament and in the New Testament; and [we know] conclusively that a monk ought to be solitary and ought to be sorrowful, because (as is stated in the aforesaid chapter *Monachus*, Question 1)<sup>11</sup> he was given the office of lamenting.

[10] “Now, a monk ought to lament principally for three reasons, although there are many others. First, he ought to lament over his sins—past ones, present ones, and daily ones, and unavoidable ones (for we all offend in many ways)<sup>12</sup>—in order that they be remitted, in accordance with the text: ‘Every night I will wash my bed, I will water my couch, with my tears’ (Psalms 6).<sup>13</sup> Secondly, not only a monk but all true Christians ought to lament in accordance with the text in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 5: ‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.’<sup>14</sup> For those who mourn at present and do penance shall rejoice in the future and shall be gladdened in Heavenly happiness. Thirdly, a monk ought to lament because of the great love [*caritas et amor*]<sup>15</sup> which he ought to have toward his Creator [and] which, in the present valley of tears and in this exile, he is lacking because of the fall of our first parent.

[11] “And so, a sorrowful monk—indeed, each truly believing soul—ought to say with the Psalmist: ‘My tears have been my bread day and night, while it is said to me daily, “Where is your God?”’<sup>16</sup> And elsewhere [the Psalmist] says: ‘My soul refused to be comforted,’<sup>17</sup> i.e., [comforted] from the consolation of the world. And afterwards [the Psalmist] added: ‘I remembered God and was delighted’<sup>18</sup> (Psalms 76). Therefore, a monk ought to be sorrowful as regards the world and earthly things, which he has despised and vomited forth. And so, he ought not to seek joy from these [earthly] things; rather, let his spirit rejoice in God his Savior.<sup>19</sup> [12] But be it that you do so [rejoice]: it will not suffice you. For you asked not simply for the habit of a monk but you also added: ‘of Monte Oliveto’. But because you wish, and keenly desire, to become a monk of Monte Oliveto, I imagine that you understand why this Monte Oliveto is needful [for you].

[13] “Pay close attention. We read in the Gospels—Matthew 26 and Mark 14—that the place to which the Lord Jesus was accustomed

to go for praying is called a farm, and a country place, [named] Gethsemani.<sup>20</sup> But Luke the Gospel-writer in his Gospel, Chapter 22, calls the aforesaid place the Mount of Olives.<sup>21</sup> But John in his Gospel calls this place of the Mount of Olivet a *garden*, as is stated in Chapter 18 of this same Gospel.<sup>22</sup> And, thus, we have three names for this Mount of Olivet. I consider, too, that it is called Mount of Olivet and not Mounts of Olivet. Although there are three peaks that are grouped, nonetheless [the grouping] is said to be one [mount] and not more than one. And although there are three [different] names, there is nevertheless a single reality and single essence and single substance.”

[14] Thereupon the most reverend Lord Cardinal turned his face toward the Abbot General and the other monks who were seated and standing, and he said: “O Fathers and O my Brothers, consider that today is the glorious solemn feast-day of the most Holy Trinity, about which Trinity we say that there is one Divinity, one Majesty, one Essence, although there are three Persons: Father, Word, and Holy Spirit. And if we were not prevented by the shortness of time, I would most gladly say to you something about so great a solemn feast-day— [something] to its praise and for your consolation. For this is the best [illustrative] material for such an understanding [i.e., an understanding of the Trinity]. [15] But since we are going to celebrate the solemn components of masses and are going to hold a procession because of the threatening war of the Italians, let us return at present (with such material [about the Trinity] left aside) to our undertaking, and let us see what this ‘Monte Oliveto’ signifies. It means, in truth, ‘rich and valuable mount,’ on which God is well-pleased to dwell. And although this mount has three names, nevertheless it is one thing. Accordingly, there is no need now to be concerned with this [topic], given that it is contained in the Chapter *Non Omittit* on the meaning of words.<sup>23</sup>

[16] “I [will] say [something] about this [monastery] Monte Oliveto. I [will] consider its three mounds. But only one [of them] has a cross; the others do not. Two [of them] have an olive tree on the right and on the left. This is what it seems to me that I saw (if I was able to descry correctly) at the entrance of this place (as one looks upwards toward the prominence of the cross) and within the monastery. In the monastery I also saw a banner of the holy cross erected on the trine and one mound with green olive leaves placed nearby. And these all signify, indicate, and convey something. But first I [will] say that in this [grouping] I recognize that these our fathers, our former teachers, and

the founders of this holy religion were holy men, full of the Holy Spirit and possessed of great prudence and endowed by God, and illuminated, with great intelligence, since they knew such deep mysteries.

[17] “But with all these [topics] set aside, let us speak about the holy cross that is erected on the mount. Most dearly beloved Son: if you wish to be a son of Monte Oliveto, then you must assume this [cross] in order to act in accordance with the text: ‘He who wishes to come after me, let [him] take up his cross and follow me.’<sup>24</sup> So says the Lord of Monte Oliveto in Chapter 9 of Luke. Therefore, since you are a young man, do you not fear to carry the cross and, as it were, to die? Indeed, it will be necessary both to die to the world and to live unto God by being born again. For no one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless he be born again<sup>25</sup>—according to the text of John 3 regarding Nicodemus. And elsewhere [we read]: ‘Unless a grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it does not bring forth fruit’<sup>26</sup> (John, Chapter 12). And so, you ought to put to death your soul, if you love it, by denying yourself<sup>27</sup> and by carrying your cross. [18] If you wish to be in Monte Oliveto, you should first become a good olive tree, which, standing near the cross, has leaves that are always green and that never fall off it even in the wintertime. Thus, it is necessary that you be a good olive tree, although you were [once] a wild olive tree. But according to the view of Blessed Ambrose regarding Luke 19 (where [Luke] deals with Zachaeus):<sup>28</sup> you should now be grafted into a good olive tree. And if hitherto you were a fruitless tree and were fit [only] for being the food of brute animals, be now transformed and ingrafted, so that you may bear the fruit of an olive tree, with a richness of devoutness, by always having a greenness of unfailing fervor. And in this way you will be a tree worthy to be placed in Monte Oliveto.

[19] “And so that you may always be green and alive with the fervor of devoutness, you ought to consider how our Lord Jesus Christ so persevered (on this Mount of Olivet with the fervor of devoutness [and] with the richness of prayer) that when the time of His suffering according to the humanity of His flesh came upon Him [and] He was situated in agony because of His anticipation of the extremely harsh death that He had to suffer: He continued in prayer and continued with a good will for always fulfilling the will of the Father. And He endured bloodlike sweat; [and] when he was so greatly distressed, he never failed or fled, but, rather, He offered Himself to them head on, saying: ‘Whom do you seek?’<sup>29</sup> as you know from Chapter 18 of John.



[20] “So too ought you to be prepared and disposed always to do the will of the Father who is in Heaven—even if He were to will to crucify you.<sup>30</sup> For if it was necessary that Christ suffer,<sup>31</sup> then much more is it necessary that we by means of many tribulations and difficulties enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, as is stated in Chapter 14 of Acts.<sup>32</sup> Suppose, then, that seeing and considering these [monastic] fathers and brothers to be well-clothed and to be well-provided-for from the yields of [the monastery’s] possessions, as if without hard work, you were to say in your heart the following: ‘Lo, I too will do likewise and will spend my life with them and with them will cease from labor.’ [In that case,] you would err, my Son, very greatly and would be misled and exceedingly deceived in thinking such things. For the Wise Man says in Chapter 2: ‘Son, when you approach the service of God, prepare your soul for temptation.’<sup>33</sup> Note that he said ‘for temptation’ and not ‘for rest’. And we cannot express in few [words] how many torments all the saints have suffered in order to arrive untroubled at a martyr’s prize. But there is a mistake on our part. For in a sermon Blessed Augustine says of martyrs: ‘We want to rejoice with the saints, but we do not want to undergo with them the tribulations of the world.’<sup>34</sup>

[21] “And so, my Son, see now whether you wholeheartedly wish to go ahead with your request and to pursue your desire now that you have understood—at least in some measure—what your request entails. For there are still many things to be said, but let the foregoing things suffice for now. Tell me, then, what you are thinking and whether you wish to reflect still more [on this matter]. For perhaps, since you are young, you have not well considered [the matter]. For if you were not to have the virtues of which I spoke but were to have only the name of virtue and holiness, you would not later obtain the reward and the crown which are given to good monks. I have said nothing about this reward and about the ineffable glory of the saints because I presume—after seeing you so lively and fervent and devout with respect to such burdens that are to be undertaken—that you are well informed and well instructed [in this regard], as can be gleaned from your words.

[22] “Nevertheless, I am not certain what you are thinking as a result of what I have said to you. Perhaps you might say to me:

Lord, I have understood sufficiently the things that you have said, and I know and acknowledge that at present I do not have such virtues and cannot obtain in an instant my being someone having mastery over such virtues and over the referents of such

names—the names “monk of Monte Oliveto”. But I hope to act like the one who takes up the study of divine and mundane writings orcccccccccccs who professes [a knowledge of] other [e.g.,] mechanical) arts. He does not suddenly (*subito et repente*) obtain perfection of study and of knowledge [thereof] or knowledge of another art which he is learning. Rather, he makes progress little by little and from day to day. Similarly, I too intend to advance from virtue to virtue after this beginning and after the assumption of the holy habit. [And I intend] to attack my studies with all my powers and with the enormous effort of a new man, who has overcome all [obstacles]. [And I intend] to slug away day and night as best I can, until with God’s help I obtain, in timely fashion, the aforesaid virtues and others that will be necessary for the status of a monk.

[23] “And I will answer you, O most beloved Son, that this [intent of yours] pleases me exceedingly. And I praise your determination and greatly commend your requesting [to become a monk]. But hear still a few things that remain [to be said]. If you wish to ascend to the very top of Monte Oliveto, then you must do as our Lord Jesus Christ did. When he wanted to go to the top of the Mount of Olivet, he took with Himself Peter, James, and John. He did not go alone, but He did pray alone—separated from them at a short distance. And they, remaining without Him, very soon fell asleep. Hence, He later aroused them, saying: ‘Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak,’<sup>35</sup> as is contained in Chapter 26 of Matthew.

[24] “And so, since you have to ascend the Mount of Olivet, see to it that you have with you the aforementioned Apostles Peter, James, and John; and do not in any way ascend this Mount without them. I say: First have Peter, who is chief among all the Apostles [and] who symbolizes obedience. And you ought to be obedient and ought always in all respects to comply with those things which your holy rule dictates, so that you never carelessly neglect anything. Yea, rather, I say to you the more strongly that if you do some good work that is contained in the rule of Saint Augustine or St. Francis but is against the rule of St. Benedict, then you would be acting badly even though that work in and of itself would be good; and you would not be obedient. And so, you would not have Peter with you.

[25] “And so, strive always to observe your holy rule, namely, that of Blessed Benedict. And [do so] especially because [this rule] is especially praiseworthy and is approved and is foremost in the Church

of God. And this rule pleases me very greatly; and from the testimony of Blessed Pope Gregory in his second book of *Dialogues*<sup>36</sup> [this rule] appears to be quite commendable. Therefore, O Son, strive to observe it rightly. You will do this best if you do what the Psalmist says, namely: ‘I have become to you as a beast of burden.’<sup>37</sup> For when a load is placed on it, the beast remains quiet, does not speak, does not judge that hay or straw, wood or stones, is placed on it but patiently bears [the load]. [The beast] does not complain or murmur about the size or the type of the load, even if [the load] be immoderate; but [the beast] patiently carries [the load] as best it can and as long as its strength lasts. And you, similarly: always obey your superiors because the obedience that is imposed by them is imposed by God. (For God says: ‘He who hears you hears me,’<sup>38</sup> as is contained in Chapter 10 of Luke. [26] And, therefore, never resist these [superiors] unless something is imposed upon you to be done that is expressly against the faith or against God or God’s precepts. However, this [circumstance] is not to be expected, because these prelates are duty-bound to render the rationale for the obedience which they impose. But you, because of the reason that had to be rendered, will be free [of fault] as regards works that you shall do out of obedience. And so, always obey willingly, calmly, and without delay. And know that because of someone else you will be deprived of your own will, and you will not be permitted to be either willing or unwilling—as is stated in the next to the last chapter and in the last chapter of *De Sepulturis*.<sup>39</sup> And let it suffice to have set forth these [remarks] about Peter, i.e., about obedience.

[27] “And together with Peter, as I said, it is necessary that you have James. This James<sup>40</sup> symbolizes a supplanter, by which is understood *holy poverty* and *voluntary contempt for the riches of the world*. By these [two] things the world and everything in it are trod under foot. And in this way the poor supplant the rich, i.e., [supplant] those who desire to become rich. But even in this world the voluntary poor are happier and more glad than are the rich. For the rich are always in distress because of the riches to be gained or because of the gained riches that are to be safe-guarded. But the poor are mentally at ease as ‘having nothing and possessing all things,’<sup>41</sup> as says the Apostle in II Corinthians 6.

[28] “Likewise, it is necessary that together with Peter and James you have John, because it is necessary that together with obedience and poverty you have chastity, which is symbolized by John, who was

a virgin. Without doubt, you will have to preserve this chastity not just for a time but continuously and even until death. For now you will be made the temple of God; and the Apostle says (in I Corinthians 6): ‘He who violates the temple of God, him will God destroy.’<sup>42</sup>

[29] “Moreover, you know that these three vows—of obedience, of poverty, and of chastity—are so connected to one another that even the pope, who can manage all things, does not have the power of disposing over them. For he can give a dispensation that one not be a monk and that he return to the world; but he cannot dispose that someone be a monk without obedience, poverty, and chastity—as is stated about the status of monks in the Chapter *Cum ad Monasterium*.<sup>43</sup> [30] And so, if any of the aforementioned virtues which you will take with you are ever assailed and you suffer hardship, do not be surprised and do not fear but think and remember that the aforementioned Disciples Peter, James, and John fell asleep when God withdrew from them. And this [occurred] because, without doubt, neither they nor any others can do anything without the Lord. So, then, when the Lord returned to them He gave them a suitable and necessary remedy, saying ‘Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.’ Therefore, my Son, do according to the counsel of the Lord: pray that you not enter into temptation. And pray earnestly that the Lord grant you the grace to obtain, and to accomplish, that which you strongly desire to; for without Him we can do nothing at all, nor are we sufficient of ourselves so as of ourselves to think the good; rather, our sufficiency is from God<sup>44</sup>—as the Apostle says in II Corinthians 6.

[31] “But note, my Son, that you must pray that, among other things, God grant you the grace of persevering. For as Gregory says: ‘Perseverance is the strength of a good work.’<sup>45</sup> And, therefore, the Lord commanded, as is read in Leviticus 3, that the rump be placed in the sacrifice.<sup>46</sup> Otherwise, your work would not be accepted by God. For a good beginning [and] a good middle are of little value if a good end does not follow. And so, the glorious teacher Ambrose says in his sermon regarding pontiffs: ‘Praise the happiness of the sailor, but [do so] when he arrives at the port. Praise the strength of the leader, but [do so] when he has been led to victory.’<sup>47</sup> [32] Hence, my Son, if you intend to fulfill the aforesaid [obligations], I also will fulfill your desire and will give you the holy habit. But if you do not have such an intent, do not put your hand to the plow,<sup>48</sup> because if later you were to look back, you would not be fit for the Kingdom of God (as [is read] in the

Chapter *De Voto*),<sup>49</sup> since it is better not to know the way of the Lord than after it is known to go back (as [is read] in the Chapter *Dilectus* about apostates).<sup>50</sup>

[33] “Lastly, I say to you that, supposing that you have good intent and a good will for living holily and devoutly with these fathers in this holy place—with prayers, fastings, disciplines, divine offices, and with all holiness—nevertheless, your goal ought not to be affixed here but you ought to do all of the aforesaid things to the end of pleasing God. [And your goal ought to be that] of obtaining God’s grace and of coming into that glory and ineffable happiness for the sake of all of which not only is the severity-of-penance of these fathers to be accepted, but also martyrdom and all torments are to be counted as nothing because the very brief sufferings of this present time are not worthy of comparison with the perpetual and eternal future glory—as the Apostle<sup>51</sup> says [in his Epistle] to the Romans, Chapter 8. [34] And you are wondering about the fact that I said to you nothing about that glory and that Heavenly happiness. [I said nothing] because time does not suffice for speaking of so many and such great things [and] because I fully believe that you are well informed about this (as I said earlier) and especially because I was told to speak to you only about the difficult and harsh [ways] through which one comes to God. You, then, my Son, answer now. What do you say? Do you wish to think further about this matter? Tell me what you are thinking as regards these things which I have said to you. Speak bluntly; have no fear.”

[35] Thereupon, the young man, who was genuflected before him, answered with a cheerful countenance and a devout mien [and] with seriousness and complete modesty: “Most reverend Lord, I have thought about this matter for nearly a year and have deliberated now at length for six months. And having considered the things to be considered, I have determined, and confirmed, my intention; and I have decided that Divine inspiration commands my accomplishing [this goal]—[commands it] to such an extent that if the Supreme Pontiff wanted to promote me to the bishopric or the cardinalate in case I would be willing to turn aside from my present purpose, I would neither on account of this [offer] nor on account of [any] other appealing circumstance of the world desist [from my present intent]. And even if it were said to me: ‘If you do not set aside this choice [of yours], your head will be amputated,’ I would quickly extend my neck and say: ‘I do not fear to die for God’s sake.’ Thus, by the grace of God I am

established in my good intent to serve God.”

[36] Thereupon, the Lord Cardinal turned to the Lord Abbot and said: “I—by your commissioning, authority, and license, and in your name—will give to him the holy habit of the novices of your order.” And immediately the young man took off his secular garments and devoutly received the holy habit from the hand of the most reverend Lord Cardinal. After handing over the habit with tears because of [the young man’s] devoutness of very great fervor: he kissed the young man and said: “You are called by my name, in particular, Nicolaus, i.e., Brother Nicolaus. This [name] means *victorious*. Hence, be victorious against Satan and his machinations, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities . . .,” etc.<sup>52</sup>

[37] And afterwards the aforesaid young man lived exceedingly devoutly, fervently, and praiseworthy for three months or thereabouts, so that he was pleasing to all. And subsequently he was afflicted by a very severe illness; and he quietly reached a blessed end and died especially devoutly. Beforehand, he was comforted by a certain glorious vision, and he disclosed it to his spiritual father, and it foretold the hour of his departure [from the world]. And thus he went gloriously into Heaven.

Praise to God for him forever. Amen.

Here ends the sermon of the most reverend lord, Lord Cardinal of St. Peter in Chains—[a sermon] composed in the foregoing way in our principal [Benedictine] Monastery of Monte Oliveto.

## NOTES TO *Sermo Montis Oliveti*

### \* Sermon CCXCIII.

1. The Abbey of Monte Oliveto (named after the Mount of Olives) is located in the Tuscany region of Italy. Nicholas went there to invest a novice monk. See Gerda von Bredow, *Cusanus-Texte IV. Briefwechsel des Nikolaus von Kues: das Vermächtnis des Nikolaus von Kues. Der Brief an Nikolaus Albergati nebst der Predigt in Montoliveto (1463)*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1955 [Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse]. Nicholas arrived at the Monastery in June of 1463—not in July, as he misstates at the beginning of the sermon. The Feast-day of the Trinity was also in June, not in July.

2. Matthew 24:35. But note also Psalms 118:89 (119:89).

3. Nicholas, here but not always, uses the magisterial “we” while referring to himself in this sermon.

4. See note 3 above.

5. Romans 8:27.

6. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis* I.2.7.

7. *Decretum Gratiani*, Causa XVI, Quaestio I, C VIII (PL 187:993A). Alternatively, see Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, Vol. I: *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, p. 763 [reprinted in Graz, Austria, 1959; see n. 23 below].

8. Here the editors of the printed Latin text cite *Vitae Patrum* (PL 73:818-819 & 822-823).

9. Jeremiah (Jeremiah) 3:28.

10. Osee (Hosea) 2:14.

11. See n.7 above.

12. James 3:2.

13. Psalms 6:7 (6:6).

14. Matthew 5:5.

15. See n. 10 of Sermon CCLXXXII (*Pater Vester Caelestis Dabit Vobis*).

16. Psalms 41:4 (42:3).

17. Psalms 76:3 (77:2).

18. Psalms 76:4 (77:3).

19. Cf. Luke 1:47.

20. Matthew 26:36. Mark 14:32.

21. Luke 22:39. Here Nicholas uses the plural: Mons *Olivarum*, as does Luke. At other times he uses the singular: Mons *Oliveti*.

22. Cf. John 18:1.

23. See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, Vol. II: *Decretalium Collectiones* (Graz: Akademische Druck -u. Verlagsanstalt, 1959 [reprint of the 1879 edition in Leipzig] ), Book V (of the decretals of Pope Gregory IX), Title XL, Chapter VII. See Friedberg, column 913. The decretal refers one to Augustine’s Harmony of the Synoptic Gospels.

24. Matthew 16:24.

25. John 3:5.

26. John 12:24-25.
27. Matthew 16:24.
28. Cf. Romans 11:24.
29. John 18:4.
30. Cf. Galatians 2:19 (2:20).
31. Luke 24:26.
32. Acts 14:21.
33. Ecclesiasticus 2:1.
34. The editors of the printed Latin text cite Pseudo-Augustine (Caesarius of Arles), Sermon 223, n. 1 (*Corpus Christianorum* 104, p. 882).
35. Matthew 26:41.
36. The editors of the printed edition of the Latin text point the reader to Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogorum Libri* (*Sources Chrétiennes* 260, p. 242, lines 6-11).
37. Psalms 72:23 (73:22).
38. Luke 10:16.
39. See Aemilius Friedberg, editor, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, Vol. II: *Decretalium Collectiones, op. cit.*, Third Book (of Book VI of the Decretals), Title XII, Chapter V. See Friedberg, columns 1047-1048.
40. The Latin name 'Iacobus' translates both as *James* and as *Jacob*. The Old Testament Patriarch Jacob supplanted Esau, by exploitingly taking over his birthright.
41. II Corinthians 6:10.
42. I Corinthians 6:10.
43. Friedberg, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, Book III (of Pope Gregory IX's decretals), Title XXXV, Chapter VI. See Friedberg, column 600.
44. II Corinthians 3:5.
45. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, Homily 25, n.1 (*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, Vol. 141, p. 205, line 16)
46. Leviticus 3:9. See also the reference in n. 45 above, lines 18-21.
47. Pseudo-Ambrose (Eusebius Gallicanus), *Homily LI, 3* (*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 101A, p. 595, lines 29-31).
48. Luke 9:62.
49. Friedberg, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, Book III (of Pope Gregory IX's decretals), Title XXXIV, Chapter VII. See Friedberg, column 592.
50. Friedberg, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, Book V (of Pope Gregory IX's decretals), Title IX, Chapter IV. See Friedberg, column 791.
51. Romans 8:18.
52. Ephesians 6:12.