

On the Ascension by Bernard of Clairvaux and Narsai

The Church's liturgical cycle offers a continuous feast, spiritually speaking. On the surface it conforms to the so-called secular calendar but offers far more by reason of being rooted in God as well as the Church's tradition. In sum, it's circular by nature compared with the linear projection of how we keep track of time. Being circular doesn't mean we return to the same feasts and commemorations each year and leave it at that. Not only is it circular by nature but is like a drill which moves forward in time. This it embodies two types of movement compared with the solely linear nature of so-called secular time. In light of this, we're able to get far more from a given liturgical celebration, allowing it to sink deeper into our hearts and minds. The best part is that this cycle never...absolutely never...gets boring. There are plenty of people who can testify to that.

During one recent liturgical cycle I was struck by the Ascension of Jesus. While obviously important, I've always had the impression that it doesn't get the attention it deserves. When you stop and think of it, the Ascension centers around the denseness of a human body transiting to a realm completely opposite to its nature. So what happened to Jesus will happen to us. Never do I cease at how both Bernard and Narsai deal with that fundamental reality. Because of this I single out six homilies on the Ascension by Bernard of Clairvaux and an extended homily by Narsai, a poet-theologian born in the year 399 in Iraq. In other words, Narsai is of the Syriac tradition. ¹

As for Bernard's six sermons, key words and phrases, are singled out and put in **bright blue** so they stand out more clearly. Then the Latin word or words are inserted sometimes with a brief notation, this with the intention of fleshing out the text. Sometimes the word is so obvious it requires no explanation and as left as such. Those notations are in **dark red**. Words which appear more than once will be followed by a plus sign, + which is to prevent repeating the same basic explanation. Also after Sermon Two scriptural references are eliminated. It proved too much effort to insert them because they are so numerous.

¹Upon completing the insertion of Latin words within Bernard's six homilies, there came to mind the feast of the Assumption. Indeed there's a connection between the two. However, it may be too much to include that important day. Who knows...I may just branch off into the Assumption a bit later.

No question about it. The approach just delineated makes for awkward reading. However, the text at hand is not intended to be read in the conventional manner. It is to be done so in the spirit of *lectio divina* which has been described numerous times elsewhere on this homepage. In brief, I'd describe *lectio* as reading in ultra slow motion. Hopefully by adopting this approach a person can get as close as possible to the spirit of the texts at hand. If anyone is interested in getting information about the authors or texts themselves, that can be obtained elsewhere.

Please note that the first part of Sermon One of Bernard's homilies has a majority of the words indicated in the manner as just described. Admittedly I went overboard in an attempt to show what can be done with the Latin text. After that experience I decided to back off, nevertheless singling out key words and phrases so as not to extend the text in an unreasonable fashion. The choice was purely arbitrary but hopefully sufficient enough to get the job done.

Please note that this is the first time I've tried such an approach, so we'll see how it goes. Ideally it would have been nice to insert both the Latin and Syriac texts. Though I have access to both, I found it impossible to do this. The difficulty centered around working with two texts in PDF format. Besides on second thought, such insertions would be too burdensome.

One thing I've noticed as I started working midway on Sermon Three. While it may be helpful to focus on a wide variety of words, it's important to keep in mind that the text is obviously dealing with the ascension of Jesus Christ. That means it's important to focus upon verbs and nouns dealing with that event. Chances are other words will not be noted as they had been up to that point.

One pleasant surprise emerged after having gone through all six sermons, the words *affectus* and *affectio*, inclination or intent and disposition. Both are very important and have occurred more frequently than anticipated. As for their translation, it's difficult to adequately translate them. The two are worthy of closer examination unto themselves.

At the moment just the six sermons of St Barnard are posted. The homiy of Narsai will follow in the near future.

St Bernard

Migne 183.299-324

Sermons for the Summer Season, Cistercian Father Series #53 (Kalamazoo, 1991)

Narsai

Patrologia Orientalis, Tome XL, Fascicule 12-#182 (Brepols, 1979)

Sermon One

1. 'While they **reclined** at table, Jesus **appeared** to the eleven disciples' [Mk 16.14]. *Recumbens* and *appareo* to lie down, to sink back and to come into sight. Truly the kindness and love of the Savior **appeared**, *benignitas* and *humanitas* or benevolence or friendliness and all the refinement belonging to human behavior [Tt 3.4] and he **manifests** *praesto*: to exhibit, to show great faithfulness, because if he does not refuse his presence to those who are reclining at table, he will be even more readily **present** *libens*: ready, willing, indicative of good pleasure to those who are inclined to **prayer** *oratio*: power of speech, address to a deity. [RB 4.56]. His kindness **appeared** *benignitas* and *appareo* +, I say, [the kindness of him] who **knew** our making *cognosco* and *figmentum*: to perceive and formation, figure. [Ps 102.14]. He has no **scorn** but rather **compassion** *dedignor* to spurn and *miseror*: to spurn and to have pity for our **needs** *necessitas*, if we make provision for the flesh not out of desire *desiderium* and *necessitas* [Rm 13.14] but out of need. The Apostle has the same thing in mind *considero*: to examine, inspect when he says: 'Whether we eat or whatever else we do, we must **perform** *facio* to do to make all things for the glory of the Lord' [1Cor 10.31]. Yet [Jesus'] **appearance** to [the apostles] as they **reclined** *recumbens* and *appareo*, both + at table can also be compared to what [he says] on another occasion to the Jews who were **finding fault** *calumnias*: **misrepresenting** with the disciples for not fasting: 'The bridegroom's friends cannot **mourn** *lugeo*: to lament as long as the bridegroom is with them.' [Mt 9.15]. [The text] continues: 'And he **rebuked** *exprobro*: to reprove their **disbelief and hard-ness** *incredulitas* and *duritas*: incredulity and harshness of heart, because they **did not believe** *credo*: to confide, have confidence in those who saw that he had risen.' [Mk 16.14]. You hear Christ **reproaching** *increpo*: to chide the disciples, or rather even **rebuking** *exprobo* + them, because he sounds quite **harsh** *durius*: hard. [He did this] not just at any time, but at the moment when he was about to **withdraw** *subtraho*: to pull out from under his bodily **presence**: *praesentia*: at hand, [when] it might seem that he ought instead to have **spared** *parco*: to forgive them his **reproach** *increpatio*: chiding. Do not be **angry** *indignor*: to scorn, resent then in the future if at times Christ's representative should **reproach** *increpo* + you. He is

conferring on you what [we] read that Christ conferred *exhibeo: to display* on his disciples when he was about to ascend *ascendo*² from them into *ab-eis* heaven. But why is it, brothers, that [Mark] says: ‘They did not believe *credo* + those who saw that he had risen?’ Who were they, whose blessed eyes deserved *mereo: to earn, obtain* to see the glorious miracle of the Lord’s resurrection? [We] do not read or believe that any mortal saw him rising, and so we are left to take *accipio: to receive, accept* as angels those whose testimony *testimonium: evidence, proof* to the resurrection? [Ac 4.33] the apostles’ irresolution doubted *pusillanimitas* and *haesitio: timidity and to be uncertain*.

2. Now, in order that there be carried out *facio* + what was written: ‘Teach *doceo: to show, demonstrate* me goodness and discipline and knowledge’ [Ps 118.66]; let the grace of his visitation, the correction of his rebuke, be followed by his instruction *doctrina* on preaching [the gospel], for he says: ‘Whoever believes *credo* + and is baptized will be saved.’ [Mk 16.16]. But what shall we say in response to these things, brothers? With this saying, too great an assurance *fiducia: trust* seems to be offered to people of the world, and I fear lest they begin to render *do: to give* that assurance an opportunity *occasio* for the flesh [Ga 5.13], flattering *blandiens* also as fawning themselves more than is appropriate on [their] baptism and belief apart from [good] deeds. Nonetheless, let us consider *considero* + what follows: ‘These signs shall accompany *sequor: to attend* those who believe’ [Mk 16.17]. Perhaps the despondency *desperatio: despair* these words occasion even in those in the religious life will seem just as great as the occasion *occasio* + for vain hope that the earlier words give to those in the world. Who then seems to possess the signs *signum: mark, signal* of belief written about in the passage at hand, without which no one can be saved? For ‘whoever does not believe will be condemned,’ [Mk 16.16] and ‘without faith it is impossible to please *placeo: to be agreeable* God.’ [Heb 11.6]. Who, I ask, casts out *icio: to thrust* demons, speaks in tongues, or picks up serpents? [Mk 16.17-18] Does it not follow, then, that if in our times no one has these [signs] or few appear to have them, no one will be saved *salvo: to make safe or healthy*, or only those who boast *glorior: to boast* of these gifts, which cannot so much claim a reward as provide evidence for such a claim? For that reason, as many are saying: ‘Did we not cast out demons in your name and in your name did we not work many miracles?’ [Mt 7.22] at the judgment they will be obliged *habeo: to have* to hear: ‘I do not know *nescio* you; go away from me, doers of iniquity!’ [Lk 13.27] Where is what the

²Obviously the verb *ascendo* occurs in abundance within all six sermons. For this reason it won’t be noted as such.

Apostle says when he speaks about the righteous judge, [2Tm 4.8] ‘who repays *reddo*: to return each according to his deeds,’ [Rm 2.6], if, perish the thought, signs are sought *signum* + and *quaero*: sign and to seek at the judgment rather than [other] claims to a reward *mereo*: to deserve?

3. Yet the claims *signum* + themselves are also signs of a sort, doubtless more certain and salutary *salubrious* ones. I do not think it difficult to know how the signs *signum* + in our present passage can be interpreted *intellego*: to understand, that they may be unmistakable *indubitatus* signs of belief, and consequently [signs] of salvation as well. For the first deed *opus*: work, especially of art of faith [2Ths 1.11] acting through love is compunction *compunctio* of heart; with it demons are assuredly cast out *eicio* + when sins are rooted out *eradico*: to extirpate from the heart. Then those who believe in Christ speak in new tongues with the old [words] now gone *recedo*: to withdraw from their mouths,’ [1Sam 2.3] and they do not speak in the future with the ancient tongue of [their] first parents, who turned to *declino*: to turn downward words of wickedness to make excuses *excuso*: to exempt for [their] sins. [Ps 140.4]. When their past sins have been effaced [Ac 3.19] by the heart’s compunction *compunctio* + and the mouth’s confession, [Rm 10.10], then lest they suffer a relapse *recidiva*: a falling back and their later sins be worse than their earlier ones [2Pt 2.20; Mt 12.45], they must pick up serpents, that is, extinguish poisonous propositions *suggestio*. But what is to be done if for some reason a root sprouts and cannot be plucked out quickly enough, but excites the mind *stimulo* and *animus*: to stimulate and life force, soul, vitality with a craving *concupiscentia* of the flesh? [1Jn 2.16] Truly, ‘if they drink anything deadly it will not harm them,’ [Mk 16.18] because, following the Savior’s example *exemplum*, when they have tasted it, they will refuse to swallow [Mt 37.24]; that is, when they have sensed *sentio*: to feel, perceive [the poison], they refuse their consent *consentio*. Without consent *consensus*, the sense of craving will not harm *noceo*: to damage them, ‘because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.’ [Rm 8.1]. What [will happen] though? Surely troublesome and dangerous *molestus* and *periculosus*: grievous and perilous is the struggle *lucta*: wrestling match of a corrupt and weak disposition *affectio*: a change in the state of the body or mind, emotion. But those who believe ‘will lay their hands upon the diseased and they will be well *habeo bene*: literally to have well.’ [Mk 16.18]. This means that they will act upon their diseased dispositions *affectio* + with good deeds, [Mt 26.10] and they will be cured *curo*: to look after, attend to by this remedy.

Second Sermon

1. Dearly beloved, this solemn feast is **glorious** and let me even say, **gladsome**, too; on this feast **matchless** glory is conferred on Christ and special joy on us. This is the **consummation and the fulfillment** *consummatio and adimpletio* of the other liturgical feasts, and this is the perfect **ending** *clausula: conclusion* to the Son of God's entire journey. 'The one who descended is the very one who ascended' today 'above all the heavens to bring all things to **fulfillment** *adimpleo* . [Eph 4.10] He had already **proven** *probo: to demonstrate, test* that he was lord of all things? [2M 13.35] on the earth and in the sea and in the lower regions; he had but to **prove** *approbo: to demonstrate* with similar but surely stronger **arguments** *argumentum* that he was also lord of the air and the heavens. The earth **recognized** *cognosco* [its] lord, because when he cried out in a loud voice: 'Lazarus, come forth,' [Jn 11.43] at the sound of his mighty voice [Ps 67.35] it restored the dead man. The sea **recognized** *cognosco* + [him] when it provided a firm footing for his steps, and the apostles **thought** *puto to regard, consider* he was a ghost. [Mt 14.25-26] Even hell **recognized** *cognosco* + [him] when he shattered its bronze gates and iron bars, [Ps 106.16] and bound therein that insatiable murderer [who is] called the devil and Satan. [Rev 8.22] Surely the one who raised the dead, cleansed lepers, gave sight to the blind and steadiness to the lame, [Mt 11.5] and chased away all infirmities with a **breath** *exsufflo to blow upon or away*, was lord of all, and with the same hand he had used to **shape** things, he was **reshaping** what had become **misshapen** *facio, refacio and defactio*. Likewise when he **predicted** *praedico* that a coin would be found right in the mouth of a fish, [Mt 17.27] it was **evident** *procul dubio* that he was lord of the sea and all things moving in it. He who put the powers of the air to public shame and nailed them to his cross had **clearly** *received* *claro and accipio* authority over the **workshops** *officina: laboratory* of hell. [Col 2.14-15] He it is 'who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, [Ac 10.38] who stood firm on level ground [Lk 6.17] to teach the crowds and stood before the governor to endure blows to his face. [Jn 18.22] All the while he **was seen** on earth and **dwelt with** *converso: to associate with* among humans [Ba 3.38] he stood firm amidst many labors, [2Cor 11.23] working salvation throughout the earth. [Ps 73.12].

2. Lord Jesus, to **complete** *claudo: to shut up, close* your seamless garment, [Jn 19.23] to bring the **integrity** *integritas*: soundness of our faith to its **wholeness** *perficio: to complete*, you, lord of the air, have only to **ascend** *ascendo* in open air,

above all the heavens [Eph 4.10] while your disciples look on. [Ac 1.9] This will prove that you are lord of the universe [2M 14.35] because you fulfilled *adimpleo* + everything in all things. [Eph 1.23] Accordingly, now it shall be your due that at your name every knee shall bend, in heaven, on earth, and in the lower regions, and every tongue shall confess [2Phl 10-11] that you are in glory and at the Father's right hand. In his right hand are delights for evermore. [Ps 15.11] That is why the Apostle admonishes us to seek what is above *quaero* + and *sursum*, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Col 3.1] There surely is our treasure *thesaurus*, Jesus Christ, 'in whom all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden,' [Col 2.3] in whom all the fullness of divinity resides bodily [Col 2.9].

3. Brothers, how great in your estimation *puto*: to suspect, suppose were the grief and fear that seized the apostles' hearts when they saw him carried from them and lifted *tollo* and *attolli* into the air, unsupported by a ladder's rungs or by ropes, not even upheld by the ministering angels who accompanied [him], but marching *gradior*: to advance in the greatness of his own strength *fortitudo*? What he had said to them was fulfilled *impleo*: 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' For anywhere on earth that he might have gone, they would have followed him inseparably *indivisibiliter*; they would even have stepped into the sea with him to sink, as Peter once did. But here they could not follow because the perishable body presses down the soul *aggravo* and *anima*, and this earthly dwelling burdens the mind *deprimo* and *sensus* or to burden and feeling, sentiment that ponders *cogito*: to think, ponder many things. [Their] grief was unbounded because they saw him for whom they had left everything being taken away from their senses and sight. With the bridegroom taken from them, the friends of the bridegroom could only mourn. [Their] fear [too was unbounded] because they were left as orphans in the midst of the Jews, not yet strengthened by the power *confirmo* and *virtus* from on high. Then, blessing them, he was taken into heaven. Perhaps his heart, matchless in mercy *singularis* and *miser cordia*, was stirred *concussus* and *viscus*: shaken, agitated and entrails as he left his miserable ones, his poor band of disciples. But [he knew that] he was going to prepare *paro* a place for them, and that withdrawing *subtraho* his bodily presence from them was for their own good.

How happy, how fitting *felix* and *dignus* was that going forth *processio* to which even the apostles were not yet worthy of being admitted! Led to *deduco* with *ad* the Father by a triumphal procession of holy souls and heavenly powers, he sat down at the right hand of God! Now has he truly brought all things to fulfillment *adimpleo* +: he was born among *inter* humans, lived among *cum*

humans, suffered and died at human hands and for the sake of humanity rose, ascended, [and] is seated at the right hand of God. [In all this] I **recognize** *agnosco to discern* that garment woven in one piece from top to bottom which this **dwelling** *mansio: habitation* in higher realms has **completed** *claudio +*, for there the Lord Jesus Christ has **attained fullness** *adimpleo +* and has brought all things to **fulfillment** *adimpleo +*.

4. Still, what are these solemn feasts to me? Lord Jesus, who will **console** *consolor* me? I did not see you hanging on the cross, bruised by beatings, pallid in death; I did not suffer with you when you were crucified, or honor [you] in death, that at least | might wash the place of [your] wounds with my tears. Why did you **leave** *derelinquo: to forsake* me out of those farewells, on the day when, as the King of Glory, robed in majesty, you withdrew to the highest heavens? Admittedly my soul would have refused **consolation** *renuo and consolor (verb)* if angels had not **come before** *praevenio* me and with great rejoicing said: ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven?’ This Jesus who has been **taken away** *assumo: to receive* from you into heaven will **come** *venio* in the same way that you saw him **go** *iens* up into heaven. ‘He will return,’ they say, ‘in the same way.’ Will he then **come to seek** *venio and quaero both +* us in that **procession** *processio +*, as **unique** as [it is] **universal** *singularis + and universalis*, when, **preceded** *praecedo* by all the angels and **followed by** *subsequor* every person, he **descends** *descendo* to judge the living and the dead? Of course he will come, but in the way he **ascended** *ascendo +*, and not as he earlier **descended** *ascendo and descendo, both +*. For he came first in humility to **save** *salvo* souls, but he will come in **sublimity** *sublimis* **uplifted** to **raise** dead bodies and **remake** *resuscito and configuro* them bright and glorious like his, so that the smaller and weaker the vessel, the more abundant the honor he may be seen to **bestow** *impendo to send, expend*. For the one who was first **concealed** *lateo: to hide* in the flesh’s weakness **shall be seen** *video +* then with great power and majesty. And I too **shall look upon** *intueor: to give attention* him, but not now; I shall see *video +* him, but not near, in such a way that this second glorification **will shine manifestly brighter** *manifeste and praeluceo* than the first on account of its **surpassing** *excellens: elevating* glory.

5. In the meantime he has been **taken up** *assumo +* to the right hand of the Father and now **stands** *sedeo* before God’s countenance on our behalf. He sits at God’s right hand, **holding mercy** *habeo and misericordia (both +)* in his own right hand, judgment in his left: **exceedingly** *nimis* great his mercy, and **exceedingly** great his judgment; immoveably he holds water in his right hand, and fire in his left. He

has strengthened his mercy *corroboro* to make strong and *misericordia* + for those who fear him as 'heaven is high above earth, so that they can perceive *sentio* + the reaches of the Lord's mercies as greater than the distance between heaven and earth. For God's design *propositum: model, example* for them remains immutable and his mercy is 'upon those who fear him from eternity to eternity, from eternity by reason of predestination *praedestinatio*, to eternity by reason of glorification *glorificatio*. Likewise for the condemned, he is to be feared among the children of humanity. [His] utterance remains fixed for eternity, on the one side and on the other, among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing *salvo* and *pereo*.

Does anyone know *scio* whether all of you whom I see here have your names inscribed in heaven and recorded *scripto* and *annotato* in the book of predestination *praedestinatio* +? For in this humble way of life I seem to observe some signs of your calling and justification *vocatio* and *iustificatio*. How great a joy do you think would fill all my bones if I could succeed in knowing *intueor* + and *conversatio: way of life* that? But no one knows *nescio* 'whether he is deserving of love or hatred.

6. On that account, dearly beloved, persevere in the observance *disciplina* you have undertaken, that through humility you may ascend *ascendo* + to sublimity. This [is] the way, and apart from it there is no other. One who goes another way falls instead of ascending, because humility alone exalts and alone leads to *exalto* and *duco* life. Christ, in his divine nature, had no way to grow or ascend *cresco* and *ascendo* +, because there is nothing beyond *ultra* God. Yet he found a way to grow by descending, *cresco* and *descendo* (both +) coming to be incarnated, to suffer and to die, lest we should die forever in *aeternum*. Because of this God exalted him; for he rose, ascended *resurgo* and *ascendo* +, and took his seat at the right hand of God. 'Go and do the same.' You cannot ascend unless you descend, because it is fixed *fixus: unwavering* as by an everlasting *aeternus* law, that 'every one who exalts himself shall be humbled *exalto* + and *humiliar*, and one who humbles himself shall be exalted.

O what wrong-headedness and distortion *perversitas* and *abusio* on the part of Adam's children! It is extremely difficult to ascend, but extremely easy to descend *difficilis* and *facilis*, yet they raise themselves with ease and lower themselves with difficulty *leviter* and *difficilis* +; [they are] ready for the honors and heights of ecclesiastical offices that make even the shoulders of the angels

tremble. Lord Jesus, scarcely are any found to **follow** *sequor* you, who allow themselves **to be drawn** *traho*, or who are willingly **led** *duco* + along the way of your commandments.' For some are drawn, and can say: 'Draw me after you.' Others are led and say: 'The king **has led** *introduco* me into his storerooms.' Others are **caught up** *raptō* as the Apostle was caught up to the third heaven." Fortunate indeed are the first: in their **patience** *they possess* *patientia* and *possideo* their souls. Even more fortunate are the second, because they give praise to him of their own will. Most fortunate of all are the third: as if having their power of free choice somehow buried in God's **boundless mercy** *profundus* and *misericordia* +, they are **caught up** *raptō* + by a spirit of ardor to the riches of his glory, **not knowing** *nescio* + whether they are in or out of the body. Blessed is the one, Lord Jesus, whom you **lead** *duco* + everywhere, [but] not that rebellious spirit who wanted to ascend at once and was **struck by** *percutio* the full power of the divinity. As for us, your people and the sheep of your pasture, may we **follow** *sequor* + you, **through** you, **toward** you *per* and *ad*, because you are the way, the truth, and the life: the way in [your] example, the truth in [your] promise, in [your] reward the life. For you have the words of everlasting life; we **recognize** and **believe** *cognosco* and *credo*, both + that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, who are above all, God forever blessed.

Third Sermon

1. Today the Lord of heaven **passed into** *penetravo* the heights of heaven with heavenly power; **dissipating** *excutio*: to banish the weaknesses of the flesh as if they were clouds, he put on a robe of glory. High is the sun in its rising; it has **grown hot** and **gathered strength** *incalesco* and *invaluesco*; its rays are far-reaching and multitudinous over the earth; and there is 'no one who can hide from its heat.' The Wisdom of God has **returned** *redeo* to the land of wisdom where everyone both **understands** and **seeks** the good *intelligo* and *requiro*: their **understanding** is **exceedingly acute** *intellectus* and *perspicax*, and their **inclination** is **exceedingly intent** *affectus* + and *paratus*, prepared 'on heeding the voice of his word.'

We, however, are in this land where there is great **wickedness** and little **wisdom** *malitia* and *sapientia*, for 'the perishable body **presses down** the **soul** *anima* + and the earthly dwelling **burdens**: *aggravo* and *deprimo*: to increase the weight and to **press down** the **mind** *sensus* + that **ponders** *cogito* + many things.' I think that

‘mind’ here means understanding, which is in fact pressed down when it ponders many things, when it does not **gather itself together** *colligo* in the single exclusive **meditation** *meditatio* that takes its beginning from that city ‘which is banded together in unity.’ This type of understanding must necessarily be **pressed down and distracted** *deprimo + and distraho* by many things in many and diverse ways. I think that [our] **inclinations** *affectio +* are called ‘soul’ here, for in a perishable body they are influenced by the different passions, which can never be **mitigated**, much less **quieted** *mitigo and sano*, until the will **seeks** one thing and **is directed toward** one thing *quaero and tendo*.

2. There are two parts of ourselves then, **understanding** and **inclination** *intellectus and affectus, both +*, that must be **purified** *purgo*: the understanding, that it may **know**; and the inclination, that it may **will** *nosco and cupio*. Fortunate, truly fortunate, were those two men, Elijah and Enoch, from whom every cause and occasion which might shackle either their **understanding** or **inclination**: *intellectus and affectus, both +* was removed. Living for God alone, they **know** nothing but God and **desire** *nosco and cupio, both +* nothing but God. We even read of Enoch ‘that he was carried off, lest wickedness **impair** his **understanding** or deceit **beguile** *muto and decipio* his **soul** *intellectus and anima, both +*.’

Our **understanding** was **disordered** *intellectus + and turbatus or disturbed*, not to say blinded; [our] **inclination** *affectus +* was tainted, and very tainted inquinatus: polluted. But Christ **enlightens** *illumino* our understanding, [and] the Holy Spirit **purifies** *purgo +* our inclination. For the Son of God came. He worked so many great and wondrous deeds in the world, that with good cause he **called** *evoco: to summon* our understanding away from all worldly matters. Thus we could **ponder** *cogito +*, and never have enough of pondering, that he has done wondrous deeds. Truly he left very extensive fields for our discerning intelligentia to roam, and the river of these ponderings is so very deep, that, in the words of the prophet, it cannot be crossed. Who can sufficiently ponder how the Lord has **come before** us, **come** to us, **come to our assistance** *praevenio, venio and subvenio (first two +)*; and how his unparalleled Majesty willed to die that we might live, to serve that we might reign, to live in exile that we might be brought home again, and even to stoop to the most menial actions so as to **set** *consituo to establish* us over all his works.

3. The Lord of the apostles **presented** *offero* himself to the apostles in such a way that they would no longer **perceive** *conspicio: to consider, examine* the invisible

things of God as **understood** *intellectus* + by the things that are made, but that the very Maker of all things would himself be **seen** *video* + face to face. Because the disciples were beings of flesh and God is spirit and spirit and flesh are not easily **brought together** *convenio*, he **adapted** *tempero* to show, moderate himself to them with the shadow of his body, that by the **intervention** *obicio*: to put before of his life-giving flesh they might behold the Word in flesh, the sun in a cloud, light in an earthen jug, the candle in the lantern. For ‘the breath in our mouth [is] Christ the Lord, to whom we said: ‘Under your shadow do we live among the nations.’ ‘Under your shadow,’ it says, ‘among the nations’; not among the angels, where with purest eyes we shall behold the most pure light. Hence also the power of the Most High **covered** *obumbro*: to overshadow the Virgin with his shadow lest even that peerless eagle be blinded by splendor beyond measure [and] be unable to **endure** *tolero*: to bear, endure divinity’s lightning brightness.

For this purpose [the Lord] **set** his flesh **before** *propono* them, to turn their every **thought** *cogitatus* away **from** *ab* human matters and attach it **to** *ad* his flesh, which was saying wondrous things and performing wondrous deeds. Thus he would **turn** *propono* + [their] attention **from** *ab* flesh **to** *ad* spirit, because ‘God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth. Does it not seem to you that he **enlightened** *illumino* their understanding when he **opened** *aperio* their mind [s] to understanding of the Scriptures, **making known** *ostendo*: to show that the Christ had to suffer these things and rise from the dead, and so enter into his glory?

4. Still, having **grown accustomed** *assuefactus*: **habituated** to that most holy flesh of his, they could not listen to a word about his departure: that the one for whom they had **left** *relinquo* everything would leave them. What is the reason for this? [Their] understanding was **enlightened** *illumino* +, but [their] **inclination** *affectus* + was not yet purified. Whence their kind Teacher **gently and tenderly** *blande and dulciter* addressed them, saying: ‘It is for your good that I go. For if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you.’ ‘But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart [s]. What does it mean, that while Christ **abides** *commoror*: to linger, remain on earth, the Holy Spirit cannot come to them? Was [the Spirit] **shrinking** from any **involvement** *abhorreo*: to recoil and **consortium** with [Christ’s] flesh? From the Spirit and by the Spirit was [Christ] conceived in the Virgin, and born from a virgin mother. It was nothing of the sort! [Christ] was **showing** *ostendo* + us the path along which we were to walk, and **putting** **before** us the **form** *appono* and **forma** with which we were to be **impressed** *imprimo*.

And as they wept, Christ was **lifted up** *elevo* to heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit, who purified their **inclination** *affectus* +, that is, their will; or rather he **transformed** *altero* it, so that those who at first wanted to detain the Lord, now preferred that he ascend. What he had foretold to them was **fulfilled** *impletus*: **satisfied**: ‘You shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.’ In this way then, was their **discerning enlightened** *intelligentia* and *illumino*, both + by Christ, and [their] will purified by the Spirit, so that just as they knew the good, they would also will it. This only is **perfect** religion and religious **perfection** *perfectus* and *perficio* +.

5. I now recall the saintly Elisha. He was told by Elijah to ask for whatever he wanted when the time came for the prophet’s **departure** *discessus* or *ascension*. His reply was: ‘I pray that your spirit may be twofold in me.’ Elijah [answered]: ‘You have requested a difficult thing. And yet, if you see [me] when I am being **taken from** *tollo* a + you, what you have asked shall take place.’ Does it not seem to you that Elijah **represents** *signo* the person of the ascending Lord, and Elisha the group of apostles **sighing** *spiro* anxiously at Christ’s ascension? For just as Elisha could not be **torn away** from Elijah, so neither could the apostles be **separated** *avello* and *separo* from the presence of Christ. He barely persuaded them at the end that it is impossible to please God without faith.

What then is the twofold spirit that is sought if not the **enlightening of the understanding** *illuminatio* and *intellectus*, both + and the purification of the inclination *purgatio* and *affectus* +? [It is] ‘a difficult thing’ because one who deserves to have it is rarely found on earth. ‘And yet,’ he says, ‘if you see [me] when am **being taken** from *tollo* a + you, what you have asked shall take place.’ Lord Jesus, your disciples need not and ought not to suffer any loss on this account, for as they were looking on, you were **lifted up into** *elevo* + in heaven, and with wistful eyes they followed you ‘marching in the greatness of your strength.’ Surely we can say that the twofold spirit [is] what the Savior says to his disciples: ‘One who believes in me will also perform the deeds that I do, and greater than these will he do. Did not Peter perform greater deeds than Christ, yet through Christ? We read that the sick were laid in beds in the streets ‘so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow would be cast over some of them and they would be freed from their infirmities.’ Now we never find that the Lord cured infirmities with his shadow.

6. I do not doubt that the **understanding** of all of you who are here present has been **enlightened** *intellectus* and *illumino*, both +, but I am going to show with evident logic that your **inclination** *affectus* + [s] have not been purified equally. All of you know what is good, the way on which to **proceed** *incedo*: to walk, to stride, and how you ought to proceed along it. But you do not have a single will. For in all the exercises of this way and this life, some not only walk but also run, or rather **fly** *volo*; so that to them their vigils seem brief, their foods sweet, their clothing soft, and their labors not only bearable but even appealing. Others, however, [are] not like this. Instead, with withered hearts and rebellious **dispositions** *affectio* +, scarcely are they dragged to these [exercises]; scarcely are they compelled by fear of hell. Wretched and woe-begone, they share in [our] **tribulation** but not in [our] **consolation** *tribulatio* and *consolatio*. Is the hand of the Lord shortened so that he cannot give to everyone when he opens his hand and fills every living creature with [his] blessing? What then is the reason? Clearly it is this, that they do not see Christ when he is **taken up** from *tollo ab* + them; in other words, they do not **ponder** *cogito* + how he left them orphans, that they are pilgrims and strangers on earth, that as long as they are still **held** *teneo* in the frightful prison of the filthy body, they cannot be with Christ. Further, if people of this type have remained under a burden for a long time, they are overwhelmed and sink down, or else they are in a sort of hell, so that they never **breathe** *respiro* fully in the light of the Lord's mercies and in the Spirit's freedom, which alone makes [our] yoke **easy** and our burden **light** *suave* and *leve*.

7. The source of such a pernicious **lukewarmness** *tepiditas* is that their **inclination** *affectus* +, that is, their will, has not yet been purified. Gravely **diverted and allured** *abstraho* and *illectus*: **seduced** by their own craving, they do not choose the good as they know it. They are **fond** *amo*: to love of little earthly consolations for their flesh, whether in word, or in sign, or in deed, or in anything else. If [they] sometimes **take a break** from these [things], they do not wholly **break** with [them] *interrumpo* and *rumpo*. Hence their **inclinations** *affectio* + are rarely directed toward God, and their compunction is not constant, but **intermittent** *horarius*: **pertaining to the hours**. Now a soul subject to these distractions cannot be satisfied with the Lord's visitations. The more it is **emptied** of the [distractions], the more fully will it be **satisfied** *evacuabo* and *impleo* + by the [visitations]. If [it is] greatly [emptied], [it will be] greatly [satisfied]; if [it is] barely [emptied], [it will be] barely [satisfied]. Surely, if you **examine** *probo* + further, one can never be mixed with the other for all eternity. When the oil did not meet with an empty vessel, it had to stop flowing. New wine is put only in

new wineskins so that both may be preserved. So, too, spirit and flesh, fire and lukewarmness *tepiditas* +, do not abide *commoror* + in the same domicile, especially since lukewarmness is wont to provoke the Lord himself to vomit.

8. The apostles, who were still clinging *inhaereo* to the Lord's flesh— uniquely holy because it belonged to the Saint of saints— could not be filled with the Holy Spirit until it was taken away *tollo ab* + from them. Do you think that you, bound and inseparably glued *adstrictus* and *conglutinus* to your flesh, which is very squalid and full of the images of every kind of impurity, can receive *suscipio* the perfectly pure and unadulterated *meracus*: undiluted Spirit if you have not tried to radically renounce *renuntio* those fleshly consolations? In fact, when you have begun sorrow will fill your heart; but if you persevere *persevero*, your sorrow will be turned into joy. For then [your] inclinations *affectus* + will be purified, and [your] will renewed, or rather created anew *pergo, renovo* and *creo*. Then through everything that at first seemed difficult, or even impossible, you will hasten *percurro*: to run through with much pleasure and great eagerness *dulcedo* and *aviditas*.

‘Send forth your Spirit,’ [Scripture] says, ‘and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth.’ Just as the outer person is recognized *cognosco* + by the face, so the inner is represented by the will. When the Spirit has been sent *emitto*, the face of the earth is created and renewed *creo* + and *renovo* this means that our earthly will become heavenly, ready at a nod to obey *paratus* and *oboediro* more quickly than a nod. Blessed are people like this, for not only do they perceive *sentio* + no evil, but they abide in a certain marvelous expansion *dilatatio* enlarging of heart. But concerning those we spoke of above, the Lord says these dreadful words: ‘My spirit will not remain in those people, because they are flesh;’ that is, they are carnal, and whatever was spirit in them has passed away into the flesh.

9. Dearly beloved, today is the day when the Bridegroom is taken away from us, and our minds are not without some disquiet *tumultus*. But it is for this purpose, that he may send *mitto* us the Spirit of truth. Let us weep and pray that the [Spirit] may find *invenio* us or rather make *efficio* us worthy, and may fill this house where we are sitting in order that not a violent shaking but his anointing *vexatio* and *unctio* may teach us everything. Then when [our] understanding has been illuminated *intellectus* + and *clarifico* and [our] inclination purified *affectus* + and *purifico*, may he come to us and make his dwelling place *mansio* + in us. Just

as Moses' serpent swallowed up all the magicians' serpents, so the [Spirit], when he comes, will devour all fleshly *consolations consolatio* +. Then will we have *rest* from labor *requies* and *labor*, gladness from tribulation *laetitia* and *tribulatio*, and glory after abuse *gloria* and *contumelia*, just as those whom the Spirit filled 'went out from the council's presence rejoicing that they were considered worthy to suffer abuse for the sake of Jesus' name.' The Spirit of Jesus, a *good* spirit, a *holy* spirit, an *upright* spirit, a *sweet* spirit, a *ruling* spirit *bonus, sanctus, rectus, dulcis* and *principalis*, makes *light and broad levis* and *latus* whatever seems *difficult and confining difficilis* + and *angustus* in this wicked world. *Disgrace* he judges a *joy opprobrium* and *gaudium*, and *contempt* he persuades [us] is *exaltation despectio* and *exaltatio*. 'Let us,' therefore, as the Prophet says, '*examine scrutor* our ways' and our *enthusiasms studium* *zeal*; 'let us lift up our hearts and [our] hands' so that we may rejoice, and *lavishly abundans* rejoice, on the solemn feast of the Holy Spirit, who *leads induco* us into all the truth, just as the Son of God promised.

Fourth Sermon

1. If we celebrate the solemn feasts of the Lord's birth and resurrection with due *devotion devotio*, it is appropriate that Ascension day be celebrated with no less devotion. In no way, of course, does this [feast] fall short of those feasts; it is rather their *goal* and *fulfillment finis* and *adimpletio* +. Deservedly do we keep as a day of *solemn feasting and gladness sollemnitas* and *laetitia* + [that day] when the Sun above the heavens, the Sun of justice, *presented praesento* himself for us to look upon, and *tempered tempero: to moderate* his lightning brightness and unapproachable light by a cloud of flesh and the sackcloth of mortality. Great too was the gladness and immense the exultation when, *stripped of conscissus* the sackcloth, he was *girded with circumdatus* gladness. He did not indeed put aside the substance of his sackcloth, but its decrepitude, its decay, its misery and its worthlessness, [when] he *consecrated dedico: to dedicate* the first fruits of our resurrection.

Nonetheless, what [do] these solemn feasts [mean] to me if my life is still *prolonged detineo: to hold back* on earth? Would anyone have presumed even to *yearn desidero* for an ascension to heaven if [Christ] who had descended does not ascend before us? I tell you then that this *place of exile habitatio* or *residence and exsilium* would not seem to me more tolerable than hell if the Lord of Hosts had not left us a seed of *confidence and expectation fiducia* + and *exspectatio* when he

was lifted up on the clouds and gave *hope spes* to believers. ‘Unless I go away,’ he says, ‘the Paraclete will not come to you.’ What Paraclete? Assuredly the one through whom love is *poured out diffundo* and hope no longer *disappoints confundo* [us]; that Paraclete through whom our *life conversatio* + is in heaven, the Power from on high, [the one] through whom our hearts are *lifted up sursum*. ‘I go to prepare a place for you,’ he says; ‘and if I depart, I will come again, and I will take you to myself.’ ‘Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered.’ Do you not see how the solemn feast we celebrate today is the *fulfillment consummatio* of the other solemn feasts, how it *manifests declaro: to indicate* their consequences and *increases augeo* their grace?

2. Just like everything else pertaining to the one who was born for us and given to us, so too his ascension was *accomplished facio* + on our behalf, and works for us. In our lives, many things happen by chance and many out of necessity. But Christ, the *power* of God and the *wisdom* of God *virtus and sapientia*, both +, could not *be subject subiaceo* to either. For what necessity could *constrain the power cogo virtus* to *gather and valor* of God, or what could the *wisdom sapientia* + of God do by chance? Accordingly, do not doubt that whatever he said, whatever he performed, whatever he suffered was deliberate, filled with *hidden meanings sacramentum*, filled with salvation. Since we *know scio* + these things, if we should at some time *happen to learn contingo: to reach, attain and scientia* any one of them which comes from Christ, we ought to attend to it not as if we are bringing forward a sort of *improvisation inventicium*, but as something which would not have happened without some reason, even if we do not know it beforehand. For just as a writer arranges everything for specific reasons, so the things that are from God are *appointed ordinatus: ordered*; and especially those *performed opero* by [his] majesty present in the flesh.

But alas! how limited our *discernment*, and how impoverished our *knowledge cognitio and scientia*! We *discern cognosco* + only in part, and what a meager part! Scarcely do little flickers shine on us from so radiant a light source—from the lamp placed on the lamp-stand. Inasmuch as each of us receives little, the things revealed to one must be more faithfully *imparted communico* to the others. For my part, brothers, I have neither the wish, nor the right to keep from you anything he himself has deigned to grant me for your *edification aedificatio* about his ascension, or rather about his ascensions, especially since this is the special *prerogative praerogativa* of spiritual gifts, that when imparted they are not *diminished minuo*. Perhaps these things are known to some of you to whom they

were revealed as they were to me; but it is incumbent on me to speak of what I perceive, because of some who might by chance not notice, being intent on more sublime matters and occupied with other things; and also because of those who are *less capable of understanding capax and intelligentia +*.

3. 'Christ who descended is the very one who also ascended.' These are the words of the Apostle. And I myself believe that he ascended in this very act of descending, for it was necessary that Christ descend in order that we might be *taught doceo +* to ascend. Surely we are all *eager cupidus: passionate* for ascent; we all *crave concupisco* exaltation. We are *noble nobilis* creatures, and [have] *greatness of soul animus + and magnus*; for that reason, we have a natural urge to *long for appeto to strive for* the heights. But woe to us if we should want to follow him who said: 'I shall take my seat on the mountain of the covenant, on the northern slopes.' Alas, wretch, 'on the northern slopes!' That mountain is very cold; we do not follow you. You have a *craving for concupiscentia +* power, and you dream of the heights of *influence potentia*. How many, even today, follow [your] foul and unfortunate footsteps! Yes, and how few escape, and are not *dominated dominandus* by the lust to dominate! That is why those who hold authority are called benefactors; that is why 'the sinner glories in the desires of his soul.' Assuredly, all flatter the powerful; all envy [them]. Whom do you follow, you wretched humans, whom do you follow? Do you not see Satan, falling like lightning?' Is this not the mountain which an angel ascended and became a devil? Be mindful that after his fall [he was] *tortured crucians: crucified* with envy and evilly *preoccupied sollicitus: excited, passionate* with casting down humankind; yet in no way did he dare to urge the ascent of that mountain on which he would surely be *recognized cognosco +* as one known for his faulty ascent as much as for his appalling brutal fall.

4. Yet the *crafty versutus: adroit, dexterous* foe was not at a loss what to do. He showed humankind another, similar mountain, saying: 'You will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' This ascent too is ruinous perniciosus; rather it is a descent, greater than [the one] from Jerusalem to Jericho. Knowledge that *puffs up inflans* is a most evil mountain; yet even today you see many of the children of Adam creeping up it with urgent *craving concupiscentia +*, as if they did not know how far their father descended by his ascent of that mountain, or rather how *grievously graviter* he fell, [and] the extent to which his entire posterity was completely cast down and shattered. The wounds inflicted on you by that ascent of the mountain have not yet been *healed sano*, even though you were still lying

hidden *lateo* in your father. Are you now attempting to ascend it again in your own person, so that the last *mistake error* will be worse than the first?

What *craving libido: longing* is so cruel for you wretched people? ‘Children of humanity, how long [will you be] heavy in heart? Why do you love vanity and seek falsehood?’ Do you not know that God chooses what is weak in the world to *confound confundo* the strong, and what is foolish in the world to confound the wise? The *fear terror* of divine *threat comminatio* does not call us back— [the threat that] he will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the *prudence sapientia* + of the prudent. Neither does the example of [our] father [Adam call us back], nor our own good *sense sensus* + and the *experience experientia* of harsh necessity to which we have been handed over by our *senseless appetite for knowledge insipiens and scientia* +.

5. See, brothers, we *have shown demonstro* you the other mountain, not for you to ascend, but for you to flee. It is the very [mountain] he was ascending who wanted to be like God and to have knowledge of good and evil, the very [mountain] his children are even today heaping up and piling high. They find nothing too worthless to use in *raising up elevo* + a mountain of *knowledge scientia* +. You may see one person eagerly striving after culture, another after the management of secular matters, this one trying for the pleasing expression of opinions which are *displeasing displicens, not enthusiastic* to God, and that one attempting some common trade. So intensely does each pursue knowledge that he does not consider it work if only he can be considered more learned than others. In this way they build up Babel, and think that they will attain likeness to God. In this way they *crave* what is not for their good and *neglect* what is *concupisco* + and *omitto*.

What do these mountains mean to you, [when] they are so difficult and so *dangerous periculum* to ascend? Why do you *forsake desero* the mountain whose ascent is both *easy* and *very useful facilis and perutilis*? The ambition for power deprived the angel [Satan] of angelic bliss; his appetite for *knowledge scientia* + despoiled the human of the glory of immortality. Let someone *attempt conor* to climb the mountain of power—how many opponents do you think he will have? How many will he find to drive him back? How many obstacles? How difficult a path? What if it should happen that at last he obtains what he desired? Scripture says, ‘The mighty shall be mightily tormented,’ and so I shall not mention the present *concerns and anxieties sollicitudo and anxietas* that power itself produces.

Another person is greedy for the knowledge [that] puffs up. How greatly will he toil, how anxious will his spirit be? And still he may hear: 'Not even if you burst yourself. ...' His eye will be fixed in bitterness as often as he happens to see anyone to whom he judges himself inferior, or thinks that others do. What if he should greatly swell up [with his knowledge]? The Lord says: 'I will destroy the wisdom *sapientia* + of the wise and bring to nothing the prudence *prudentia* of the prudent.'

6. Now I would not prolong *immoror*, is unduly. I think you have seen that we must flee *fugio* each of these mountains if we are really terrified of the angel's headlong plunge, [and] the human's fall. 'Mountains of Gilboa, let no dew or rain come upon you.' Yet what are we doing? It is not expedient *expedio* to ascend in this way, yet we are seized with the craving *concupiscentia* + to ascend.

Who will teach us a salutary *saluber* ascent? Who but the one of whom we read that 'he who descended is the very one who ascended'? He was the one who had to show *demonstro* us a way of ascent so that we would not follow *ductor: leader* either the footsteps or advice of the wicked leader, or rather misleader. Because he found nowhere he could ascend, the Most High descended, and by his descent he prepared *dedico: to consecrate* for us a satisfying and salutary *suavis and salubris* ascent. He descended from the mountain of power, clothed in the frailty of the flesh; he descended from the mountain of knowledge, because 'it pleased God to save believers through the folly *stultitia* of what is preached.' What appears weaker than the delicate body and limbs of a child? What looks less learned than a little one who knows only [its] mother's breast? Who [is] more powerless than one whose every limb was fastened with nails, whose bones were counted? Who appears more senseless than the one who delivered his soul to death, and then restored what he had not stolen? You see how far *multum* he descended, how greatly he emptied himself of his own power and wisdom! Yet he could not have climbed *ascendo* + any higher up the mountain of goodness, nor found a clearer way of commending his love. Nor is it astonishing *mirum* that Christ ascended by descending, when both of the former fell by ascending. And it seems to me that it was the one ascending this mountain who was sought [by the psalmist] who asked: 'Who will ascend the mountain of the Lord, and who will stand in his holy place?' Perhaps even Isaiah, seeing people falling from their desire to ascend, was calling *revoco: to recall* them to this mountain when he exclaimed: 'Come, let us ascend the mountain of the Lord!' Is [the psalmist] not manifestly charging them with ascending the former mountains [of knowledge

and power] when he affirms the luxuriance of this mountain, saying, ‘Why look enviously upon the rugged mountains? [Here is] a rugged mountain, a fruitful mountain.’ This is then the ‘mountain of the Lord’s house, established on the highest of the mountains,’ where the bridegroom was beheld leaping by the one who said: ‘Behold, he comes, *leaping saliens* on the mountains!’ He was teaching one *unacquainted ignarus: not knowing* with the way, drawing a little child along, leading forth an infant. For that reason he was going step by step, as it were, so that from *strength to strength virtus* + the God of gods might be seen on Zion. For his justice is like the mountains of God.

7. If you wish, let us now *consider intueor* + those *leaps saltus* too with which like a giant he exulted to run his course, whose *rising egressio* is from highest heaven; he *runs occuro* step by step even to its height. Imagine first the mountain he ascended with Peter, James and John, where ‘he was *transfigured transfiguro* before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothing became white as the snow.’ This is the glory of the resurrection which we *contemplate contemplor* on the mountain of hope. Why did he ascend to be transfigured if not to *teach doceo* + us to ascend by *pondering cogitatio* that ‘future glory which will be revealed in us?’

Fortunate is the one whose *meditation meditatio* + is always in the Lord’s *sight conspectus overview of a subject*, who with *unremitting semper: always* pondering turns over in his heart the *delights delectatio* of the Lord’s right hand for evermore! What can seem burdensome to one who is always *calling to mind traho: to exercise, practice* that the sufferings of this age are not worth *comparing condignus: fitting* to the future glory? What can anyone *crave concupisco* + in [this] evil age whose eye is always seeing the good things of the Lord in the land of the living, always seeing the everlasting rewards? ‘To you my heart has spoken’—the prophet is talking to the Lord—‘to you my heart has spoken: my face has searched for you; your face, Lord, will I continue to *seek requiro*.’ Who can grant me that all of you rising up should stand on high and see the *exultation exultatio* which will come to you from the Lord?’

8. Do not be annoyed, I beg you, if we *linger moror* on this mountain a while longer, for we will be able to *pass over pertransio* the others more quickly. In fact, who would not be *held detineo* on this [mountain] by blessed Peter’s utterance, when he spoke on it and about it, saying: ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here’? For what is as good, or what else ever seems good, as for a soul to *live demoror: to*

detain in good things, since the body still cannot. I think that [Peter's words], 'it is good for us to be here,' came from one who was entering 'the place of the **wondrous admirabilis** tabernacle up to the very house of God, with cries of rejoicing and praise, the sound of a feasting throng.' Now who among you inwardly **pondering cogito** + that future life, the gladness, the joyousness, the happiness, the glory of God's children, who, I say, **turning volvo** such things over in a **conscience at peace conscientia** + **and tranquillus** with itself, does not immediately **utter out eructo: to belch** of a fullness of inner **pleasure suavitas** + **agreeableness**: 'Lord, it is good for us to be here'? Clearly not in this pilgrimage full of suffering, where he is **held back detineo** + in the body, but in that **pleasant and salutary pondering cogitatio with suavis and salubris, all** + wherein his heart enables him to live. 'Who will give me wings like a dove's, and I will fly away and find rest!' Yet you, children of humanity, children of the man who descended from Jerusalem to Jericho, 'children of humanity, how long will you be heavy in heart?' Ascend to a **high heart cor and altus**, and God will be **exalted exalto**, for this is the mountain on which Christ is **transfigured transfiguro** +. Ascend, and you will know that the Lord **has dealt wondrously mirifico** with his Holy one.

9. I beseech you, my brothers, do not let your hearts be **weighed down gravo** with **worldly concerns curis and saecularis**. Thanks [be to] God, I do not find it particularly necessary to admonish you about dissipation and drunkenness. **Disburden exonero** your hearts, I beseech you, of the weighty mass of earthly **ponderings cogitatio** +, that you may know the Holy one with whom the Lord has dealt wondrously. **Lift up levar** your hearts with the hands of [your] ponderings, that you may see the transfigured Lord. **Prepare formo** in your hearts not only the tents of the patriarchs and prophets, but all the diverse mansions of that heavenly home, like the one who **went about circueo** in the Lord's tent, offering a sacrifice of jubilation, singing and reciting this song to the Lord: 'How beloved [are] your tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul **longs** and **faints concupisco and deficio** +: **to be wanting** for the courts of the Lord!'

You too, dearly beloved, must **go about circueo** + with a sacrifice of **loyalty and devotion pietas and devotio**, visiting with [your] mind the heavenly **habitations**, and the many **dwelling places domus and mansio: habitation** which are in [our] Father's house; humbly **casting down prosterno** your hearts before the throne of God and the Lamb; **reverently supplicating reverentia and supplico** each of the orders of angels, [and] greeting the **body** of patriarchs, the **group** of prophets, and the **assembly** of apostles **ordo, numerus, cuneus: wedge, troop and senatus: council of**

elders; acknowledging the martyrs' crowns resplendent with purple flowers; marveling at the choirs of virgins, fragrant with the scent of lilies; **turning erigens**: arousing your ears, as much as your weak heart **allows praevaleo**, to the honeyed sound of a new song.

'I remembered these things,' the prophet says, 'and I **poured out effundo** my soul within me.' What things? 'How I went into the place of the wondrous tabernacle, to the very house of God.' And again, 'I remembered God, and | **found delight delecto**.' This man saw the one whom the apostles saw, and I think [it was] a **vision visio** not unlike that of the apostles, except that his vision was completely spiritual, with nothing physical about it. Certainly [the prophet] did not see him as did the one who said: 'We saw him and there was no beauty or comeliness in him.' There is no doubt that he saw him **transfigured transfiguro** + and more **beautiful speciosus: splendid** in appearance than the children of humanity; he **shows perhibeo: to hold out** his delight just like the apostles who say: 'It is good for us to be here'! And that nothing may be **lacking desum** to the similarity set forth, we read that [the apostles] fell prostrate while [the prophet] admits that his spirit **grew faint deficio**. 'How great is the abundance of your sweetness, Lord, that you have **reserved abscondo: to hide** for those who fear you'! Ascending this mountain, [my brothers,] and '**gazing speculans** on the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces,' certainly you too will have to cry out: 'Draw us after you'! Of what **advantage prosum: useful** is it to know where you ought to go, if you are not familiar with the way to go?

10. Accordingly, you must ascend a second mountain. On this one you can hear [Christ] preaching and **setting up erigo** a ladder fitted with eight rungs, its top touching heaven. 'Blessed are those who suffer persecution because of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Now if you ascended the first mountain by continual **meditation meditatio** + on celestial glory, you will not find it a heavy burden to ascend this mountain, in order to **meditate meditatio** on his law day and night, just as this very prophet used to meditate not only on the rewards but also on the Lord's commandments, which he loved. So you too will hear: 'And where I am going, you **know scio** + on account of the first ascension; 'and you know the way,' on account of the second. For that reason, **set pono: to place** your heart on searching for the way of truth, lest perhaps you be among the number of those who 'have not found the way to a city to dwell in.' Instead, **be concerned sollicitus** + to ascend, not only by pondering heavenly glory, but also by **living in a way conversatio** + that merits heavenly glory.

II. I read no less of a third mountain on which [Christ] ascends alone to **pray** *oro*: **to entreat**. You see then how aptly the bride in the Song says: 'Behold, he comes, leaping on the mountains!' On the first [mountain] he was transfigured, so that you might know where to **direct** *tendo* + yourself; on the second he spoke the words of life, so that you might know how to **reach** *pervenio* these; he prayed on the third so that you might **strive to obtain** *studeo* and *obineo* the right **disposition** *voluntas* for journeying and for reaching [your destination]. 'It is a sin for anyone to know good and not do it.' Therefore, since you know that the right disposition is given in **prayer** *oratio* +, when you see what has to be done, you too, ascend to pray in order to **gain the strength** *convalesco* for doing what you see. Pray **earnestly**, pray **persistently** *instante* and *perseverante*, just as [Christ] used to spend the whole night in prayer, and the good Father will give the good Spirit to the one who is **asking** *peto* him. And see how it is to our **benefit** *utiliter*, at the time of prayer, even to seek a place of physical **seclusion** *secretum*. [Christ] taught this not only in word, when he said: 'Go into your own **room** *cubiculum*: **bedroom**, and with the door closed, pray to your Father,' but also recommended it with [his] example, not allowing any of his friends to come, but ascending alone to pray *oratio* +.

12. Do you think we will be able to **find** *invenio* + anything further about his ascensions? Of course, we will. For I do not want you to be **unmindful** *immemor*: **to be heedless** of the beast of burden onto which we read that he ascended. Nor do I want you to leave out the **ascent** *ascensio* + of the cross, for it was necessary that the 'Son of man' be lifted up on it too. 'When I have been **lifted up** *ex alto* + from the earth,' he says, 'I will draw all things to myself.'

And so what will you do when **knowledge is present** *cognitio* + and **supper**: **to be available**, and **will** *volo* + is added to it, but you find you cannot **accomplish** *perficio* + what is good; when ass-like and bestial **impulses** *motus* possess a **conflicting** *contrarius* law and want to hold you prisoner? What, I say, do you do about the **irrational cravings** *irrational* and *concupiscentia* + that are in the parts of your body? When you decide to fast, the lure of gluttony besets you; when you are bent on keeping a vigil, drowsiness bears down upon you. What do we do with this ass [of ours]? For this is ass-like, something we have in common with asses, for [the human being] 'has been matched with senseless beasts, and has become like them. Ascend on to this ass, Lord; **trample down** *conculco* these bestial **impulses** *motus* +, for they must be **dominated** *dominor*, lest they prevail

and have dominion [over us]. Unless they are trampled down, they will tread us under foot; unless they are repressed, they will oppress us *opprimo*. My soul, follow Christ the Lord in this ascension too, so that desire *appetitus* may be subject to you, and you may have dominion over it. For you to ascend to heaven, you must first lift *levo* yourself above yourself by treading upon the carnal passions *desiderium* that wage war against *super* you from within in you.

13. Follow *sequor* + Christ also as he ascends the cross, [and] is lifted up *exalto* + from earth that you may position *colloco*: occupy yourself not only above *super* + yourself, but above the entire world too, on the summit *fastigium*: peak of the mind *mens*, looking down *aspicio* and *deorsum* at all the things that are on earth, and looking down upon them [too], as it was written: 'They will behold a land from afar.' Let no pleasures of the world influence *oblectamentum*: amusement and incline you, no adversities cast [you] down. Far be it from you to glory except in the cross of your Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to you, so that what the world covets, you will view as a cross; and [through whom] you have been crucified to the world, so that what the world views *appeto* + as a cross, you will embrace in the fullness of love *inhaereo*: to stick, adhere and *amor*.

14. Now what remains *resto* but for you to ascend to him 'who is above all, God forever blessed!' To depart *dissolvo* and be with Christ [is] by far the best thing *optimus*. 'Blessed is the man whose help *auxilium* is from you,' says the prophet to the Lord; 'in his heart he has disposed *dispono*: to arrange his ascents;' he will go from strength to strength until he sees the God of gods in Zion.' This is the last ascension, in which everything finds fulfillment *impleno*. As the Apostle says: 'Christ who descended is the very one who ascended, that he might bring all things to fulfillment *adimpleo* +.' But what shall I say of that ascension? Where will we ascend in order that where *ibi* Christ is, there *ibi* we too may be? What will it be like there? No eye has seen, apart from you, O God, what you have prepared *praeparo* for those who love you! Let us long for *desiderio* + this [ascension], my brothers, let us aspire to *suspiro*: to sigh it continually. Let the love in our hearts be strengthened *affectus* + and *vigeo*: to flourish in the measure that our understanding fails *intellectus* and *deficio*, both +.

Sermon Five

1. Saint Luke briefly **commends** *commendo* to us the threefold [manifestation of] virtue in the early Church when he describes how, after the Lord's ascension, they 'steadfastly continued *persevero* + and *unanimiter* to pray with concord,' awaiting *exspecto* the heavenly consolation *consolatio* + they had been promised.' Indeed, with praiseworthy courage *magnanimitas* the little flock, deprived of *destitutus* otheir Shepherd's support *solatium*, but not doubting that he would care *cura* for them and would show a parent's concern *sollicitudo* for them, knocked on *pulso* heaven's gate with ardent supplications *supplicatio*, certain that the prayer of the just would pierce *penetro* it, and that the prayers of the poor would not be spurned by the Lord, nor return *redo* without [his] abundant blessing. With great forbearance *longanimitas* they persisted *persisto* without growing weak in accord with the prophet's saying: 'If he seems slow, wait for him because he will come and will not delay.' And concord *unanimitas* is clearly meant in what we read, because this [virtue] alone merits the gifts of the divine Spirit. 'For God is not [a God] of dissension but of peace,' and does not make [anyone] dwell in a home unless there is harmony *unus mos*: way of life.

2. Rightly then did the divine ear hear the readiness *praeparatio* of their hearts, and not disappoint *confundo* + the expectations *expectatio* + of those who possessed courage, forbearance, and concord *magnanime*, *longanime* and *unanime*, for these are perfectly sure signs *testimonium* of faith, hope, and charity. Clearly hope brings about forbearance, and charity concord; but does faith bring about courage? It does, [faith] alone. If anything is rashly undertaken, *praesumo* without faith, there is no firm resoluteness *solidus* and *magnitudo* of soul but instead a windy puffing-up and worthless swelling *ventosus* and *inanis*: windy and worthless. Will you hear a person of courage? 'I can [do] all things,' [Paul] says, 'in the one who gives me strength.' Brothers, if we are longing to obtain the Spirit in the measure that runs over, let us imitate *imitar* this threefold readiness. The Spirit is given with reserve *mensura* to everyone except Christ, yet the abundance of the measure that runs over seems somehow to exceed *excedo* [all] measure. Courage was evident in our conversion *magnanimitas* + and *conversio*; may forbearance be manifest at [our] end, and concord in our way of life. The heavenly Jerusalem truly calls out to be built by people like this, who because of faith do not lack the greatness *magnitudo* + to take on Christ's burden, whose perseverance shows the extent of their hope, and who are joined *iunctura* together in charity *caritas* 'which is the bond of perfection.'

Sermon Six

1. Today the 'Son of Man' was brought before the Ancient of days, sitting on his throne, to be *seated as an equal consessurus* with him. From now on not only will he be 'the branch of the Lord in splendor and glory,' but also 'the sublime fruit of the earth.' [This is] a blessed union and a *mystery sacramentum* + to be *embraced with unutterable joy amplector, ineffabilis and gaudium* +! For the 'branch of the Lord' and the 'fruit of the earth' are one and the same; the very Son of God' and the fruit of Mary's womb' are one and the same; David's son and Lord are one and the same, who today completes the joy of him who long ago sang in prophecy: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand.' How could the 'branch of the Lord' not be [David's] Lord? Yet [he is] also [David's] son, since he is 'the sublime fruit of the earth,' the fruit of the stalk which came forth from Jesse's root.

Today, therefore, the Father *glorifies clarifico* at his side his Son, [who is] also the Son of humankind, with the glory [the Son] had with [the Father] before the world was made. Today heaven takes pride in having returned to it the Truth which has sprung up from the earth. Today the Bridegroom is *taken away aufero* from [his] friends and they must *mourn lugeo* +, just as he himself foretold. For the friends of the Bridegroom could not mourn while the Bridegroom was with them, but the day has come for him to be taken from them, and from now on they will mourn and fast. Peter, where are those words of yours now: 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make here three tents' Behold, [Christ] *has entered ingredior* the 'greater and more perfect tent, not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation.'

2. How then is it still 'good for us to be here'? Rather, it is *grievous molestus* +; it is *burdensome*; it is *perilous gravis and periculosus*. Surely so, where an abundance of *wickedness* is found, but little *wisdom malitia and sapientia* +, if any at all; where everything is sticky, everything is slippery, shrouded in darkness [and] surrounded with sinners' snares; where *souls are imperiled* and *spirits are disheartened anima + and periclitor, spiritus and affligo*; here, under the sun, where there is only 'vanity and vexation of spirit *vanitas and afflictio*.'

My brothers, let us then *lift up levo* +, let us lift up our hearts to heaven, along with our hands, and let us *strain contendo: to hasten to follow sequor* + our ascending Lord with steps, so to speak, of *commitment devotio* + and faith. [A

time] will come when, without delay [and] without difficulty, we will be **caught up *rapio*** in the clouds to **meet *obviam*: adverb regarding to encounter** him; then [our] spiritual bodies will be able to **achieve *poterunt*: they will be able to** what now our physical spirits rightly cannot. For how much effort is now **needed *conatus*** to lift up [our] hearts when—as lamentably enough we read in the book of [our] own experience—the perishable body burdens and the earthly dwelling presses down ***aggravo* and *deprimo*, both +**.

3. Perhaps **instruction *tradentus*: to be delivered** is needed about what it means to **lift up the heart *levo* and *cor*, both +**, and how it is to be **raised up *elevo* +**; but instruction by the Apostle rather than by us. ‘Since you have risen in company with Christ’ he says, ‘**seek *quaero* +** the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at God’s right hand; **savor *sapio*** the things above, not those on the earth.’ It is as if he were to say more plainly: ‘Since you have **risen in his company**,’ **ascend with *consurgo* and *conascendo*** [him] too; since you **live with** him, **reign with** him ***convivo* and *conregno*** too. Let us **follow *sequor* +**, brothers, let us **follow** the Lamb wherever he goes. Let us **follow** him when he suffers; let us also **follow** him when he rises; and let us **follow** him even more joyfully when he ascends. Let our former self be crucified together with him, so that the sinful body may be destroyed, and we may no longer be slaves to sin, since the parts of ourselves that are on earth have been put to death. Then too, as he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may **walk *ambulo*** in newness of life. For he died and rose for this purpose, ‘that we, having **died** to sin, might **live *mortuus* and *vivo*** to righteousness.’

4. Furthermore, because newness of life **requires *exigo*** a place of **greater safety *tutior* and *locus*** and the **dignity *dignitas*** of resurrection calls for a loftier **position *gradus***, let us follow him even as he ascends, which means to **seek and savor *quaero* and *sapio*, both +** the things that are above, where he is, not those on the earth. Do you ask what that place might be? Hear the Apostle speaking: ‘It is the Jerusalem on high which is free; she is our mother.’ Do you want to know what things are there? It is a **vision of peace *visio* and *pax***: ‘Praise the Lord, Jerusalem, Zion, praise your God;’ ‘he has established peace in your borders.’ O peace that surpasses all understanding! O peace even beyond peace! O **measure *mensura* +** beyond measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over! Suffer then with Christ, Christian soul; rise with him, ascend with him. This is [what the psalmist says]: ‘Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.’ Surely Paul, as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, taught his followers in this

way about **abstinence and righteousness** *continentia* and *iustitia* and the hope of eternal life. Truth itself in the gospel **exhorts** *moneo*: to warn us to gird our loins, to light our lamps, and be found thereafter like people **waiting for** *exspecto* + their master.

5. Finally, if you **paid careful attention** *adverto bene*, the ascension that the Apostle recommends to us is twofold, in that he admonished [us] both **to seek and to savor** *quaero* and *sapio*, both +, not the **lowest things**, but those **on high** *infirmis* and *superna*. Perhaps it will be seen that the prophet, too, did not completely pass over this distinction when he said: 'Seek peace and pursue it.' Thus **seeking** the peace we are to **pursue** *inquirere* and *persequor*, [and] pursuing [the peace] that has been sought, would be the same as seeking what is to be savored, [and] savoring what we have sought: [namely,] the things that are **above** and not the things **on earth** *sursum* and *super*, both +. Assuredly, as long as our hearts are **divided** *divido* and found to have many recesses, and do not appear at all **consistent** *cohaero* with themselves, we must **lift** *levo* + them up **piecemeal** and somehow **part by part** *particulatim* and *membratim*. The purpose is they may be **brought together** *colligo* in that celestial Jerusalem 'which is banded together in unity,' where not only individuals but all alike begin to **dwell together** *habito* as one, undivided not only within themselves, but undivided also among themselves. Notice then, as I **distinguish** *distinguo* the principal parts of the **heart** *cor* + itself, that there is **understanding** in us, and **inclination** *intellectus* and *affectus*, both +, too, and they often act in opposition to one another. One seems to look for the **highest things**, the other to long for the **lowest** *summus* and *infirmus*. We can gather how truly great [is] the pain, how grievous the soul's torment, when it is so torn, so wounded, so divided from itself; at least from this that everyone **experiences** *experior* publicly, the dividing of a body—even if anyone has **failed to heed** *neglego* and *animadverto* it within his own spirit because of his destructive and dangerous **lack of attention** *insensibilitas*. The legs of a person [in the stocks] are pulled apart and the feet forced away from each other by a rather long block of wood; and even if the skin still remains whole, yet what must that **torment** *cruciatus* be?

6. We **lament** *plango*: to strike that wretched people are thus afflicted, those who live among us in the body, perhaps enlightened **like** us, but who are **not** found to share our dispositions *similiter* and *dissimiliter*. They have an understanding of the good they do equal to ours, but not an equal **love** *diligo* of what they **understand** *intellectus* +. Now what excuse for ignorance do we [have], brothers, we who are never without religious instruction, never without sacred reading, never without

spiritual learning? ‘Whatever things are true and chaste, whatever are just and worthy of love, whatever things are of good repute, and if [there be] virtue and praise of discipline: these you have **learned** and **accepted** *disco* and *accipio* +, and likewise you have **heard and seen** *audio* and *video* + in the examples and words of those among you who are **spiritually mature** *perfectus* +, whose **encouragement and way of life** *exhortatio* and *conversatio* + so fully **instruct** *erudio* all [of you]. If only these things, as they **arouse** *admoneo* our understanding, would also **influence our inclination** *moveo* and *affectus*+! Then there would be within us no exceedingly bitter contradiction, no divided state so difficult to endure, when from the one side we are **drawn upward**, and from the other **dragged back** down again *traho* + and *retraho* with *sursum* + and *inde*!

7. Truly you can **observe** *adverto* + in nearly all religious communities men filled with **consolation** *consolatio* + [and] **overflowing** *superabundo* with great joy. [They are] always **pleasant and cheerful**; **fervent in spirit** *iucundus*, *hilaris* and *fervens* **meditate** *meditans* day and night on God’s law, **repeatedly looking up** *suspicio* and *crebo* to heaven and lifting up blameless hand[s] in prayer. They **carefully watch over [their] consciences** *sollicitus*, *observator* and *conscientia* and are **dedicated** *sectator*: **follower** to the pursuit of good deeds. To them discipline seems worthy of love, fasting sweet, vigils brief, and manual labor pleasant. In sum, every austerity in this way of life seems **invigorating** *refrigerium*: **cooling** to them.

On the other hand, clearly we **encounter** *invenio* + people [who are] **irresolute and lax** *pusillanimis* and *remissus*: **timid and literally sent back**, who lose heart when burdened, who are in need of rod and spurs. Their gladness is listless, [and] their grief irresolute. For them compunction [is] fleeting and infrequent, [their] pondering sense-bound, their **way of life** *conversatio* + lukewarm, their obedience lacking dedication, their speech imprudent, their prayer lacking the heart’s **intention** *intentio*, and their reading without edification. Indeed, we see that the fear of hell barely **restrains** *inhibeo* them, [and] shame barely contains them. Reason barely bridles them, and **monastic observance** barely **confines** *disciplina* + and *coerceo* them.

Is it not **apparent** *video* + to you that the life of these people approaches the borders of hell as their **understanding** fights with their **inclination** *intellectus* and *affectus*, **both** +, and their inclination with their understanding? They are obliged to undertake the deeds of the strong without being in the least sustained by the food of the strong; clearly they share [our] **tribulation**, but not [our] **consolation**

tribulatio and *consolatio*, both +. I speak to whoever is like this among us: let us stand up and *restore our souls resarcio* or to *patch up and anima* + [our] souls, let *recollect* [our] *spirits recolligo* and *spiritus* and cast off pernicious *lukewarmness tepiditas*, not only because it is perilous and is wont to *cause provoco* God to vomit as from time to time we wretchedly lament, but because it is certainly *very difficult to endure molestus* +, full of misery and pain, in plain proximity to hell, [and is] the shadow of death.

8. If we are *seeking quaero* + the things above, let us strive in the meantime to *savor and taste studeo* +, *sapio* + and *praelibo: to foretaste* them in advance. Perhaps our being *admonished apto: to accommodate* both to seek and to savor the things above can not inappropriately be referred to the understanding and the *inclination intellectus* and *affectus*, both +, so that in [the heart's] two most important parts, as said above, we may *strive to lift studeo* and *levo*, both + up our hearts to God with the hands of *virtuous endeavor and spiritual exercise conatus* and *pious: tried with exercitium*. All of us, if I am not mistaken, are *seeking quaero* + the things that are above with the *understanding* of faith and the judgment of *reason intellectus* + and *ratio*, but perhaps we do not all equally *savor sapio* + the things above, enticed as we are to those which are on earth by some *impetuous predisposition praeiudicium* modified by *violentus* of the *affections affectio* +.

What is the source of that great *diversity diversitas* of characters we pointed out a little earlier, that *dissimilarity disparilitas* in enthusiasms, that difference in *ways of life conversatio* +? Why is the spiritual gift so absent from some while there is such abundance for others? Certainly, the Dispenser of grace is neither miserly nor indigent, but where there are no empty vessels, the oil must stop flowing. On all sides the love of the world *pours ingero* itself in; with its *consolations*, or rather *desolations consolatio* + and *desolatio*, it watches at the door, rushes in through the windows, and *seizes the mind occupo* and *mens* +—but not [the mind] of the one who said: ‘My soul refused to be consoled; I was *mindful memor* of God and *found delight deligo: to select*.’ *Holy delight desiderium* and *animus*, both + assuredly *turns away declino* + from the mind preoccupied with worldly *desires desiderium* +, for the true cannot be mixed with the false, nor the *eternal* with the *transitory aeternus* + and *caducus*, nor the spiritual with the physical, nor the highest with the lowest. Consequently, you cannot equally *savor sapio* + the things *above* and the things *on earth, sursum* and *super*, both +.

9. *Fortunate felix* + [were] those men, through whom, we read, the Lord’s

ascension was prefigured *praesigno*, Enoch [who was] caught up and Elijah [who was] taken up *rapio and transfero*. Clearly fortunate are they who now live solely for God, [and] are free to do nothing more than understand, love and enjoy *intelligendo, diligendo and fruendo* (left in their respect forms) [God]. In those who are known to have walked with God, the perishable bodies do not press down *aggravo* + the souls, and the earthly dwelling does not burden the mind that ponders *cogito* + many things.' Every obstacle *impedimentum* has been taken from [their] midst, every occasion removed; no material has been left to press down their inclination or burden their understanding *affectus* and *intellectus*, both +. Scripture recalls that [Enoch] was caught up *sublatus*: raised so that wickedness would not conquer *vinco* wisdom, and that his understanding or soul *intellectus* and *anima*, both + would be deceived or altered *decipio* and *muto*, both + no more.

10. But for us in this darkness what [will be] the source *unde*: whence of truth? What [will be] the source of charity in this wicked world, in this world which has been put in the power of the evil one? Do you think there will be anyone to enlighten our understanding *intellectus* and *illumino*, both +, to enkindle our inclination *inflammo* and *affectus*? Of course there will be, if we turn to *convertio* with *ad* Christ, so that the veil may be removed from *aufero* + [our] hearts. He is the one of whom it is written: 'On those dwelling in the land of the shadow of death, on them has light risen.' According to what Paul related to the Athenians, God overlooked *despicio* times of earlier ignorance, but now calls on people everywhere to repent *ago* and *paenitentia*. Keep in mind *memini* the Word of God and Wisdom *Verbum* and *Sapientia* + incarnate: during the whole time that that unutterable strength, that glory, that majesty deigned to be seen *video* + on earth and to live among humans *converso* + with *inter* or *among*, his work was surely to enlighten *illumino* + the eyes of the heart and to persuade *suado* people to believe both by his preaching and the signs he displayed. Moreover 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;' he says; 'he has sent me to preach the good news to the poor.' And to the apostles he would say: 'The light is among you only a little while longer; walk while you have the light, so that darkness will not overtake *comprehendo*: to lay hold of you.' Not just before [his] passion, but even after [his] resurrection, when 'in many convincing ways he appeared to them during the forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God,' and, as we read, he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, he was informing [their] understanding *informo* and *intellectus* + more than purifying [their] inclination *purgo* and *affectus*, both +.

11. Now how could the *sense-bound animalis* be *directed afficio* toward what is spiritual? Nay, they could not endure the plain light itself even for a little while! The Word had to *be shown exhibeo* + them in the flesh, the sun in a cloud, the light in an earthen jug, the honey in wax, the candle in a lantern. A Spirit before their face [was] Christ the Lord, but [he was] not without a shadow under which they could live for now among the nations. So we read that the [Spirit] cast a shadow over the Virgin too, lest, *beaten back reverberatus* by too dazzling a splendor, even the *keen candidus* sight of that eagle *be weakened hebeto* before the most brilliant light and perfectly pure brightness of the divinity.

Yet that *gentle levis: light* cloud could not be *useless; otiosus: idle* it, too, worked to bring about [our] salvation. [Christ] *aroused* the disciples' *inclination provoco and affectus*, both + toward his own flesh because, without some *modification of will mutatio and affectus* +, their minds could not be *directed promoveo* toward *understanding intellectus* + of faith, and [they] did not yet have the strength to rise up toward *assurgo ad* what is spiritual. Thus they would *cling to adhaereo* [this] man [who was] performing wondrous deeds and uttering wondrous words with a human sort of *love affectus* +. Assuredly [their] *love amor* + was still carnal, but so strong as to *prevail praevaleo* + over all other loves. This was surely the serpent of Moses that devoured all the serpents of the Egyptian magicians. Moreover, 'Behold,' they say, 'we have left everything and followed you.'

Truly blessed are the eyes that saw the Lord of majesty *present praesens* in the flesh, the *Source Auctor* of the universe when he *lived among* humankind *conversans and inter*, both +, *radiant coruscans* with virtues, curing the sick, treading on the seas, raising up the dead, commanding demons, [and] conferring on human beings a like power. [They saw him] meek and humble in heart, *kind, approachable benignus and affabilis*, [and] *overflowing with tender compassion affluens and viscus or bowels with misericordia* +, the Lamb of God, having no sin but bearing the sins of all. Blessed are the ears found worthy to *gather percipio: to take, to perceive* the words of life from the very mouth of the Word incarnate; to them 'the Only-begotten who is at the Father's side' *explained* and *made known enarro: to explain in detail and facio with nota* whatever he heard from the Father. Thus they might drink in the perfectly pure source of truth itself, the streams of heavenly *teaching doctrina* +; they were to absorb what was later to be *poured out propino*, or even *spouted forth eructo: to belch*, to all peoples.

12. Should we *wonder quid mirum or what a sight*, brothers, that sorrow filled their

heart[s] when he announced that he was about to *leave iturum* them and added: 'Where I am going, you cannot come now' Why would their *inner selves* not be *shaken up viscus and concutio*, their emotions not be troubled *affectus + and turbo*, their *mind[s]* not *quaver haesito: to remain fixed and animus +*, their countenances not be dismayed, [and] their hearing not be appalled? How could the message of his departure be received with complete *calmness aequanimiter*, when he for whom they had left everything was going to *leave reliquor* them? Yet he had not *focused colligo +* all the disciples' *affection affectus +* onto his flesh so that it would *remain* with his flesh, but so that it might be *transferred maneo and transfero* to the Spirit. Thus the time would come when they would say: 'Even though we *knew cognosco +* Christ according to the flesh, now we no longer know him [that way].' Therefore that kindest of Masters, *comforting refoveo: to warm again* them with gentle *consolations consolatio +*, says: 'I will ask my Father and he will give you another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth' who will *remain maneo +* with you forever.' Again he says: 'I tell you the truth: it is for your good that I go. For unless I go, the Paraclete will not come.'

[There is] a great *mystery mysterium*, my brothers. What does this mean: 'Unless I go, the Paraclete will not come'? Was the presence of Christ *repugnant invisus: hateful* to the Paraclete? Did the Holy Spirit shudder *horreo* at cohabiting with the Lord's flesh, which, as we know from the Angel's message, could not have been conceived without the Spirit's coming upon [Mary]? What does this mean then: 'Unless I go, the Paraclete and will not come'? [He means that] unless the presence of the flesh is *withdrawn from subtraho +* your sight, your *busy mind occupatus and mens +* does not *admit the fullness admitto and plenitudo* of spiritual grace; [your] *mind* does not *receive admitto* it nor [your] *inclination embrace capio* it *animus and affectus, both +*.

13. How does it seem to you, brothers? If these things are so, or rather because they are so, would anyone who in other respects gives in to some alluring fantasies *phantasticus and illecebra or enticement*, who follows the enticements of his flesh—the flesh is indeed a sinful woman, begotten in sin, accustomed to sin, and in whom there is no good—[would such a one] dare to wait for the Paraclete? I say, who *cleaves continually semper and inhaero* to this dung-heap, who *cherishes* the flesh, *sows* in the flesh, [and] *savors* the flesh *foveo, semino and sapio +*, would he dare [to expect] the *consolation consolatio +* of nothing less than a celestial *visitation visitatio*, the torrent of delight, the *grace gratia* of the mighty Spirit? As the Truth himself *bears witness testor*, the apostles could in no way

receive [the Spirit] while [they were] with the flesh of the Word. Anyone is completely mistaken to **think** *arbitror: to judge* that heavenly **sweetness** *dulcedo* could be mixed with these ashes, divine balm with this poison, or the **gifts** *charismata* of the Spirit with **enticements** *illecebra* + of this type.

You are **mistaken** *fallo*, holy Thomas, you are mistaken if you hope to see the Lord when [you are] apart from the company of the apostles. Truth has no love for corners; roadside lodging places do not please him. Truth stands in the **open** *medium* and **delights** *delecto* + in discipline, the common life, and common **undertakings** *studium* +. Wretch, how long will you go looking for side roads, seeking the **consolations** *consolatio* + of self-will with such great effort, and begging for [them] so disgracefully? ‘And what am I to do?’ you ask. ‘Cast out the maid-servant and her son; for the son of the maid-servant shall not be an heir with the son of a free woman. As I have said, [there is] no **accord** *conventio* between truth and vanity, light and darkness, spirit and flesh, fire and lukewarmness.

14. ‘But while the [Spirit] **delays** *moror* +,’ you will say, ‘I cannot be without some **consolation** *consolatio* +.’ On the contrary, ‘if he seems slow, wait for **expecto** + him, because he will come and will not delay. The apostles sat waiting ten days, ‘**continuing together** *persevero unanimiter* in **prayer** *oratio* + with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus.’ You too, then, learn to **pray**, learn to **seek**, to **ask**, to **knock** *oro, quaero* +, **pulso: governed by** *disco* +, to learn until you **find**, until you **receive**, until it is **opened** *invenio, accipio, aperio, all* + to you. The Lord knows your **creation** *figmentum* +: he is faithful, he does not allow you to **be tried** *patior* beyond your ability. I trust in him; if you **wait** *expecto* + faithfully he will not even wait for the tenth day. Surely he **will come** *praevenio* + to meet the desolate but praying soul with his choicest blessings. And so, refusing to be consoled, happily and not foolishly, you **find delight in thinking** *delecto* + and **memoria** of him, being filled with his **abundant stores** *ubertas: richness*, and **quenched** *inebriatus* with the torrent of his **delight** *voluptas: pleasure*.

This is undoubtedly the way that Elisha once prayed when, as we read, he **lamented** *plango* that his sweet **solace** *solatium*, Elijah’s **presence** *praesentia* +, was to be **taken from** *subtraho* him. Yet **consider carefully** *considero* + and **diligentior** how he prayed, and what response was given to him as he pleaded. ‘I pray, Lord,’ he says, ‘that your spirit may be **twofold** *duplex* in me. It was **appropriate** *oportet* that the spirit be twofold in him, so that a twofold measure of grace would

compensate *supplere* for the absence of [his] departing master. For this reason Elijah said to him: 'If you see [me] when I am being taken from you, what you ask shall be.' The sight *visio* + of him leaving made twofold *duplico* his spirit, when, visibly caught up to heaven, he bore with him every desire *fero* and *desiderium* + of Elisha, so that he too would then begin to savor *sapio* + the things that are above, not those on *sursum* and *super*, both + the earth. The sight of [Elijah] leaving *abiens* made twofold his spirit, so that to spiritual understanding was joined spiritual inclination *intellectus* and *affectus*, both +, which was caught up to heaven with the very flesh to which it was so strongly *potis*, also as chief clinging *inhaero* +.

15. We find this quite obviously fulfilled *impleo* + in the apostles. When that Jesus of theirs was so manifestly lifted up *elevo*, and was being taken *fero* + into heaven as they looked on, so that none of them needed to ask: 'Where are you going?' then, by faith that has been given eyes, so to speak, they were taught to raise their eyes beseechingly *supplex*: begging up to heaven, [and] to stretch out pure hands as they besought *postulo* the gifts of charismatic grace *charismatum* and *donum* promised them. [They did this] until suddenly from heaven was heard the sound of the mighty Spirit coming *advenio*, of the fire coming that the Lord Jesus was sending to earth, desiring *volo* + that it be mightily *vehementer* enkindled.

Certainly they had also received the Spirit earlier, that is, when he breathed on *insufflo* them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' But there was need for the spirit to be twofold, plainly the spirit of faith and understanding *fides* and *intelligentia*, not of fervor, [the spirit] that would enlighten *illumino* + their reason more than it would inflame their inclination *ratio* and *affectio*. For first the Word of the Father had taught them discipline and wisdom *disciplina* and *sapientia*, both +, and filled their hearts with understanding *adimpleo* and *intellectus*, both +; afterwards the divine Fire, coming upon them and finding them clean vessels, abundantly poured out *infundo* gifts of charismatic grace *charismatum* + and completely transformed *muto* + their love into spiritual love *amor* +. A charity *caritas* + strong as death blazed up in them [and] scorned closing, for fear of the Jews, not just [their] doors but even [their] mouths.

In preparation for that grace, let us strive *studeo* +, dearly beloved, in the measure our littleness [allows], to empty *evacuo* ourselves of all things and to rid our hearts of wretched *miser*: miserable pleasures and transitory *caducus* + consolations. Now with the feast day pressing upon us, let us persevere *persevero*

+ with one accord in *prayer oratio* +, with greater fervor and increased faithfulness, that the *kind* Spirit, the *sweet* Spirit, the *strong* Spirit *benignus* +, *dulcis* + and *fortis*, may deign [to bestow] on us his visitation, his *consolation* and *strengthening* *visitatio* +, *consolatio* + and *confirmatio*: *strengthening* *roboro* what is weak, *smoothing* *planus* what is rough, and *purifying* *purifico* + [our] hearts, that [Spirit] who is one with the Father and Son, the same but not identical. For that three are one and one is three is *professed* *fateor* in perfect truth and faithfulness by the universal Church, [which has been] *adopted* by the Father, *espoused* by the Son, [and] *strengthened* *adopto*, *desponsatus* and *confirmo* + by the Spirit: to whom as there is one substance *substantia*, so is there no less one *glory gloria* + forever and ever. Amen.