

# THE NORTHERN HOMILY CYCLE

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## INTRODUCTION

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### THE NORTHERN HOMILY CYCLE

The *Northern Homily Cycle* (hereafter *NHC*) is a collection of homilies, opening with a paraphrase of the Gospel of the day, and concluding with a series of illustrative *exempla*. Composed in rhyming English verse, it is the earliest and most complete work of its kind, its widespread and enduring popularity witnessed by three distinct recensions and twenty surviving manuscripts ranging from the early fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries. At a time when more people were attending church and being urged to attend church, the collection was intended to accompany the Gospel lessons that were read every Sunday as a part of the mass, the service the laity were most likely to attend. One part of the mass consisted of an unchanging series of ceremonies and chants surrounding the celebration of the Eucharist; intermixed with these were prayers, psalms, and lessons which varied from week to week according to the time of the year. As the entire service was sung or chanted in Latin, the laity were often noisy and inattentive, complaining of boredom, and sometimes thronging outside in the courtyard where they would wait until the high point of the service, the moment when the host and the chalice were elevated; they would then rush into the church to observe, leaving again afterward as quickly as possible.<sup>1</sup>

That the laity were moved primarily by what they could see is not surprising, since they could understand so little of what they heard. For many, perhaps, this was enough, and churches might also contain impressive visual representations of Christianity in the form of stained glass windows and sculpture. Nonetheless, the author of the *NHC* wanted more for his audience. In particular, he wanted to communicate something of his own understanding of the Gospel readings which changed from Sunday to Sunday, and were intimately tied to the form and meaning of Christ's life. Thus he announces at the outset his intention to "undo" (Prol.7) in English, for the benefit of the layfolk who do not understand Latin or French, the Gospel reading which is heard in church during the mass. Their need to understand this Gospel, he says, is just as great as that of learned folk, if they are to live righteously and attain the Kingdom of Heaven at their lives' end. This passionate evangelical spirit is at the heart of the collection, seen over and over again through the author's preaching on the need for shrift and his exhortations that no one who wishes for it need be beyond the reach of God's mercy.

The cyclical nature of the collection (it includes a text for each of the fifty-two Sundays of the year) is specifically tied to the Christian understanding of time. The celestial bodies have provided us with a reference for measuring the passage of time throughout human

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<sup>1</sup> Lynch, *Medieval Church*, p. 282.

existence, most notably by dividing it into daylight time and night time. Medieval understanding would also have encompassed the reckoning of a year beginning either on March 25 (Annunciation Day) or January 1 (New Year's Day), the progression of the seasons, and the progression of life itself from birth to death. The canonical hours, representing the times of day at which Christian practice prescribed certain prayers to be said (e.g., Matins, Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones), were often used as temporal points of reference in the secular world as well. For Christians, time was additionally and most significantly organized around the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Thus, the Christian year begins not on January 1 or March 25, but with Advent, the season in which the birth of Christ is anticipated and which begins four weeks before Christmas. The year moves through the seasons of Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost, bringing the year to a close with the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity. Every one of the fifty-two Sundays in the year has a name and a place in the Christian calendar, and each Sunday has a Gospel reading which is assigned on the basis of its appropriateness to the occasion. Something of the passion as well as the charm of the *NHC* can be seen from the words which present the Christian rationale for beginning with Advent:

A monethe bifor his birthe,	
Hali Kirk wit menske and mirht,	<i>Holy Church with honor; mirth</i>
Welcomes him everilke a yer,	<i>every</i>
And thanks God on fair maner,	
For Cristes com and Goddes sande,	<i>coming; gift</i>
That lesed us of the fendes bande.	<i>freed; devil's bonds</i>
And forthi at that blisful tyme,	<i>therefore</i>
Quen Hali Kirk welcumes hime,	
Wil I begin to mak my spelle,	<i>tale</i>
And of his com sumthing telle;	
For Criste tocome mad endinge,	<i>arrival</i>
Of al our soru and our murninge. (Ratio, lines 29–40)	<i>mourning</i>

The text that follows is the one most commonly associated with the First Sunday in Advent; taken from Matthew 21:5, it begins, “Behold, thy king cometh.” These words, as quoted by Matthew, are part of an Old Testament prophetic utterance regarding the coming of the Messiah; its appropriateness to the season of Advent might seem obvious to the modern reader, yet this obviousness would only be apparent if the words themselves could be understood. That understanding is what the *NHC*-poet intended to promote, and thus it is that each of his own compositions begins with a Latin rubric giving the first few words of the Gospel lesson which had been preached on that particular Sunday, followed by an English paraphrase of that same lesson. His goal, however, did not end there. Once the text had been paraphrased in English, he went on to expound a lesson (or “homily”) relating to that text in some way, usually based, at least in part, on patristic exegesis. Then, in concluding the sermon, he added a story known as an *exemplum* which he must have hoped would make the lesson more vivid and interesting for his audience. Along with narratives of hermits, saints and monks, knights, and ordinary sinners, the tales occasionally included items taken from folklore, local knowledge, and even the odd fabliau. There were models and precedents of various kinds for the many aspects of the *NHC*, but it remains original with regard to both its nature and its scope. Though there were numerous sermon cycles in Latin, there are no English verse cycles extant between the twelfth-century *Ormulum* and the

*NHC*. The poet, certainly no Chaucer, can be both long-winded and repetitive, but he writes with intelligence and imagination on many subjects, and his poetry at times achieves both insight and beauty. The early unexpanded version of the *NHC* was partially edited in the nineteenth century and has long been out of print; my hope, therefore, in preparing this edition, is to make the *NHC* both available and accessible to a wider audience.

## BACKGROUND

Between the fifth and twelfth centuries the Catholic Church grew from its early days as a small, sometimes persecuted sect within the Roman Empire to an institution that embraced every corner of Europe and engaged in regular attempts to reach other parts of the world. Although, as we shall see, the people who lived during this “age of faith” were not uniformly religious, medievalists rightly point to the power of the church in this period: “The church baptized all children. It stood at the center of medieval villages, towns, or eventually, cities. Everything of importance revolved around the church. Its bells tolled the hours of the day. Its calendar regulated the week, the month, and the year.”<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, up until the beginning of the thirteenth century, it was common for ordinary folk to attend church rarely, and to be quite ignorant regarding the principles of Christian faith and practice, and even the “story” of Christ himself. Moreover, although the life of the early church had centered around a communal meal known as Eucharist (i.e., the sharing of bread and wine representing the body and blood of Christ), in the later Middle Ages the sacrament of Eucharist became a priestly ceremony to be observed only from a distance by the laity, albeit in a spirit of great awe.<sup>3</sup>

In 1215, a gathering of church officials, known as the Fourth Lateran Council, was organized by Pope Innocent III and held in Rome. The pope had two great objectives for this conference, the first of which was to spur enthusiasm and preparation for a new crusade against the infidels. The second, however, was of far greater significance for ordinary folk, with its goal of requiring all Christians above the age of reason (i.e., twelve) to receive Eucharist at least once a year at Easter in their own parish churches; in preparation for this, all had first to confess to their parish priests and subsequently to perform whatever penance was stipulated. “*Omnis utriusque sexus*,” as this pronouncement was known, was “indisputably the most important factor in the rise of the industry of Latin and vernacular instruction on the doctrines of penance and mechanics of confession.”<sup>4</sup>

The need to confess and take communion at least once a year became the cornerstone of the church’s pastoral care for the laity. However, the official promulgation of these obligations also created an immediate problem for those charged with their execution (i.e., parish priests) who tended to be nearly as poor and ignorant as the congregations they served. The service of the mass, at which the Eucharist was observed or distributed, was in Latin, which layfolk would not understand. Moreover, the priests themselves were often illiterate; they might have memorized the Latin words they needed to say, but that did not necessarily mean they knew the meaning of those words. For the purpose of their rare attendance in church, the laity had been taught to recognize the salient features of the service and to make

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<sup>2</sup> Hinson, *Church Triumphant*, p. 396.

<sup>3</sup> Brooke and Brooke, *Popular Religion*, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> Copeland, “Confessional Texts,” p. 390.

appropriate gestures and say suitable prayers, but the picture which arises resembles, not altogether inaccurately, that of the blind leading the blind.<sup>5</sup>

What resulted during the century which followed Fourth Lateran in 1215 was a concerted effort to provide a better-educated clergy through the provision of written materials outlining and explaining such aspects of Christian belief and practice as the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Sacraments, and the teaching of the Gospels. Thus, while the words of the mass itself would continue to be spoken in Latin, the council urged the preaching of sermons on these topics in the vernacular, as an accompaniment to the mass. Half a century later, Archbishop Peckham stated explicitly that priests should explain these matters “in their mother tongue.”<sup>6</sup> Other popular works of instruction in the vernacular which appeared at around the same time as the *NHC* were the *South English Legendary*, *Cursor Mundi*, and *Handlyng Synne*. None of these essentially contemporaneous works took the form of the *NHC*, however (i.e., a lectionary providing paraphrases of Gospels for the entire church year). Thus, the *NHC* remains unique in terms both of its scope and its early date.

#### THE THREE RECENSIONS OF THE *NORTHERN HOMILY CYCLE*

Sixteen of the twenty extant manuscripts belong to the original, unexpanded early fourteenth-century recension whose primary home was in the north of England, perhaps in Yorkshire, which ran to approximately 20,000 lines of rhyming octosyllabic verse. In addition to the fifty-two Sundays of the year, the collection also included the feasts of the Purification, the Annunciation, and the Ascension. John Small printed the fragment extant in the earliest manuscript, Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians MS, in his *English Metrical Homilies* (1862); the complete text has never been edited.

The Vernon and Simeon manuscripts represent the first of the two major expansions, dating from the late fourteenth century, which renders the collection in a midland dialect. In addition to dialect, this recension is characterized by its addition of new homilies, particularly for individual feast days following Easter and Pentecost. Although there is no edition of this version, in 1877 Horstmann printed the text of the *exempla* found in the Vernon manuscript.<sup>7</sup> The Vernon manuscript in its entirety may also be viewed in a facsimile edition.<sup>8</sup>

The second major expansion is found in two fifteenth-century manuscripts, Cotton Tiberius E.VII and Harley 4196. Like the first recension, this version is composed in a northern dialect; distinguishing features include the introduction of fresh material from the Vulgate into the previously composed homiletic material, expansion of narrative items (though without greatly changing them), the elimination of many of the *exempla*, and the addition of a series of saints' legends (*Tractatus de legenda Sanctorum*) as readings for Christmas week. Saara Nevanlinna has edited the text of this version (excluding the *Tractatus*), though without interpretive notes on individual items.

<sup>5</sup> Brooke and Brooke, *Popular Religion*, p. 116.

<sup>6</sup> *Ignorantia sacerdotum*, quoted in translation by Shinnars and Dohar, *Pastors*, p. 128.

<sup>7</sup> Horstmann, “Die Evangelien-Geschichten der Homiliensammlung des Ms. Vernon.”

<sup>8</sup> Doyle, *Vernon Manuscript*

## DATE, AUTHORSHIP, AND AUDIENCE

Neither the identity of the original *NHC*-poet nor the date of its composition are known; nor do we know much about its real as opposed to its intended audience. The *terminus ante quem* is the early fourteenth century, the date of the earliest manuscript (Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians). Carver has hypothesized a relatively precise window, between 1295 and 1306, for the following reason: in 1306, the second year of his pontificate, in a message addressed to the Friars Minor, Pope Clement V removed an earlier papal prohibition of Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303) against missionary expeditions to the Saracens and other infidels. Putting this information together with lines 148–49 of *Septuagesima Sunday*, which criticize the pope for his failure to allow missionary activity, Carver concludes that “it seems reasonably certain, then, that the *NHC* was written between January of 1295 and July of 1306; and it seems more than likely that it was written before October 1303, when Boniface died.”<sup>9</sup>

Doubtless a cleric of some sort, whether regular or secular, the author has been variously theorized as a Benedictine monk (Horstmann, Gerould), a friar (Mosher, Owst, Carver), or a secular priest (Gerould); Deanesly suggests “some Austin canon or parish priest.”<sup>10</sup> More recently, however, Thomas Heffernan has made a study of the differing liturgical practices common in the north of England at the time of the *NHC*’s composition, which has led him to conclude that a member of the regular order of Austin canons is by far the most likely candidate.<sup>11</sup> While not wishing to rehearse the basis for the earlier proposals, most of which were not based on detailed analysis, I do think it worth summarizing Heffernan’s arguments. Taking five rubrics and their accompanying Sunday Gospels in the *NHC*, he has compared them with their corresponding texts in 1) the four major secular uses in England (Sarum, York, Hereford, Exeter); 2) the four mendicant orders active in the north (Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Augustinians); 3) the regular orders of the Benedictines and the Cistercians; and 4) the Austin, Gilbertine, and Premonstratensian canons. Although no conclusion based on a selective study such as his can be absolutely definitive, Heffernan nonetheless builds a strong case in favor of the Austin canons as originators of the cycle, based on the importance for the medieval cleric of the pericopal rubric not simply as a “scriptural tag” but as “a signal means of identification . . . God’s word is read by and to Dominicans or Franciscans, Cistercians or Carthusians, Austins or Gilbertines, seculars and laity. It is in this insistence on the particularity of the worship, a particularity which creates cohesion throughout the group, that the importance of the rubric lies.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, to cite just one of Heffernan’s examples, in considering the phrasing of the Gospel pericope for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, he finds a slight variation among the seven *NHC* manuscripts he has examined. This penchant for a “*regulated system of variety*”<sup>13</sup> is not only typical of the practice of the Austin canons as seen elsewhere, it rules out, in this case at

<sup>9</sup> Carver, “Northern Homily Cycle, and Missionaries,” p. 260.

<sup>10</sup> Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, p. lviii; Gerould, *Saints’ Legends*, p. 169; Gerould, *North English Homily Collection*, p. 104; Mosher, *Exemplum*, p. 86; Owst, *Preaching*, pp. 49, 225. Carver, *Northern Homily Cycle*, pp. 56–73; Deanesly, *Lollard Bible*, p. 149.

<sup>11</sup> Heffernan, “Authorship,” pp. 289–309.

<sup>12</sup> Heffernan, “Authorship,” p. 296.

<sup>13</sup> Heffernan, “Authorship,” p. 300. Italics mine.

least, the secular uses, the Benedictines, the Dominicans, and the other canonical orders, all of whom always kept to one or other of the variations of phrase. More generally, Heffernan notes that Austin canons offered qualities necessary for the composition of a text like the *NHC*: their freedom from a rigorously prescriptive liturgy, the popularity of their order which had a significant number of houses in Yorkshire, and their inclusion of members “who worked at times within the sphere of the local parish church in a priestly capacity.”<sup>14</sup> Henrietta Leyser indicates general acceptance of the idea that “regular canons both could and should . . . undertake pastoral work,” though there is disagreement among some scholars as to just how actively involved in preaching the Austin canons were.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the new ascetical movements and orders of the twelfth century which led to the emergence of the Austin canons were characterized by two aspects that can be linked to recurring themes in the *NHC*. First, the revival of the eremetical tradition, in spirit if not in fact, may help to account for the number of hermits who play leading roles in the *exempla*; second, and more significantly, the desire to emulate apostolic poverty is reflected in the *NHC*-poet’s concern for and knowledge of the poor as over against the rich. Unlike monks who separated themselves entirely from the world, regular canons embraced a life in common, but remained in touch with that world. While the Austin canons were neither very rich, very learned, nor very influential, as a phenomenon they were very important: they needed the proximity of human habitation, settling most often near a town or a castle, running small schools, hospitals, and places of retirement for the sick and the aged: “The monk renders an account only for his own soul: the canons for the souls of others as well.”<sup>16</sup>

Frequent allusions to the laity make the intended audience of the *NHC* clear, beginning with the Prologue: “For laued men haves mar mister, / Godes word forto her” (lines 55–56). Some phrases point towards a private reading audience, as when the poet refers the audience to more information concerning Adam’s loss of Paradise: “Als nethir mar man find mai / In Lenten on the first Sundai” (Second Sunday after Epiphany, lines 91–92), where the word *nethir* would probably mean “below” or “further on.”<sup>17</sup> Yet the homily for Easter Monday suggests at the very least a strong interest on the part of our poet in the preaching that takes place in church, first praising those who come to church gladly in order partake of the spiritual food of a sermon, and then noting that “som man comes to the sermoune, / That ware bettir be in the toune,” because they pay so little attention, even falling asleep at times, though they have no difficulty in staying awake at the tavern or wasting time in other unprofitable ways (Easter Monday, lines 97–146). Perhaps the strongest single piece of evidence suggesting that a public reading in church was at least the poet’s aspiration occurs in the Second Sunday in Advent when, following a Latin rendering of the fifteen signs of Doomsday, the following words (in Latin) occur: “These verses may be omitted by the reader when he reads in English before the laity” (line 180a). While conclusions as to audience must remain speculative, I confess that, like Heffernan, I am drawn to the belief that the *NHC* “was composed for oral delivery in church and so faced the myriad constraints

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<sup>14</sup> Heffernan, “Authorship,” p. 308.

<sup>15</sup> Leyser, *Hermits*, p. 97.

<sup>16</sup> Foreville and LeClercq, quoted in Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, p. 249. The most detailed discussion of the Austin canons is found in Dickinson, *Origins of the Austin Canons*.

<sup>17</sup> The metaphorical meaning of “further on in the text” does seem clear here, although the *MED* citations for this adverb all relate literally to physical space.

that locale imposed — noise, inattention of the congregation, and a sharply defined time limit.”<sup>18</sup>

If we assume that the collection was in fact aimed at a lay congregation, we must also wonder how it might have been received. According to H. Leith Spencer, that audience, whether rural or urban, would have been composed of both men and women of a variety of sorts and conditions who could have heard a sermon preached either at morning mass, or in the afternoon when it might be heard in the churchyard or marketplace as well as in church.<sup>19</sup> Medieval audiences were notoriously restless and despite the best intentions of the *NHC*-poet to engage their interest many listeners might have said that his preaching “cometh in at the one ere and goeth oute at the other.”<sup>20</sup> But for those who did listen, what did they make of what they heard? Perhaps they took the homilies to heart, though in the case of the injunctions against lechery which, as Spencer observes, were found in so many medieval sermons, they might well have resisted “in the face of a stubborn conviction in their hearers that it was only doing what came naturally.”<sup>21</sup> The *exempla* might more easily have held their attention, but how applicable would they have seemed to the lives of the laity, given that only a minority center on those in secular life? My own answer, admittedly conjectural, is that though the clergy not only figure largely but are often badly behaved, the narratives are for the most part told in such a way as to broadly suggest human ways of being in the world. Furthermore, though anti-feminist attitudes are certainly present, even the misbehaving women of the *exempla*, almost always members of a religious order, often figure human nature in a way that transcends the purely misogynistic.

## STRUCTURE

Although word-for-word translation of scripture was increasingly seen as risky in the later Middle Ages, preachers nonetheless had an obligation to preach God’s word, as seen in the following anecdote told of Robert Grosseteste, who was deeply concerned with pastoral care of the laity. When approached by a cleric with a request to undertake advanced study in Paris instead of ministering to the care of souls, Grosseteste wrote in a letter of 1235: “The Lord said to the chief of his apostles, ‘If you love me, feed my sheep’, not ‘If you love me, lecture to the pastors of my sheep.’”<sup>22</sup> The author of the *NHC* (as witnessed by the earliest manuscripts of the original version of the *NHC*, which include large amounts of Gospel material) seems to have been more attentive to the need to convey the matter of scripture than to the supposed danger, which in any case was less where a metrical paraphrase was at issue. Over the next two centuries, however, official resistance hardened and became most intolerant in the suppression of the Lollards in the fifteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Thus, an interesting paradox can be seen in the way later manuscripts of the *NHC* have made alterations to earlier ones with respect to the quantity of biblical paraphrase. “The rising pressure against

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<sup>18</sup> Heffernan, “Authorship,” p. 289.

<sup>19</sup> Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 95.

<sup>22</sup> Grosseteste, *Epistolae*, quoted in translation in Shinnars and Dohar, *Pastors*, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> Morey, *Book and Verse*, p. 2.



vernacular translation may be indicated by the fact that the later manuscripts of the original version include less and less biblical material in Latin or English; some manuscripts copy only the *exempla*; no manuscript contains only the gospel paraphrases.”<sup>24</sup>

Each individual item within the collection is divided into three parts of varying length. Following the Latin rubric which gives the first few words of the Sunday Gospel pericope (that is, the scriptural lesson appointed in the missal for recitation for that day), the text is paraphrased in English. These paraphrases may be relatively short and unadorned renderings of the Gospel texts, but they are occasionally interrupted by some thought which has struck the poet and on which he may expand before the homily proper is reached. The conclusion of the paraphrase is signaled by the words, “This es the strenghe of oure Gospell / Als man with Ynglihsse tonge may tell” (First Sunday after the Nativity, lines 65–66). The homily which follows the Gospel paraphrase takes the form typically found in medieval sermons, the so-called ancient form of sermon construction rather than the “modern” or university form. The latter began with a short scriptural phrase which was then subdivided and analyzed, whereas the former expanded on an entire Gospel passage, teasing out themes and allegorical meanings in the manner of Augustine and Gregory. This form was thought to be particularly suitable for the laity, presumably because of its less academic character, as the following quotation from the fourteenth-century Dominican Thomas Waleys suggests: “When a sermon is preached, not to the clergy, but to the people, one does not adopt a short theme; instead the whole Gospel which is read during mass is taken as the theme, and it is expounded in its entirety.”<sup>25</sup> Though the interests and concerns of the *NHC*-poet are apparent in every part of the individual items — unifying paraphrase, homily, and *exemplum* — the themes and ideas which engage him are seen at their clearest and most original in the homily proper. Over and over again the homilies express a compassionate concern for the poor and anger at the inequalities between rich and poor. The poet’s awareness of the possibility of damnation and the mercy God freely extends to those who repent and reform their lives further leads him to stress both the importance of confession and the need of the laity to hear not just preaching, but good preaching of God’s word. He also draws attention on many occasions to corruption and greed within the clergy itself and the consequences for the laity who are so often ill-served by those who should teach them.

The purpose of the *exempla* found in the *NHC* is to confirm or illustrate the themes of the preceding homily. Like all *exempla*, they tell a brief and didactic story that employs the rhetorical mode of persuasion through its appeal to authentic human experience.<sup>26</sup> Of the *NHC*’s fifty-nine Gospel paraphrases and homilies, forty-six include one or more of these narratives, some of them biblical, but most taken from a wide variety of earlier sources. Generally speaking, clerical figures (e.g., bishops, monks, hermits, nuns) predominate as the protagonists of *exempla*, which developed initially in a monastic milieu; narratives focusing on purely secular incidents were a later addition to their subject matter. However, despite this clerical emphasis, the pithy, realistic, and entertaining qualities of the *exemplum* had obvious appeal for the laity: “It is often noted in preaching manuals and collections of exempla that such ‘concrete’ means of persuasion are particularly appropriate for

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<sup>24</sup> Morey, *Book and Verse*, p. 324n5.

<sup>25</sup> Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 240.

<sup>26</sup> Bremond, LeGoff, and Schmitt, *L’Exemplum*, pp. 36–37.

laypeople.”<sup>27</sup> The *exemplum* can be traced back to Greek and Roman origins; its use as a feature of the Christian sermon began with Gregory the Great, but it was not until the time of the great preaching campaigns (beginning in the mid-twelfth century and continuing into the thirteenth) that it became a nearly universal feature of medieval discourse.<sup>28</sup> From the time of Cardinal Jacques de Vitry and the preaching friars (c. 1200), these narratives rapidly became prominent elements of sermons, generating collections from which preachers might draw.

Larry Scanlon, whose book on the *exemplum* focuses chiefly on its deployment within Chaucerian tradition, argues that the *exemplum* was a means through which the Church attempted “to establish its ideological authority among the subordinate classes it had previously ignored.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, while the Church-sponsored sermon *exemplum* gave lay audiences knowledge of Christianity, it also functioned to maintain the Church’s separation and privilege.<sup>30</sup> This reading of the purpose and function of *exempla* offers valuable insight into the medieval Church’s concern to maintain its authority, a concern certainly shared by the composer of the *NHC*, especially with regard to the importance of confession; nonetheless I question whether the latter always maintains a separation as absolute as that suggested by Scanlon. The poet’s willingness at times not only to criticize the clergy, but even to encourage his audience to criticize them, as well as his empathy for the laity in general and the poor in particular, suggest a more open-ended attitude as well as a degree at least of the “social permeability between the exemplarist and the audience” whose existence Scanlon denies.<sup>31</sup> As Claire Waters points out, *exempla*, like vernacularity more generally, “did reflect a certain connection between the supposedly learned preacher and his supposedly unlearned flock,” and while the clergy might take a condescending attitude towards the laity’s need for stories, they themselves were neither always learned nor above a taste for such narratives.<sup>32</sup>

Within the *NHC* the nature and appropriateness of the connection between homily and tale vary widely as the following examples may help to illustrate. The *NHC* homily on Purification explains in detail the English name (Candlemas) and the meaning of the feast which honors the Virgin Mary. Its importance is further signaled by the fact that two *exempla* follow the homily, the first a miracle in which a pious woman holds fast to a candle given her in a vision by the Virgin, the second an account of a sinning abbess who is miraculously purified by Mary. In both cases the connection is evident: both homily and *exempla* well illustrate the veneration in which the Virgin Mary was held as well as her miraculous power. A second example shows a less compelling connection, especially when compared to another contemporary work, *Handlyng Synne*, which succeeds in creating a more meaningful link. The homily for the Second Sunday in Lent follows a paraphrase of Matthew’s account of the Canaanite woman who begs Jesus to heal her daughter (Matthew 15:21–28). Most of this unusually long homily expands on six important qualities demonstrated by the woman’s attitude towards Jesus, of which the most important is humility (as seen in her reaction to

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<sup>27</sup> Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, pp. 62–63.

<sup>28</sup> Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power*, pp. 32, 57–65.

<sup>29</sup> Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power*, p. 58.

<sup>30</sup> Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power*, p. 68.

<sup>31</sup> Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power*, p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, pp. 63–64.

Jesus' initial refusal to grant her request). Only at the end of the homily does the poet add a single stanza that allegorizes mother and daughter, when he likens the mother to "each sinful man" and the daughter to man's soul which is sickened by the "spiritual illness of lechery." This creates a link of sorts to the *exemplum* that tells of a young hermit afflicted by fleshly desire. The tale is engagingly told and makes a very good point about the universality of sexual temptation and the need to be on guard, as well as the need to understand that repentance and forgiveness are never beyond our human reach; yet the homily is a richly-developed meditation which touches on many themes suggested by Matthew's text, and the allegory so briefly produced at the homily's conclusion hardly does justice to its complexity. By contrast, Mannyng includes this *exemplum* in the section treating the seven deadly sins, as part of his discussion of lechery, and the appositeness of the account of the hermit who so nearly succumbs to his desire is more obvious and more powerful when placed within this larger context. These two examples are less a criticism than an attempt to focus attention on the fact that some of the links between homily and *exemplum* are more meaningful than others; readers will have the opportunity to reach their own conclusion as to how successful the *NHC*-poet has been throughout in making the connection between homily and *exemplum*.

#### SOURCES AND INFLUENCES

Some fifty or more years before the composition of the *NHC*, Robert of Gretham, a north-country Englishman, wrote a series of metrical homilies in Anglo-Norman for every Sunday of the year, to which he gave the title of the *Miroir ou Les évangiles des domnées*. Gordon Hall Gerould thought he had found the source for the *NHC* in Robert's *Miroir*, and Margaret Deanesly, following Gerould's lead, stated that the *NHC*-poet had "turned Robert's verse Gospels from French into English, or composed English verses largely founded upon them."<sup>33</sup> Yet ten years later Gerould retreated from this claim, indicating that Robert's work had provided a "model" rather than a source. Acknowledging that it might not be wise to argue from a reference in the Prologue to "clerks who look in their mirror / And see in books how they shall live,"<sup>34</sup> that the writer knew this particular *Miroir*, he nonetheless finds much evidence of almost word-for-word paraphrase.<sup>35</sup> Like the *NHC*, the *Miroir* has a prologue followed by a series of homilies, some of which are accompanied by *exempla* and, also like the *NHC*-poet, Robert indicates his desire to provide simple scriptural exposition based on Gospel paraphrases. The *Miroir*, however, is addressed to Dame Aline, a lady whom Robert served as chaplain, and in style and content it appears to be directed at a more aristocratic audience. The first portion of a late fourteenth-century Middle English translation of Robert's *Miroir* has recently been edited in a dual-text edition which prints Robert's *Miroir* alongside its later derivative.<sup>36</sup> I have made a careful study of the Anglo-Norman text, and while I think it evident that the *NHC*-poet had read the *Miroir*, and renders a close paraphrase of at least one passage in Septuagesima (q.v.), as well as touching on some similar themes (bad preachers, the greed of the rich), the overall correspondence between the two is not

<sup>33</sup> Gerould, "North-English Homily," pp. 95–96; Deanesly, *Lollard Bible*, p. 149.

<sup>34</sup> Than klerkes that thair mirour lokes, / And sees hou thai sal lif on bokes. ProL.67–68

<sup>35</sup> Gerould, *Saints' Legends*, pp. 167–68.

<sup>36</sup> Duncan and Connolly, *Middle English Mirror*.

great. The prologue is entirely different and there are no overlapping *exempla*; furthermore, although both authors have at times made use of the same homily taken from the writings of Gregory the Great, in most cases they develop it in completely different ways. Wherever possible I have indicated both the similarities and the differences in individual homilies up to Septuagesima Sunday, which is the extent of the Duncan-Connolly edition.<sup>37</sup> While it has not been possible to compare the *NHC* with later portions of Robert's *Miroir*, I believe that the correspondence is not likely to be any greater than in the earlier portion.

For a medieval cleric, it was not only natural, but expected, that he would claim authorization for his preaching based on his citation of previous "authorities," namely the Church Fathers writing in the first few hundred years after Christ. Authors cited directly by the *NHC*-poet include Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, and Bede, the last two of whom receive very frequent mention. Once again, I have tried wherever possible to point out correspondences with these authors in individual items. Although the poet could conceivably have read individual copies of the homilies of Gregory and Bede, or of Bede's commentaries on the Gospels, it is more likely that he has taken them from a collection of *distinctiones* or a biblical *catena*, which were not only readily available but apparently much in demand by vernacular preachers by the time of the *NHC*'s writing.<sup>38</sup> Given the lack of a single specifically identifiable source, there is no way to evaluate precisely the original contribution made by the *NHC* author to the materials he has used. The allegorical mode so frequently employed in his exposition of biblical passages was a commonplace of medieval interpretation, and many figures are so widespread, that it is neither possible nor important to try to pin down their ultimate original. Even where the differences between one of Gregory's homilies and its development in the hands of our author are apparent, there is no way to be certain how much of this development has been appropriated from an intermediary source. Nonetheless, I believe that readers will observe over time a sense of a unique and original poetic voice which unmistakably marks the collection as whole.

The sources for the *exempla* of the *NHC* were ably researched by Gerould in a doctoral dissertation of 1902 (*North English Homily Collection*), and his conclusions have held up for the most part, although I have supplemented his work in all cases with my own research. As with the homilies, the particular collection or collections from which individual *exempla* were drawn cannot be pinpointed, but in most cases the ultimate source from which the *NHC* version is descended is known and the following generalizations apply as an indication of probable origins. The so-called *Vitae Patrum*<sup>39</sup> and the thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea* by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine have provided many items; the *exempla* found in the ever popular *Dialogues of Gregory the Great* have also been drawn on in several instances.

<sup>37</sup> The editors have indicated their intention to bring out further volumes in the future. The full text of Robert's *Miroir* has never been printed, and though another recent (and complete) edition of the English translation was published recently, it does not include the Anglo-Norman original (see Blumreich, *Middle English Mirror*).

<sup>38</sup> Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers*, p. 4. See also Heffernan's helpful comment and note in "Authorship" where he also notes having seen many such collections in the libraries of the Austin canons in the north of England (p. 293).

<sup>39</sup> The *Lives of the Fathers*, a fourth- to sixth-century collection of writings about the desert monks and hermits of Egypt and Palestine, known in the Middle Ages as *Vitae Patrum*, was edited by Heribert Rosweyde in the seventeenth century, and is reprinted in *Patrologia Latina* 73–74.

Biblical narratives, while not conforming precisely to the definition of an *exemplum*, have taken their place among *NHC* narratives on a number of occasions. The collections of miracles of the Virgin which proliferated in the later Middle Ages account for four *exempla* and there are many saints' legends which must have come from individual *legenda* or collections thereof. Other sources include two contemporary collections of *exempla*, the *Alphabetum Narrationum* by Arnold of Liège and Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Miraculorum*. For every item included in this edition I have suggested its probable source as well as giving its number in Frederic C. Tubach's *Index Exemplorum*, a most helpful aid to anyone wishing to study different versions of the same *exemplum*.

#### THE PRESENT EDITION

The *NHC*, as previously indicated, runs to approximately 20,000 lines, of which a little more than a third have been included in this edition (7715 lines). Items have been taken from every part of the complete cycle, in order to give the reader a sense of the liturgical year, which begins with Advent and ends with the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity. Selection of individual items has been further based on providing as much variety and interest as possible. All of the items not included here have been listed in their appropriate position in the cycle, along with (in the explanatory notes) identification of the biblical pericopes, folio numbers for all manuscripts consulted in this edition, and *New Index of Middle English Verse* numbers for individual items.

The original unexpanded *NHC* survives in sixteen manuscripts, only nine of which are reasonably complete. This edition is based principally on two manuscripts. The first of these, Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians, is the earliest (early fourteenth century), but contains only the Prologue, the *Ratio quare*, and the first thirteen homilies, breaking off near the beginning of the second *exemplum* for Purification. The pages of the original manuscript, a thin quarto on vellum, have been individually mounted in a cardboard frame; three leaves are missing after fol. 24. The *NHC* portion of the manuscript is found on fols. 16r–36v; the beginning and end of the manuscript contain parts of the early fourteenth-century poem *Cursor Mundi*. The hand (textura) in which the *NHC* portion is written is the same throughout, and the language is northern in character. The manuscript was bequeathed to the library in 1741 by Dr. John Drummond, and was mounted in cardboard and bound during the second half of the nineteenth century. The pages have been ruled, with two columns to a page and forty-three lines in each column. The Latin rubric is in red but the manuscript is otherwise exceedingly plain, with no ornamentation of any kind.

Where Edinburgh breaks off, I have continued with Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 42, which offers a relatively early, good, and nearly complete text of the entire collection (fols. 216–223 are missing). This manuscript, also northern in character, consists of 257 vellum leaves, written in a single text hand of the mid-fourteenth century. Each page has a single column containing thirty-eight lines, with faint ruling still usually visible. There are no illustrations, but a modest degree of ornamentation has been attempted. The Latin rubric is occasionally underlined in red, and the large blue letter that begins the Gospel paraphrase is infilled with a simple design; red vine-like scrollings run down the side of each page. On the first leaf, small red carets bracket individual couplets, but this practice is not continued elsewhere. Following the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity, some further items have been added: Purification (missing from its calendrical position); the Vigil and Feast of John the Baptist, and the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Neither of these two manuscripts is the original version, but, as noted above, both are northern in character and relatively early. Rather than relying solely on the more complete Ashmolean manuscript, I have chosen to begin with the Edinburgh fragment not only because it is significantly closer in time to the date of the *NHC*'s composition, but because of its highly distinctive northern features (see the section on Language below) and because it preserves at least one feature of the collection which was probably closer to the original than Ashmole (i.e., the tendency to include a significantly larger portion of the Latin rubric for each Sunday's Gospel passage; Ashmole often cites no more than the first four or five words and later manuscripts sometimes omit the rubric altogether). Additionally, the text for the Second Sunday in Advent includes a unique editorial comment to the effect that certain Latin verses describing the fifteen signs of the "last times" are to be omitted by the reader when he reads in English before the laity. Though these words cannot be taken as proof that the intention was carried out, they do offer an invaluable indication of the author's intention that the text was to be read aloud in church.

As will be seen from the notes, I have also consulted the following manuscripts from time to time, occasionally emending the text here presented based on their readings:

- Cambridge University Library MS Gg 5.31. Vellum, early fifteenth century, northern.
- Cambridge University Library MS Dd I.1. A long, narrow manuscript, principally on paper, perhaps intended to be carried in a saddle bag (i.e., a holster manuscript), early fifteenth century, language generally southern.
- Lambeth Palace MS 260. Paper, early fifteenth century, northern.

Following the policy of the Middle English Texts Series, I have spelled out all numerals; expanded all abbreviations; replaced thorn with *th*, yogh with *g*, *y*, *z*, or *gh*, and (usually) *ff* with *f*; and used the modern equivalent for *il/j* and *u/v*. The scribe of MS Ashmole 42 has occasionally written two lines of verse on a single line, a practice which I have silently corrected. Punctuation and capitalization follow modern conventions. According to the policy of the Middle English Text Series, certain nouns (God, Lord, Son, Holy Ghost, and a few others) referring to the Christian deity are capitalized; when designating Christ's mother, "lady" is also capitalized.

## LANGUAGE

The editors of the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* have identified the dialect of the Edinburgh manuscript as generally characteristic of Yorkshire.<sup>40</sup> N. R. Ker indicates that Angus McIntosh specified northwest Yorkshire.<sup>41</sup> With regard to MS Ashmole 42, James R. Sprouse has attempted in a recent article to pinpoint a precise geographical location and he concludes that the manuscript was copied in the West Riding of Yorkshire, close to the Lancashire border.<sup>42</sup> Augustinian houses were numerous in Yorkshire in the fourteenth century, and it seems more than possible that the original, as well as these two early copies,

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<sup>40</sup> McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin, eds., *Linguistic Atlas*, vol. 3: *Linguistic Profiles*, p. 570.

<sup>41</sup> Ker, Cunningham, and Watson, *Medieval Manuscripts*, vol. 2, p. 540.

<sup>42</sup> Sprouse, "Scribal Dialect," p. 105.

were created in one of them. I list below a few of the typically northern features that characterize both manuscripts:

Sounds: Old English *a* mostly remains unrounded: *nan* (none); *stan* (stone); *ga* (go); *gasteli* (ghostly).

Verbs: The suffix *-s* is used in the third person present tense, both singular and plural: *saise* (he says); *tase* (he takes); *heres* (they hear); *dryves* (they drive). The present participle ends in *-and*: *wonand* (dwelling); *livand* (living). The infinitive normally appears without final *-n*: *will knawe* (will know); *walde do* (would do). The preterite plural loses its final *-n*: *we herd* (we heard); *we wend* (we thought).

Pronouns: Third person feminine singular: *scho* (she); third person nominative plural: *thai* (they); third person accusative plural: *thaim* (them); demonstrative plural pronoun: *thir* (these).

Vocabulary: *kirk* (church); *mikil* (much); *swilk* (such); *kythe* (show); *sal, suld* (shall, should); *til* (to). References to northern vocabulary items of particular interest will be found in the notes.

In addition, Edinburgh shows the following unique northern features:

- 1) *qu-* for *wh-*: *quat, qua, quil, quen*, etc. (Ashmole: *what, wha, whil, when*, etc.)
- 2) Edinburgh also occasionally uses the form *ic* or *ik* for the first person singular pronoun (Ashmole 42 always has *I*).

## MANUSCRIPTS

The original unexpanded *NHC*:

- ED: Edinburgh, MS Royal College of Physicians. [First base-text for this edition, covering Homilies 1–13]<sup>43</sup>
- A: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 42 (S.C. 6923) [Second base-text for this edition, covering Homilies 14–59]<sup>44</sup>
- G: Cambridge University Library MS Gg. V. 31<sup>45</sup>
- D: Cambridge University Library MS Dd. II<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Described in Ker, Cunnigham, and Watson, *Medieval Manuscripts*, pp. 539–40.

<sup>44</sup> Described in Black, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>45</sup> In his *Register of Middle English Verse*, Carleton Brown has paginated MS Gg 5.31 in a way that future readers are likely to find confusing. A number of pages are missing at various points in the manuscript; the remaining pages are numbered in pencil, according to the original pagination. Brown, however, renumbers individual manuscript items according to the actual number of remaining pages, even though no such renumbering occurs in the manuscript itself. For this reason, I have provided the page numbers as noted in the manuscript.

<sup>46</sup> As is the case with MS Gg 5.31, MS Dd I.1 has also lost a significant number of pages. In this case, however, the original pagination has been cancelled in the manuscript itself and replaced by numbers reflecting the pages remaining. Carleton Brown's *Register* follows the manuscript's revised numbering and hence remains a reliable guide to finding individual items. However, the reader must

- L: Lambeth Palace Library MS 260
- Minneapolis, Minnesota University Library MS Z 822 N81
- San Marino, CA, Huntington Library MS HM 129
- Cambridge University Library MS Addit. 8335 (*olim* Bute)
- London, British Library MS Addit. 30358 (fragment)
- London, British Library MS Addit. 38010
- Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 30516 (Eng. poet. c.3) (fragment)
- Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 3440 (Arch. Selden Supra 52) (*exempla* only)
- Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 31791 (Eng. poet. c.4) (*exempla* only)
- London, British Library MS Harley 2391 (*exempla* only)
- Porkington 10 MS (*exempla* only)
- London, British Library MS Lat. misc. b. 17 (fragment)

The first *NHC* expansion:

- V: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. Poet a. 1 (the Vernon Manuscript)
- London, British Library Addit. 22283 (the Simeon Manuscript)

The second *NHC* expansion:

- London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius E VII
- London, British Library MS Harley 4196

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be careful to note that the old numbers have been canceled only on the recto sides of the MS; they remain unchanged on the verso sides.







## THE NORTHERN HOMILY CYCLE

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### PROLOGUE

	Fader and Sun and Haligast, That anfald God es ay stedfast, Worthi Driht in Trinité, A God, a miht, in persons thre;	<i>onefold; is ever Ruler One; one</i>
5	Withouten end and biginning, Rihtwis Lauerd and mihti Kyng That mad of riht noht alle thing And geres the erthe froit forthe bring: Witouten thee nan froit mai spring,	<i>Righteous Lord Who made everything from nothing makes; fruit</i>
10	For al es loken in thi welding. Thou ert Lauerd, that worthi Drihte That al ophaldes wiht thi mihte. Thou that al craftes kanne, Of erthe and lam thou made manne	<i>locked; power uphold with who understand all loam; man</i>
15	And gaf him gast of schilwisnes, That thou mad efter thi liknes. Thou filde this gaste sa full of witte, Sa quaynt and crafti mad thou itte, That al bestes er red for man,	<i>the spirit of reason Whom cunning are afraid of</i>
20	Sa mani wyle and wrenk he can. Forthi suld man in thi servis Despend his witte and his quaintis; For thu gaf man skil and insiht, And hevenis blis thou haves him hiht	<i>tricks; knows Therefore Use; cunning promised</i>
25	To kovenand that he serve thee riht And se and knau thi mikel miht. One thee bird be his mast thouht, That ses quat thou for him has wroht, And fra quat bale thou him broht,	<i>In covenant great On; ought [to] be When [he] sees what what trouble</i>
30	Quen thou fra helle on rode him boht. An unkind man es he, That turnes alle his thoht fra thee, And wel bird everilke man Lof God after that he kan:	<i>When; cross; redeemed unnatural ought every Praise God as best he knows how</i>
35	Lered men wit rihtwis lare,	<i>Learned; with good (just) teaching</i>

	And laued folk wit rihtwis fare;	<i>unlearned people (laity); behavior</i>
	Prestes wit matines and wit messe,	<i>matins; mass</i>
	And lewde men wiht rihtwisnes;	<i>unlearned</i>
	Clerk wit lar of Godes worde,	<i>knowledge (counsel)</i>
40	For he haves in him Godes horde	<i>treasure</i>
	Of wisdom and of gastlic lare,	<i>spiritual</i>
	That he ne aght noht forto spare,	<i>ought</i>
	Bot scheu it forth til laued menne,	<i>to ignorant</i>
	And thaim the wai til hevin kenne.	<i>make known</i>
45	For all sal we yeld acount,	<i>we will all give an account</i>
	Quat that wisdom mai amount,	
	That God havis given us for to spend,	<i>use</i>
	In god oys til our lives end.	
	Forthi suld ilke precheour schau	<i>each; make known</i>
50	The god that Godd havis gert him knau,	<i>made him know</i>
	For qua sa hides Godes gift,	<i>who</i>
	God mai chalange him of thift.	<i>accuse</i>
	In al thing es he nouht lele,	<i>loyal</i>
	That Godes gift fra man wil sele.	<i>conceal</i>
55	Forthi the litel that I kanne	
	Wil I schau til ilke manne,	
	Yf I kan mar god than he,	
	For than lif ic in charité;	<i>then I live</i>
	For god es wisdom that es kid,	<i>made known</i>
60	And nathing worthe quen it es hid.	<i>when</i>
	Forthi wil I of my povert,	<i>shortcoming</i>
	Schau sum thing that ik haf in hert,	<i>I have</i>
	On Ingelis tong that alle may	<i>English</i>
	Understand quat I wil say,	
65	For laued men haves mar mister,	<i>ignorant; have greater need</i>
	Godes word forto her,	
	Than klerkes that thair mirour lokes,	<i>who examine themselves</i>
	And sees hou thai sal lif on bokes;	
	And bathe klerk and laued man,	
70	Englis understand kan,	
	That was born in Ingeland,	
	And lang haves ben tharin wonand.	<i>dwelling</i>
	Bot al men can noht, iwis,	<i>certainly</i>
	Understand Latin and Frankis.	<i>French</i>
75	Forthi me think almous it isse,	<i>charity</i>
	To wirke sum god thing on Inglisse,	<i>compose</i>
	That mai ken lered and laued bathe	
	Hou thai mai yem thaim fra schathe,	<i>protect; harm</i>
	And stithe stand igain the fend,	<i>firmly; against; devil</i>
80	And til the blis of heven wend.	<i>go</i>
	Mi speche haf I mint to drawe,	<i>I intend to speak</i>
	Of Cristes dedes and his sau;	<i>sayings</i>

	On him mai I best found mi werke, And of his dedes tac mi merke,	
85	That maked al this werd of noht, And der mankind on rode boht. The faur Godspellers us schawes Cristes dedes and his sawes, Al faur a talle thay telle,	<i>world from nothing at great cost Gospel writers one tale</i>
90	Bot seer saues er in thair spelle, And of thair spel in kirk at messe, Er lezouns red bathe mar and lesse; For at everilke messe we rede Of Cristes wordes and his dede.	<i>various sayings are church</i>
95	Forthi tha Godspells that always Er red in kirc on Sundays, Opon Inglis wil ic undo, Yef God wil gif me grace tharto. For namlic on the Sunanday,	<i>In; expound If especially</i>
100	Comes lawed men thair bede to say To the kirc, an forto lere Gastlic lare that thar thai here; For als gret mister haf thay, To wit quat the Godspel wil say	<i>prayer learn Spiritual teaching; hear need know</i>
105	Als lered men, for bathe er bouht Wit Cristes blod, and sal be broht Til hevenes blis ful menskelie, Yef thai lef her rihtwislie. For wil ic on Inglis schau,	<i>graciously live here</i>
110	And ger our laued brether knawe, Quat alle tha Godspelles saies, That falles tille the Sunnendayes; That thai mai her and hald in hert, Thinge that thaim til God mai ert.	<i>lead</i>
115	And forthi at our biginninge, Pray we God of hevine kinge, That he help us forto bringe This ilke werk to god endinge; And gif me grace sua make	<i>so</i>
120	This werk for laued mennes sake, That I mai haf for my mede, Hevenrik blis quen I am dede. And our werc be worschipe To God, and to the fend sendschipe,	<i>reward Heavenly</i>
125	And joy til halwe and till angel,	

And Cresten folk til sauel hel.<sup>1</sup>

That it be sua, says inwardlye

“Pater noster,” “Ave Marie.” *Pater noster etc.*

*[In order] that it [may] be so, say*

“Our Father,” “Hail Mary”

*Explicit Prologus. Incipit ratio quare presens opus incipiat Dominicam primam Adventus Domini.*<sup>2</sup>

### RATIO

	Ar the fulthe of tim was comen	<i>Before; fullness</i>
	Satenas al folk aved nomen,	<i>had taken</i>
	For mankind in prison he helde,	
	Wihtouten help, witouten belde,	<i>joy</i>
5	Ai til God in Trinité	<i>Forever until</i>
	Of mankind hafd sa gret pité,	
	That he send his Son to take	
	Fleys and blod for mannes sake.	<i>Flesh</i>
	For witouten fleis and blode,	<i>redeem</i>
10	Moht Crist noht by apon the rode	<i>Might; purchase; cross</i>
	Mankind, that in fleis and felle,	<i>flesh and skin</i>
	Was demed to the pin of helle.	<i>condemned; pain</i>
	Forthi hafd God of man mercie,	<i>Therefore</i>
	That was bigiled thoru envie	
15	Of Satanas, that wiht lesinge	<i>lying</i>
	Gabbid Adam and his ospringe;	<i>Deceived; offspring</i>
	And gert mankind ga tille helle,	<i>made; go</i>
	Thar he suld evermar duelle,	
	Yef it ne havid ben Godd Almihti,	<i>If</i>
20	That send his Son thoru his merci,	
	To yeld for mankind raunceoun,	<i>yield; ransom</i>
	And lesse us al of prisoun.	<i>release</i>
	Goddes Sun and Goddes sande,	<i>gift</i>
	Com to les mankind of bande,	<i>release; bonds</i>
25	And was born of mayden Marye	
	Mankind on rode for to bie,	<i>purchase</i>
	And forthi that Crist com us to,	
	Our aller nedes for to do.	<i>The needs of us all</i>
	A monethe bifor his birthe,	
30	Hali Kirc wit menske and mirht,	<i>Holy Church with honor; mirth</i>
	Welcomes him everilke a yer,	<i>every</i>
	And thanks God on fair maner,	

<sup>1</sup> Lines 124–26: *Of God, and to the destruction of the devil, / And to the joy of saints and angels, / And to the salvation of Christian souls*

<sup>2</sup> *[Here] ends the Prologue. [Here] begins the reason why the present work begins with the first Sunday of the Advent of the Lord*

	For Cristes com and Goddes sande,	coming; gift
	That lesed us of the fendes bande.	freed; devil's bonds
35	And forthi at that blisful tyme,	therefore
	Quen Hali Kirk welcumes hime,	
	Wil I bigin to mak my spelle,	tale
	And of his com sumthing telle;	
	For Criste tocome mad endinge	arrival
40	Of al our soru and our murninge.	mourning

*Explicit istud precedens Argumentum. Incipit Evangelium eiusdem Dominici secundum Marcum.*<sup>1</sup>

### 1. FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*Inicium Evangelii Jhesu Cristi filii Dei, sicut scriptum est in Ysaya Propheta. Ecce mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam qui preparabit viam tuam ante te. Vox clamantis in deserto parate viam Domini, rectas semitas facite eius. Fuit Johannes in deserto et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	Sayn Mark byginnes his Godspel	
	Wit wordes that I wil you tel	
	And tas witnes of Ysaye	takes; Isaia
	That spekes of Crist in prophecye.	
5	This Ysaye than spekes ful even,	justly
	In the Fader nam of hevin,	In the name of the Father of heaven
	Til Crist of Sayn Johan the Baptiste,	To Christ about Saint John the Baptist
	That bodword broht of him that Crist.	announcement
	"I send," he says, "My messenger	
10	Bifor thi face thi word to ber,	
	That sal graithe bifor thee the way,	prepare
	Wit word that he of thee wil say."	
	Thir wordes says God Almihty,	These
	Thoru the prophet Malachye,	
15	And als than spekis Ysaie	also
	Of Sayn Jon ful openlye	
	Thai scheu bathe an wit sere letter, <sup>3</sup>	
	Forthi bers us trow thaim the better.	Therefore we ought to believe

<sup>1</sup> This ends the preceding explanation. [Here] begins the Gospel for this Sunday according to Mark

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Mark 1:1–8): *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaia the prophet: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee. A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. John was in the desert [baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance, unto remission of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying: There cometh after me one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.]*

<sup>3</sup> They both say the same thing with many [different] letters

- 20      Thay tald hou Sayn Jon the Baptist  
         Suld graythe the gates bifor Criste, *prepare the way for*  
         For Sayn Jon was in wildernes,  
         And baptized folk in forgifnes  
         Of sin, and kend thaim the way *showed*  
         Tilward that blis that lastes ay. *Toward; forever*  
 25      For mikel folk of a contré *many*  
         That our Godspelles kalles Judé *Judea*  
         And of Jerusalemes cité,  
         Com of Sain Jon baptized to be;  
         Thai schraf thaim of thair sines clen, *confessed*  
 30      And Sayn Jon baptized thaim biden. *at once*  
         In strang penance his life he ledde, *severe*  
         Wit camel hare was he cledde, *hair; clothed*  
         Wod hony and froit he ete, *Wild*  
         And taht the folk thair sine to bete, *taught; amend*  
 35      And said, "A stither gom than I, *stronger man*  
         Efter me sal com in hy, *soon*  
         That es so mensful and mihty, *full of honor*  
         That I meself es noht worthi  
         To les the thuanges of his schon, *To untie the thongs of his shoes*  
 40      Sa mikel god thoru him bes don. *much*  
         For I in water bapptiz you,  
         Bot apon him aw ye to trow, *ought; believe*  
         For he sal wit the Hali Gaste  
         Baptiz you and your sinnes waste." *dispel*  
 45      This es the strenthe of our Godspel,  
         That man with Englis tung mai telle.
- In this Godspel als think me, *as I think*  
         Tua thinges may we gastli se. *Two; spiritually see*  
         The first es worsip and louing *praise*  
 50      Of Jhesu Cristes tocoming. *coming*  
         For it falles to a mihty king, *is appropriate*  
         That messagers word of him bring  
         Ar he com tille his biging, *Before; home*  
         Als Sain Jon broht of Crist tithing,  
 55      Of quaim Ysay the prophet *whom*  
         Bers witnes wit wordes suet;  
         And Sain Mark settes his witnes,  
         In our Godspel als wel worthé es.  
         The tother thinge that we may se, *other*  
 60      In our Godspel als think me,  
         Than es the gret derworthines *preciousness*  
         Of precheours that bers witnes  
         Of this tocom and mas it couthe,  
         Wit word that comes of thair mouthe; *coming; make it known*

- 65 For thai er Cristes messagers,  
 Til al that thair sarmoun heres. *To all who*  
 Thay telle the folk on quat maner *what*  
 That mankind was to Godd sa der *so dear to God*  
 That he send his Son us to,
- 70 Our aller nedes forto do: *All of our*  
 That was our Lauerd Crist Jesus,  
 That was send todey for us.  
 Forthi bird us in his cuming, *Therefore we ought*  
 Welcum him als worthi king,
- 75 For in hali bok find we  
 Of Cristes tocuminges thre. *Of Christ's three appearances*  
 The first was quen he com to tak *when*  
 Fleis and blod for mannes sak. *Flesh; sake*  
 He lyhted doun ful mekeli *humbly*
- 80 Into the maiden wamb Mary, *virgin*  
 And schop him bodi of hir fleyse, *created*  
 And dubbed him wit our liknes, *made himself*  
 And welk in werld als sinful man, *walked*  
 Bot sinles was he al an; *all one*
- 85 Wit our licnes bigiled he  
 The fend that his manhed moht se, *fiend (i.e., the devil); human nature*  
 Bot pride made the fend sa blind,  
 That his Godhed moht he noht find. *divine nature might*  
 He wend that Crist war noht bot man, *believed; nothing*
- 90 And thoru his Godhed was he tan. *caught*  
 Cristes Godhed the fend tok  
 Als fisce is tan wit bait and hoc; *As fish is taken; hook*  
 For his Godhed in fleis was felid *concealed*  
 Als hok in bait, quare thoru he telid *deceived*
- 95 The fend that telid our fadir Adam, *who deceived*  
 And broht mankind in mikel blam; *much*  
 Haved Satenas wist witerlye *Had; known certainly*  
 That Criste havid ben Godd almihtye,  
 For al this werld havid he noht gert, *made*
- 100 The Jowes sting him to the hert. *Jews*  
 Bot for he sau him noht bot man, *he (Satan) saw*  
 Godhed in him wend he war nan, *thought*  
 Forthi he fanded ithenlye, *attempted busily*  
 To harl him intil his balye. *thrust; dominion (custody)*
- 105 He wend wel wit him to fare, *act*  
 Als he havid don with other are; *others before*  
 For quen Crist suelt apon the tre, *died; cross*  
 His sauel gern spied he, *soul eagerly*  
 Yef he moht se or find tharinne,
- 110 Any filth or spotte ofe sinne.  
 And for he fand tharin riht nan,



- Als fisc wit hok was he tan.  
 The fendes miht that was ful stithe, *so strong*  
 That he was won bifor to kithe, *accustomed; show*  
 115 Was alle taken in Cristes hand,  
 That him in hel sa harde band, *bound*  
 That nevermar sal he wend *escape*  
 Out of helle, bot ay thar lend. *dwell*  
 And Crist reft him than mani man, *then deprived him of*  
 120 That he fra Crist bifor havid tan. *taken*  
 For son, quen Crist on rod was slain, *at once; rood (cross)*  
 He herid hel als mihti thain, *harrowed; warrior*  
 And broht thaim al that war his, *all who belonged to him*  
 Mihtfullik intill his blis;  
 125 His Godhed and his sauel samen, *soul together*  
 Broht thaim al fra pin to gamen. *pain; joy*  
 Thus com ur Lauerd Crist us to  
 To bring us al til rest and ro; *peace*  
 Forthi beres man that ese mad hale, *ought man, who is made whole*  
 130 And blissfully bette of his bale, *and blissfully healed of his torment*  
 Welcom Crist that com to bring  
 Us til his blis als mighti King.
- Nou se ye qui and for quas sake, *why; whose*  
 Crist com til us our kind to take. *nature*  
 135 His first com was bodilye, *appearance*  
 Bot another est gastilye: *is spiritual*  
 That es quen Crist gifes us wille  
 His comandmenz to fulfille.  
 For son, quen we haf wil to do  
 140 Al that the precheour says us to,  
 And feles our hert in charité *fills*  
 Forsothe ful siker mai we be, *Truly; sure*  
 That Crist es comen intil our hertes *into*  
 Gastli, that us til godnes ertes, *Spiritually; draws*  
 145 Of usself haf we noht bot sin, *ourselves*  
 Bot quen Crist wirkes us witin,  
 Than at the first beginne we,  
 God Cresten men to be, *Good Christian*  
 That may ye se aperteli, *openly*  
 150 Wit mani ensaumpel witerly, *certainly*  
 Namly bi Mari Maudelayn, *Magdalene*  
 That lang haved in sin lain;  
 Quen Crist com gastly til hir hert,  
 Ris of hir sinne son he hir gert,  
 155 For son, quen scho havid hir tanne *Rise up from; soon; made*  
 To Crist, scho wex a god womman, *she*  
*became*

	Of hir wil ik aperteli telle, Yef ye will list and lithe mi spel.	<i>I will openly speak hear my tale</i>
	Werldes welthe gert Marie wede,	<i>made Mary mad</i>
160	Quil scho was yong in hir fairhede. Scho gaf hir hert til sinful play, And kest hir maidenhed awaiy, For rifli gers werldes win Thir fair wimmen fal in sin.	<i>frequently worldly pleasure makes These</i>
165	Scho lived hir lif in licherye, Ai til Crist haved of hir mercie; He com til hir hert gastelye, And gert hir leve al hir folie. Sco umthot hir quat scho haved tint,	<i>lechery Always reflected; lost</i>
170	And igan sin gan scho stint. Hir rewed of himself ful sare, And haved for hir sin slic kare That nane that hers spek of Marie Thar haf wanhop of Godes mercie;	<i>against; cease repented; sorrowfully such hears</i>
175	For do man never sa mikel sin, And he wil his sin blin, Godd of hevin es ai redi, For to haf of him mercie. That was sen in the Maudelayn,	<i>Need have despair If; cease</i>
180	That burd mak sinful man ful fain. Sain Louk the god Godspeller, Telles us on quat maner, That this ilc sinful Marye, Gat forgifnes and mercie.	<i>ought; glad Luke what same</i>
185	He sais that in that ilk toun, Woned a man that hiht Symoun, Thar Mary woned that tim that scho Hafd will penanz forto do. This ilk Simonde was mesel,	<i>Dwelled; was called Where Had [the] will to do penance</i>
190	Bot Crist hafd gifen him his hel; He hafd inoh quarof to lif, And almous to the pouer gif. Fel auntour that he prayd Crist To eet wit him at his biwist,	<i>leper health enough [wealth] with which alms; poor</i>
195	And Crist that seknes fra him kest, Com and eet wit him als gest; And son, quen Mari herd telle, That Crist sudd to the meet thar duelle,	<i>It happened home meal</i>
200	Sco com thar Crist himselven sete, And sua sar than gun scho grete, That wit teres sco wes his fete, That scho of hir eyen lete.	<i>She came to where so ruefully she began to cry out tears; washed</i>

- Scho wiped his feet wit hir hare,  
 And kissed thaim wit suetli suare,  
 205 And blotned thaim wit smersles suete,  
 That al feled suetnes that thar sete.  
 Scho havid boht this oinment  
 To smer hir auen bodi gent,  
 To mak suet smelland hir bodye,  
 210 Quil scho haunted hir folye.  
 This Symond, of quaym I spak are,  
 Biheld this womman lufli fare,  
 And thoht that yef Crist war prophet,  
 Him bird wit qua handeles his fet;  
 215 Als qua say, him bird wit that scho  
 War noht worthi this dede to do,  
 For sin mas hir unworthi,  
 To nehe him that sud be hali.  
 And als Symond thoht this,  
 220 Crist wist quat he thoght, iwis,  
 And said, "Symond, tak yem to me,  
 Ik haf sumthing to spek wit thee."  
 Simond ansuerd and said him tille,  
 "Sai on, Maister, quat es thi wille."  
 225 And Crist sette him ensaumpel than,  
 And said it was a riche man,  
 This riche man havid dettours fel,  
 And sum war fals and sum war lele.  
 A man haht him fifty penis,  
 230 Another an honderet or the prise,  
 And nauther haved penis forto yeld,  
 And he kid thaim curtaysi and beld,  
 And forgaf thaim thair dette bathe,  
 Witouten stez, witouten schathe:  
 235 Quether of thir tua lufd him mar?  
 And Symond ansuerd Crist ful yar,  
 And said, "He quaym he mar forgafe,  
 Wit riht mar lufe sudd til him hafe."  
 And Crist said, "Thou havis demid riht,  
 240 For thus fars dette of sinful pliht;  
 I com hider in als uncouthen man,  
 Water to min fet bedd thou nan.  
 And this womman havis wasced mi fet,  
 Wit salt teres that sco gret,  
 245 And hir hevid havis scho mad al bare,  
 And wiped min fet wit hir hare;  
 Thou kissed me noht sin I com ine,  
 To kis min fet can scho noht blin;  
 Forthi es hir forgiven hir sin,
- pleasant words*  
*dried; ointment*  
  
*bought*  
*anoint; own; beautiful*  
  
*earlier*  
*this woman's lovely behavior*  
  
*He ought to know who*  
*In other words*  
  
*makes*  
*approach*  
*as*  
*certainly*  
*heed*  
  
*many debtors*  
*loyal*  
*owed; pence*  
*or the equivalent*  
*neither; give*  
*showed; help*  
  
*Voluntarily; harm*  
*Which of those two loved*  
*readily*  
  
*should*  
*have judged*  
*So it fares with the debt of a sinful condition*  
*unknown*  
*offered*  
  
*she wept*  
  
*since*  
*cease*

250	For mikel luf that scho kidd herin. The les that man luv es me, The les sin mai him forgiven be, Bot for hir luf es til me lele I forgif hir sinnes ful fele.	<i>showed herein</i> <i>less</i>  <i>loyal</i> <i>many</i>
255	Ga," he said, "womman, in pes, For al thi sinnes forgiven es." This tal haf I tald you, To scheu on quat maner and hou, That quen Crist cumes intil our hertes,	<i>Go</i>     
260	To lef our sin he us ertes, And gers us ask him forgivenes, Of al our sinnes mar and les. His first tocom was bodili Quen he was born of our Lefdi,	<i>leave; leads</i>    <i>coming</i> <i>Lady (i.e., Virgin Mary)</i>
265	For than he com in fles and bane For to hel sinful man; His other com es gastilye, Til our hert, quen we lef folye, For of usself haf we bot sin,	<i>bone</i> <i>heal</i> <i>second coming; spiritual</i> <i>abandon</i> <i>nothing but</i>
270	Of him comes al our welth and win, For quen he cumes gastlic us to, Than haf we wil us god to do. Nou haf ye herd twifald tocom, The thred sal be on Day ofe Dom,	<i>joy</i>    <i>of two appearances</i> <i>third; Judgment Day</i>
275	Quen we sal ris thoru blast of bem And Crist sal cum al folc to dem. To god men sal he be quem, And to the wik ful grisli sem; Igain thaim sal he be sa brem,	<i>trumpet</i> <i>judge</i> <i>agreeable</i> <i>wicked; gruesome</i> <i>Against; fierce</i>
280	That of his land he sal thaim flem. Of this tocom tel I noht nou, For Crist himselven telles hou He sal cum than, and wit quat miht, In our Godspel todai sefniht,	<i>banish</i>    <i>in a week's time</i>
285	And qua sa wil that Godspel her, Than mai ye se on quat maner Crist sal cum to dem us alle, For igain him may we noht calle; Forthi red I we al pray	    <i>advise</i>
290	That he be til us quem that day, And bring us til his mikel blis, That til rihtwis men graithed es. Amen, say we al samen, Thar bes joy and endles gamen. Amen.	    <i>just; prepared</i> <i>together</i> <i>mirth</i>

## 2. SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*Dominica ii. Adventus Domini secundum Lucam*<sup>1</sup>

*Dixit Jhesu Crist discipulis suis, Erunt signa in sole, et luna, et stellis, et in terris, pressura gentium pre confusione sonitus maris et fluctuum. Arescentibus hominibus pre timore et expectatione que supervenient universo orbi et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

*Incipit explanatio eiusdem evangelii ad latinam*<sup>3</sup>

	Today Sain Louk telles us	
	In our Godspel, that Jesus	
	Spac of thing that es to com,	
	And namlic of the Day of Dom.	<i>Judgment Day</i>
5	“Takning,” he said “sal be don	<i>Signs; shall be given</i>
	Bathe in the son, and in the mon,	<i>Both; sun; moon</i>
	And in the sternes al biden;	<i>stars; at once</i>
	And folc sal thol wandreth and ten,	<i>suffer; sorrow; harm</i>
	For folc sal duin for din of se,	<i>waste away because of the sea’s noise</i>
10	And for baret that than sal be.	<i>trouble</i>
	Over al this werd bes rednes,	<i>world will be; fear</i>
	Wandreth and uglines.	<i>terror</i>
	For mihti gastes of the hevin	<i>spirits</i>
	Sal be afrayed of that stevin.	<i>Shall; frightened; noise</i>
15	Than sal Crist cum that men may se,	
	In maistri and in gret pousté.	<i>superiority; power</i>
	Quen this bigines for to be,	<i>When this begins</i>
	Lokes up and ye may se	
	That your biing and your pris	<i>redemption; purchase</i>
20	Ful ner cumen tilward you is.”	<i>Very near to you has come</i>
	Himself our byinge he calld,	<i>He called himself our redemption</i>
	For he boht us quen he was salde.	<i>sold</i>
	Quen Criste havid said this grimli sau,	<i>these grim words</i>
	An ensaumpel gan he schau,	<i>example; show</i>
25	And said, “Quen ye se lefes spring,	<i>leaves</i>

<sup>1</sup> *The Second Sunday of the Advent of the Lord, according to Luke*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 21:25–33): *Jesus said to his disciples, And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; Men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. [For the powers of heaven shall be moved; And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude. See the fig tree, and all the trees: When they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh; So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.]*

<sup>3</sup> [Here] begins the explanation of that same Evangelist according to the Latin

	And thir tres froit forthe bring,	<i>the trees bring forth fruit</i>
	Than wat we wel that somer es ner.	<i>know</i>
	Als may ye wit on that maner	<i>Similarly; know in that way</i>
	Quen ye se thir takeninges in land,	<i>the signs</i>
30	That Crist es ful ner cumand.	<i>coming</i>
	For hevin and erthe sal pas thar,	<i>pass away</i>
	Bot my word passes nevermar;	
	Als qua sai, thing that I you telle,	<i>As if to say</i>
	Ne mai na miht fordo ne felle.	<i>No power may destroy or subvert</i>
35	Quen this werld that I mad of noht	<i>from nothing</i>
	Sal be gane and til end broht,	
	Than sal mi word be sothefast,	<i>enduring</i>
	For mi kinric sal ever last.”	<i>kingdom</i>
	This es the strenthe of our Godspel,	
40	Als man wit Inglis tung may tel.	
	The maister on this Godspel preches,	<i>master</i>
	And sais that Crist tharin us teches	
	For to forsak this werdes winne,	<i>world's pleasure</i>
	Ful of wrechedhed and sinne,	<i>wretchedness</i>
45	For Crist sais us hou it sal end	
	And warnes us ful fair als frend.	
	He telles us takeninges snelle	<i>fierce signs</i>
	Thar he biginnes his Godspelle,	<i>Where</i>
	And sais kinric sal rohly rise	<i>kingdom; violently</i>
50	Igain kinric, and ger men grise;	<i>make men terrified</i>
	For bal sal ger thir berness blede,	<i>misery; children bleed</i>
	And mak in land hunger and nede.	<i>create</i>
	This bale sal bald baret breu,	<i>This trouble will stir up reckless strife</i>
	And fel mikel of this werdes gleu.	<i>destroy much; world's joy</i>
55	Slic wordes said Crist of thir wers	<i>Such; wars</i>
	That folc in werd ful derf deres;	<i>strongly injure</i>
	For quatkin wer sal fal in land,	<i>whatever kind of war</i>
	Til pouer folk es it sarest schouand.	<i>poor; most grievously manifest</i>
	That felis wel nou Hali Kirk,	<i>feels; Holy Church</i>
60	That bers of baret be ful irk;	<i>Which ought to be very angry with that strife</i>
	For it and pouer men havis bathe	
	Of wer and wandreht al the schathe,	<i>war; sorrow; harm</i>
	This baret prinnes pouer pride	<i>This strife pierces poor pride</i>
	Als thai wel wat that walkes wide,	<i>know who</i>
65	Bot werdes haht and hey tures	<i>worldly possessions; high towers</i>
	Getes thir cité men fra stures;	<i>Protect; strife</i>
	For the riche men havis ay, iwis,	<i>always; certainly</i>
	Inohe of met and drinc and blis,	<i>Enough; food</i>
	Bot pouer tholes the baret,	<i>poor people suffer</i>
70	That havis default of clathe and met.	<i>lack of clothing and food</i>
	And forthi warnes Jesus bathe	

	Riche and pouer of thair schathe, Thar he schaues in our Godspelle Takeninges that bird our pride felle.	<i>destruction Where ought to destroy our pride</i>
75	He sais takeninges sal be don Bathe in the sone and in the mon: The sun sal turn intil mirknes, Als sais Joel, that bers witnes Of Crist, that thir takeninges us schaues	<i>darkness who bears witness</i>
80	In our Godspelle wit grisli sawes. For mon, he sais, sal turned be Intil blod, that folk sal se, Quen sun and mon sal thusgat turn, Than sal the sinful sar scurn,	<i>sayings the moon  in this manner sorely tremble</i>
85	For than may thai wit witerly, That Crist sal com to dem in hi. Bot god men sal nathing dred, For than sal thai be seker of med In that blisful land that thay	<i>know certainly to judge on high  certain; reward</i>
90	Sal ever lif in gamen and play; And Crist in our Godspel forthy Confortes us ful mildeli, And bides us lok til grouand tres: For quen men leues on thaim sees,	<i>joy  growing trees leaves</i>
95	Men wat that ful ner es somer comand, And riht sua mai we understand Quen we se thir takenis cume, That nerhand es the Dai of Dom.	<i>coming just so come close at hand; Judgment Day</i>
100	Bot for Crist spekes of takeninge That tithand of this Dom sal bringe, Forthi es god that I you telle Sumthing of thir takeninges snelle: Sain Jerom telles that fifteen	<i>news  fierce</i>
105	Ferli takeninges sal be sen Bifor the Day of Dom, and sal Ilkan of thaim on ser dai fal. The first dai sal al the se Boln and ris and heyer be Than ani fel of al the land,	<i>Marvelous judgment Each one; different days fall sea Swell; higher hill</i>
110	And als a felle up sal it stand; The heyt tharof sal passe the felles Bi sexti fot, als Jerom telles, And als mikel the tother day Sal it sattel and wit away,	<i>height; surpass  much; next settle; wither</i>
115	And be lauer than it nou esse, For water sal it haf wel lesse. The thride dai mersuine and qualle	<i>lower  dolphin and whale</i>

- And other gret fises alle *fishes*  
 Sal yel, and mak sa reuful ber *Will yell; grievous noise*  
 120 That soru sal it be to her.  
 The ferthe day freis water and se *fresh*  
 Sal bren als fir and glouand be. *burn; fire; glowing*  
 The fift day sal greses and tres *grasses*  
 Suet blodi deu that grisli bes. *Sweat; dew; is*  
 125 The sexte day sal doun falle  
 Werdes werks, bathe tours and halle. *Worldly works; towers*  
 The sevend day sal stanes gret *huge stones*  
 Togider smit and bremlly bete. *strike; fiercely resound*  
 And al the erthe the ahtande day *eighth*  
 130 Sal stir and quac and al folc slay. *quake*  
 The neynd day the felles alle  
 Be mad al evin wit erthe salle. *level*  
 The tend dai sal folc up crep,  
 Als wod men of pittes dep. *mad men out of deep caves*  
 135 The elleft day sal banes rise *eleventh; bones*  
 And stand on graves thar men nou lies. *where*  
 The tuelft day sal sternes falle. *stars*  
 The thretend day sal quek men dey alle, *living; die*  
 Wit other ded men to rise,  
 140 And com wit thaim to gret asise. *judgment*  
 The faurtend day, at a schift *On the fourteenth day, with one common fate*  
 Sal bathe brin bathe erthe and lift. *Earth and air will both burn*  
 The fifetende day thai bathe  
 Sal be mad newe and fair ful rathe, *quickly*  
 145 And al ded men sal rise,  
 And cum bifer Crist our Justise.

*Unde Versus de eiusdem Signis*

*Whence verses about the signs of the same*

- Signis ter quinis se prodet ad ultima finis  
 Mundani motus Domino soli modo notus.  
 In signo primo surget mare stans quasi murus  
 150 Erigat in proprios post pauca sinus rediturus,  
 Etque quater denis cubitis transcendere montes  
 Cernetur, paucique fluent in flumina fontes.  
 Oculet in signo sic se maris unda secundo,  
 Ut vix aspectum capiat: diversa profundo  
 155 Monstra super fluctus post hec ubi nata patebunt,  
 Rugitusque sui celos horrore movebunt.  
 Quarto cum fluviis ardebunt equoris unde,  
 Fontibus ut latices effundant non erit unde.  
 Rorem sanguineum quinto deducet ab herbis  
 160 Horror et arboribus lacrimis perfusus acerbis.  
 Hinc turre et tecta cadent, quia dirvet edes



- Sexta dies, omnis que solo ruet ardua sedes.  
 Augebit lapidum conflictus in orbe timorem,  
 Terribilemque dabit collisio seva fragorem.  
 165 Concuciet terram post hec motus generalis,  
 Omnia conturbans, horrendus, et exitialis.  
 Omnibus equatis in plano terra jacebit,  
 Strata superficies nichil asperitatis habebit.  
 Hinc velud amentes exhibunt ante latentes  
 170 In latebris homines et fari nulla valentes.  
 Sicca super tumbis post hec surgencia stabunt.  
 Ossa iterumque suis se carnibus associabunt  
 Casus stellarum signans discrimine finem  
 Nesciet ulterius clarum deducere finem.  
 175 Corpore viventes simul absque mora morientur,  
 Ut pariter clangente tuba cuncti reperentur.  
 Optimus inde status celum terramque novabit,  
 Luce sub eterna, quem nulla dies variabit,  
 Convocet ut cunctos cum buccina protinus urgens  
 180 Judicis ante pedes veniet plebs tota resurgens.<sup>1</sup>

*Isti versus omittantur a lectore quando legit Anglicum coram laycis.<sup>2</sup>*

Than sal Crist dem als king ful wis,  
 And ger the sinful sare grise.  
 Sa grisly sal he to thaim be,  
 That thaim war lever that thai moht fle

judge  
 make; greatly fear  
 dreadful  
 That they would rather; might

<sup>1</sup> Lines 147–80: *By fifteen signs the end of the world's motion reveals itself / To the last, known only to the Lord alone. / In the first sign the sea will rise, standing as if a wall / Were to rise, bound to return to its own coastline after a few (days?), / And also will be seen to surmount the mountains by forty cubits, / And few springs will flow into the rivers. / In the second sign a wave of the sea will hide itself in such a way / That it will scarcely take a sight: monsters of different sorts / From the depths will be revealed after this above the waves where they were born / And their roars will heave the heavenly hosts with horror. / In the fourth the waves of the sea will burn together with the rivers, / There will not be a place from which the waters may pour forth from springs. / In the fifth dread will draw down bloody dew from grass / And trees, horror soaked with bitter tears. / After this towers and houses will fall, since the sixth day will wreck / The buildings, and every lofty seat will fall crashing to the ground. / A clashing together of stones will increase fear in the world, / And the cruel collision will give a fearful uproar. / After this a widespread earthquake will shake the land to its foundations, / Throwing all things into confusion, frightful, and death-dealing. / Once everything has been made flat, the earth will lie in an even plain, / The surface, laid low, will have no unevenness at all. / Hence men will go out like madmen lying hidden before / In their lairs and being able to say nothing. / After this the rising dryness will stand above the tombs. / And again the bones will join themselves to their own flesh, / The falling of stars signaling the end with their separation / Will not know how to bring down their bright end any further. / Those living in their bodies at the same time and without delay will die, / Just as equally all men will be called by the resounding horn. / After this the best condition will renew heaven and earth, / Under an everlasting light, which (condition) no day will change, / Just as when the rousing trumpet will immediately call together all men, / The whole common people rising up will come before the feet of the Judge.*

<sup>2</sup> *These verses may be omitted by the reader when he reads in English before the laity.*

- 185 Fra that dom that he sal dem *judgment; judge*  
 Than al this werd, sa bes he brem *world; so fierce is he*  
 Tille thaim that sinful cumes thar.  
 And forthi sal thai gret sar, *weep*  
 And say, "Allas that we war born,  
 190 Schamlic haf we usself forlorn." *ourselves lost*  
 Than salle thair wike dedes alle, *wicked*  
 Stand and igaines thaim kalle, *against; call out*  
 And with ther takeninge ber wittnes  
 Of thair sin and thair wiknes. *wickedness*  
 195 Of mikel soru sal thai telle,  
 For Satenas wit fers felle, *companions evil*  
 To bind thaim sal be ful snelle, *quick*  
 And bremli draw thaim till helle,  
 Thar thai sal evermare duelle,  
 200 And wafullic in pines welle, *woefully burn in pain*  
 And endeles of soru telle.
- This bes thair dom that her in sin  
 Ligges, and wil thair sin noht blin;  
 Bot wald thai thinc on Domes Dai  
 205 Thaim bird lef thair plihtful play. *Lie; cease*  
 Allas, allas, quat sal thai say *But if they would think*  
 Bifor him that miht ful may, *They ought to abandon their sinful play*  
 Quen al the men that was and esse *is all powerful*  
 Sal se thair sines mare and lesse,  
 210 And al the angeles of the hevin,  
 And ma fendes than man mai nafen. *more; name*  
 Igain sawe may thar nan be,  
 Of thing that alle men may se.<sup>1</sup>  
 Of this openlic schauing *open revelation*  
 215 Havis Godd schawed many taking.  
 Of a taking that I haf herd telle,  
 That falles wel til our Gosselle.<sup>2</sup>
- A blak munk of an abbaye  
 Was enfermer of all, I herd say. *custodian of the infirmary*  
 220 He was halden an hali man *considered*  
 Imange his felaus everilkan;  
 An cloyster monk loved him ful wel, *Among; every one*  
 And was til him ful speciel, *cloistered*  
 For rivelic togider drawes

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 212–13: *A thing that all men may see cannot be gainsaid*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 216–17: *I have heard tell of one such token / That is most appropriate to our Gospel*

- 225    Faithe, lufreden, god felawes.<sup>1</sup>  
       Fel auntour that this enfermer  
       Was sek, and he that was him der  
       Com to mak him glad and blithe,  
       And his lufredene til him to kithe.  
       *It happened by chance*  
       *friendship; show*  
 230    He asked him hou he him felid,  
       And he his stat alle til him telld,  
       And said, "Ful hard fel I me —  
       To dede I drawe als ye mai se."  
       His felau was for him sary,  
       And praied him ful gern forthie,  
       That yef Godd did of him his wille,  
       That he suld scheu his stat him tille.  
       This seke monk hiht to com him to,  
       Yef he moht get lef tharto:  
       *how he felt*  
       *condition*  
       *I feel very ill*  
       *death*  
 235    "I sal," he said, "yef I may,  
       Com to thee my stat to say."  
       Quen this was sayd, he deyed son,  
       And his felau asked his bon,  
       And prayed Godd for his mercye,  
       That he suld schew him openly,  
       Other wakand or slapand,  
       Of his felaw state sum tithand.  
       And als he lay apon a niht,  
       His felaw com wit lemes liht,  
       And tald him bathe of hevin and helle;  
       And he prayed he suld him telle  
       His state; and he said, "Wel far I  
       Thoru the help of our Lefdi.  
       War scho ne hafd ben, I havid gan  
       To won in helle wit Satan."  
       His felau thoht herof ferly,  
       And asked him quarfor and qui,  
       And sayd, "We wend alle wel that thou  
       Haved ben an hali man til nou:  
       Hou sal it far of us kaytefes,  
       That in sin and foli lyes,  
       Quen thou that led sa hali life,  
       Was demed tille hell for to drife?"  
       Quen this was said, the ded ansuerd  
       And tald his felaw hou he ferd,  
       And said, "Son quen I gaf the gaste,  
       Tille my dom was I led in haste,  
       And als I stod mi dom to her  
       *eagerly*  
       *if*  
       *condition*  
       *promised*  
       *might; permission*  
       *made his request*  
       *in his mercy*  
       *tidings*  
       *bright rays of light*  
       *I am doing well*  
       *Were it not for her*  
       *dwell*  
       *amazing*  
       *wherefore and why*  
       *thought*  
       *fare with us wretches*  
       *Were judged [worthy] to be driven to hell*  
       *dead man*  
       *what he experienced*  
       *As soon as I gave up the ghost*  
       *judgment*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 224–25: *For commonly faith and friendship draw good fellows together*

- 270      Bifor Jesus, wit dreri cher, *mournful expression*  
           Of fendes herd ic mani upbrayd, *complain*  
           And a boc was bifor me layd,  
           That was the Reuel of Sain Benet, *Benedictine Rule*  
           That ic hiht to hald and get. *promised; keep*  
           This Reul thai gert me rapli rede. *made; quickly*  
 275      And als I red, sar gan I drede,  
           For overlop moht I mac nan, *omission might I make none*  
           Bot of the clauses everilkan  
           Yald ic acount, hou I thaim held, *I yielded an account*  
           And my conciens gan me meld. *betray*  
 280      It schawed thar ful openlye  
           That I led mi lif wrangwislie,  
           For in the Reul es mani pas, *section*  
           That than igain me casten was, *was laid against me*  
           Quarthoru almast haved I thare *Whereby*  
 285      Be demid til helle for to fare. *go*  
           Bot for I lufed wel our Lefdye *because; loved*  
           Quil I lifd, ic hafd forthie *While*  
           Ful god help thar thoru hir mercy;  
           For scho bisoht Crist inwardlie *entreated; earnestly*  
 290      That I moht in purgatorie  
           Clens mi sin and mi folye.  
           Forthi hop I to far ful welle, *hope*  
           For mi soru sal son kele; *grow cold*  
           Forthi, my frend, I prai thee,  
 295      That thou ger felaues prai for me.” *make my fellow monks*  
           Quen this was said, awai he went,  
           And his felawe ful mikel hem ment, *kept him in mind*  
           And efter this siht mani a dai *sight*  
           Gert he for his sawell prai. *Did*  
 300      This tal haf I tald you,  
           To schew on quat maner and hou  
           We sal be demed, and yeld account  
           Quat our sinnes mai amount.  
           For al sal com to rounge, iwis,  
 305      Thar, that her mistakin isse  
           Bi the lest idel thoht;  
           For thar forgifnes bes riht noht.<sup>1</sup>  
           Than sal we bye the sines dere *pay for; dearly*  
           Of quilke we er noht schriven here; *which; are not confessed*  
 310      Yef we be her of sines schriven,

<sup>1</sup> Lines 304–07: *For, indeed, everyone will be tormented / There, who makes a mistake here / In [even] the least idle thought; / For there there is no forgiveness*

	Thar havis Godd us thaim forgiven, Forthi birdd us our sin her bete, Wit schrift of mouthe and wonges wete. For schrift of mouthe es medecine	<i>we ought; amend oral confession; wet cheeks</i>
315	That schildes man fra helle pin; For if we schrif us clen of sinne Wit penanz, ded we sal haf winne, And mai be siker on Domes Dai, To wind intil that blisful plai,	<i>shields; pain  we will have joy after we are dead certain proceed; pleasure</i>
320	Thar Crist sal evermar be King; For his merci he thider us bring.	<i>In; [may] he</i>

### 3. THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*Dominica iii. Adventus Domini secundum Matheum.*<sup>1</sup>

*Cum audisset Johannes in vinculis opera Cristi, mittens duos de discipulis suis, ait illi; Tu es qui venturus es, an alium expectamus. Et respondens Jhesu Crist, dixit illis: Euntes renunciate Johanni que audistis et vidistis. Ceci vident, claudi ambulant. et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	Sayn Mathew the Wangeliste Sais that Sain Jon the Baptiste Was in prisoun, and herd telle Of Cristes dedes and his spelle,	<i>Evangelist   preaching</i>
5	And send of his decipils tua, And bad thaim thai suld ga To wit at Crist, quether it war he That suld cum mannes bote to be? “Or we,” he said, “another Crist sal bide,	<i>sent for told; should go learn from; whether should come; redemption Or if we; shall await</i>
10	That fel miht the fendes pride?” Sain Jon decipels yed and said Thair erand that on thaim was laid, And quen Crist thair asking herd, Ful mildely he thaim ansuerd,	<i>might destroy went was given to them question</i>
15	And bad thaim tille thair maister schaw	<i>reveal</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Second Sunday in Advent according to Matthew*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Matthew 11:2–10): *Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ: sending two of his disciples he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another: And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, [the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see: a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.]*

	His dedis that thai herd and sawe;	
	Als qua sai, "Dedes bers wittenes	<i>As if to say</i>
	Of me, that I sothefast Godd es.	<i>true; am</i>
	I gif the blind," he said, "thair siht,	
20	I ger the halt men ga riht,	<i>make; lame</i>
	I mac unhale men al hale,	<i>make; sick; whole</i>
	And def men I bet of bale,	<i>deaf; heal; harm</i>
	I rais men fra ded to life,	<i>death</i>
	And pouer men mas me ful rife;	<i>make me well known</i>
25	And ful bliced," he said, "es he	<i>blessed</i>
	That es noht sclaunderd in me.	<i>That does not take offence at me</i>
	Als qua sai, Jowes havis eft and nithe	<i>undying hostility</i>
	At me for the ferlikes that I kithe,	<i>Towards me; miracles; make known</i>
	Forthi er thai sclaundered in me,	
30	Quen thai mihit of mi Goddhed se,	
	And for bliz ic him wit graze	<i>because; bless</i>
	That folues noht the Jewes traze."	<i>follows; path</i>
	Swilk wordes til thaim spak Crist	<i>Such</i>
	That com fra Sayn Jon the Baptist,	
35	And quen thai hafd herd Crist sawe,	<i>words</i>
	Hamward til Sain Jon gan thai drawe.	<i>did they go</i>
	And als thai til Sain Jon ward yode,	<i>went toward</i>
	Crist spac tille thaim that bi him stode,	
	For thai havid ben Sain Jon to se	<i>dwelled</i>
40	In wildernes, for thar woned he,	<i>criminal</i>
	Bifor that Herodis the feloun	<i>Put</i>
	Did Sain Jon in his prisoun.	<i>all the people</i>
	Forthi asked Crist mare and lesse,	<i>sought</i>
45	Quat thing thai soht in wildernes.	<i>did you go</i>
	"Quat thing," he said, "yed ye	
	Intil wilderness to se?	
	Wend ye of Sain Jon for to finde	<i>Did you think</i>
	A red that waives wit the winde?"	<i>reed; bends</i>
	Als qua say, he es nan of tha	<i>not one of those</i>
50	That waifes for welthe or for wa;	<i>bends; misfortune</i>
	For werdes welthe and wa es winde,	<i>worldly; wind</i>
	That makis werdes men ful blinde,	<i>worldly</i>
	For welthe to pride our hert draus,	<i>draws</i>
	And wa geres us thol hard traues,	<i>makes us endure; torments</i>
55	Bitwix thir tua we held als reed,	<i>Between the two; bend</i>
	In wa we murne, in welthe we wede,	<i>In misfortune we mourn, in wealth we run mad</i>
	Bot Sain Jon igan bathe stode,	<i>against</i>
	For nouthier of thaim chaunged his mod;	<i>neither; mood</i>
	Forthi asked Crist quether man him soht	<i>whether they sought him</i>
60	Als he war man of fliker thoht,	<i>As if; wavering</i>
	And thus askid Crist quether men yede	<i>went</i>
	To se a wind waivande rede,	

- Quen thai yed sain Jon to se,  
 That stithe stode als stalworthe tre;  
 65 Als qua sai, "Wen ye that he  
 Es als tuifald of hert als ye?  
 Nai, for he es sa stedfaste  
 That na wind mai him fra me caste."
- Slic wordes als I you telle  
 70 Sais Crist todai in our Godspelle  
 Of Sain Jon, that stithe stode  
 Igain fanding of werdes flode,  
 For he no was noht lic in dede  
 Til thaim that heldes als the rede.  
 75 For mani man mai bisend be  
 Unto the rede, als thinc me;  
 That es at say, thir glotherers  
 That in thair an hand fir beres,  
 In the tother watir ber thai;  
 80 Als lawed men er won to say.  
 Thai kindel baret wit bacbiting,  
 And slokenes it wit thair glothering,  
 Thai heeld in tuin, als dos the red,  
 Wit fair speche and wit fals dede,  
 85 Thai ger thair riche men misdo,  
 For al thair thing thai spek thaim to;  
 For quethir sa thai do wel or ille,  
 Thai hald wit thaim in al thair wille.  
 Mirthe and med and werdes belde  
 90 Gers thaim til falshed helde.  
 Bot sua did noht Sain Jon, iwis,  
 That snibbed Herod quen he did misse,  
 And said it was igain the lawe  
 His brother wif fleyslic to knawe.  
 95 He helded noht, bot stithe stod,  
 And for sothe sawe he sched his blod.  
 Insted of tal, I wille you telle  
 Hou it of his slahter felle.
- The king Herode wit mikel unriht  
 100 Raeft his brother his wif, that hiht  
 Herodias, and Sain Jon herde  
 Wit quatkin sin Herodes ferd,  
 And snibbed him of his sinne,  
 And bad him that he suld it blinne.  
 105 Quarthoru Herodes als feloun  
 Did Sain Jon in his prisoun.  
 Herodias als wikke womman
- sturdy; upright tree*  
*Do you think*  
*irresolute*
- Such*  
*firm*  
*temptation; world's flood*  
*similar*  
*bend*  
*may be likened*  
*as I think*  
*flatterers*  
*one; fire carry*  
*the other*  
*ignorant; accustomed*  
*stir up strife*  
*slacken; flattering*  
*bend in two*  
*lies*  
*go astray*
- whether they do good or ill*  
*follow them [the flatterers]*  
*wealth; worldly pleasure*  
*Makes*  
*certainly*  
*rebuked; amiss*
- brother's wife carnally*  
*firm*  
*because of true words*  
*slaughter*
- injustice*  
*Stole his brother's wife, who was called*  
*what kind of sin; behaved*  
*rebuked*  
*told; cease*  
*Wherefore; criminal*  
*Put*

	Wald that Sain Jon havid ben slan.	<i>Wished</i>
	He mired hir flesly liking,	<i>hindered; desire</i>
110	Forthi scho wald to ded him bring,	<i>wanted</i>
	Bot chesoun till him fand scho nan,	<i>reason [for this] in him found she none</i>
	For Herodes that him hafd tan,	<i>taken</i>
	Sau that he was an hali man	
	And thoht ful lathe to be his ban,	<i>was very reluctant; death</i>
115	For of Sain Jon stod him awe,	<i>he stood in awe</i>
	And sinned les for his sawe,	<i>less on account of his words</i>
	And herd his word wit god wille,	
	And did mikel that he said him tille.	
	Herodes mad a fest, and cald	<i>invited</i>
120	Princes tharto and bernes bald;	<i>bold men</i>
	And als he wit his gestes seete,	<i>guests; sat</i>
	And mad him glad, and drank and eet,	<i>ate</i>
	Bifor him com a fair yong lasce,	<i>lass</i>
	That Herodiases dohter was,	
125	And tumbled sa wel for alle	<i>tumbled</i>
	That thar war gedered in that halle,	<i>gathered</i>
	That al war payed of hir play.	<i>pleased</i>
	And Herodes til hir gan say,	
	“Quat sa thou wil, thou ask me,	<i>Whatsoever you want</i>
130	For freli sal I graunt thee.”	
	He swar his athe that he suld fille	<i>oath; fulfill</i>
	Alle hir asking and hir wille.	
	“If thou,” he said “ask halven dele	<i>Although; half part [of]</i>
	Mi kingerik, I grant it wele.”	
135	This mai ran tille hir moder swithe,	<i>maiden; quickly</i>
	And bad hir that scho suld hir lithe	<i>hear</i>
	Quat the king hir haved bed,	<i>promised</i>
	And asked hir moder quat scho red.	<i>advised</i>
	Hir moder was fain quen scho this herd,	<i>happy</i>
140	And sone hir dohter scho ansuerd,	
	And said, “Loc that thou ask noht	<i>see; nothing</i>
	Bot that Sain Jones hefd be broht	<i>Except; head</i>
	In a disce sone bifor thee,	<i>dish</i>
	For this thing wald I gladli se.”	
145	This maiden child ran to the king,	
	And said, “Sir, this es min asking,	<i>request</i>
	Yef thou wil that mi wil be don,	
	Thou grant me min asking son,	
	And gif me in a disce weved	<i>severed</i>
150	Sain Jon the Baptist heved.”	
	Ful ille payed was the king	<i>ill-pleased</i>
	Quen he herd this asking;	
	Him thoht scham igitain to kalle	<i>He was ashamed to take back</i>
	That he havid hiht bifor thaim alle,	<i>What; promised</i>



- 155 And for he havid sworn his athe, *oath*  
 To wrech that laze thoht him lathe, *He was unwilling to anger that girl*  
 Forthi he send his queller sounne *executioner*  
 And bad hir wil suld be don.  
 His queller did als he him bad,  
 160 And mad this maiden child ful glad,  
 For he broht hir als scho havid said,  
 Sain Jones hevid in a disce laid.  
 Thus was this mai Sain Jones ban, *maiden; slayer*  
 That was for riht and sothesaw slan, *true-speaking slain*  
 165 But thurt him noht haf tint his heved, *needed; lost*  
 Yef he als red wald haf wevid. *wavered*  
 Yef he havid noht snibbed the king,  
 Bot loued his dedes wit glothering, *praised; flattering*  
 Than moht he haf gan quit away, *free*  
 170 And lifd in werdes welth and play.  
 Bot he did wel better than, iwise, *certainly*  
 For nou es he in well mar blisse,  
 And Herod and Herodias  
 Er bathe in hel wit Satenas. *both*  
 175 Nou haf ye herd hou Sain Jon stod  
 For sothefastnes, and ched his blod. *truth; shed*  
 Forthi in our Godspel sais Crist  
 Til the folc, of Sain Jon the Baptist,  
 “Wend ye of Sain Jon for to find *Did you expect*  
 180 A red that waives wit the wind, *reed; bends*  
 Nay, bot swa stedfast es he,  
 That nathing gers him tuifald be;  
 For he sal stand in sothefastnes,  
 And thol ded for rihtwisnes.” *suffer death*  
 185 An other asking, als aountour felle, *question; as it happened*  
 Asked Crist in our Godspelle,  
 Til thaim that stod him about,  
 And of Sain Jon havid dout,  
 “Quat yed ye,” he said, “to se *What did you go*  
 190 In wildernes, ye tel me:  
 A man robed in wlank wede?” *proud attire*  
 Als qua sai, nai, no in fairhede;  
 For al men wist that knew Sain Jon, *As if to say, no, not in splendid array*  
 That he havid camel har apon. *knew*  
 195 Forthi asked Crist, whether thai yed *hair*  
 To se Sain Jon in wlanke wede, *whether they went*  
 Als qua sai, es he nan of tha  
 That er cled in gren and gra. *he is not one of those*  
 Crist spac of thaim that gas in gren, *clothed; green and gray*  
 200 To scheu the folc quat he wald men. *wear green*  
 “In kinges houses,” he said, “won thai *would mean*  
 dwell

	That er cled in gren and grai”	
	Als qua sai, about kinges es	
	Wel mar prid than in wildernes.	<i>Much more</i>
205	Her mai ye se that Jhesu Criste	
	Loues Sain Jon the Baptiste.	<i>Praises</i>
	For he in pouer wed was cled,	
	And in povert his lif he led,	<i>poverty</i>
	And herbi wil Crist us lere,	<i>teach</i>
210	To forsak proud clething her.	
	The god clerk, Sain Gregorie	
	Schewes us aperteli,	<i>openly</i>
	And yef sin no war in wlanke wede	<i>If there were no sin in proud clothing</i>
	Haved noht Crist loued Sain Jon in lede	<i>praised; among the people</i>
215	For the clething of povert.	
	For thoh prid be al in the hert,	
	Riche clething nohtforthi	<i>nevertheless</i>
	Schroudes sua man bodi,	<i>Covers</i>
	That rifli geres it man thinc mar	<i>frequently makes</i>
220	Of his bodi, that it wel far,	<i>About his body's well-being</i>
	Than he of his sawel dos.	
	Sua thinc him of his wed gret ros	<i>Thus; clothing; pride</i>
	Quil he fandis fleis to fede,	<i>While he attempts to feed his body</i>
	And mac it fayr wit wlanc wede.	
225	His fairnes witout he schawes	<i>outer fairness</i>
	To sem better than his felaues.	
	For elles forze wald he nan mak	<i>otherwise; pay no regard</i>
	Quether his clething war quit or blac,	<i>white</i>
	Bot for he will be heier calde	<i>Because; accounted more important</i>
230	Than othere, and for better talde,	<i>taken for better</i>
	Forthi he schroudes his bodi	
	And lates of pouer men hetheli;	<i>regards poor men scornfully</i>
	The liking of his wlanc wede	<i>desire for</i>
	Gers him tin his sawel mede.	<i>Makes; lose; reward</i>
235	Forthi loues Crist in our Godspel	<i>praises</i>
	Pouer wed, oure pride to fell,	<i>[in order] to destroy our pride</i>
	And askes ef the folc yed	<i>went</i>
	To se Sain Jon in wlanc wede.	<i>proud clothing</i>
	Als qua sai, bisen sal ye take	<i>lesson</i>
240	This werdes welth for to forsak,	
	For werdes welthe and prid and play	
	Endes all wit ten and tray.	<i>harm and vexation</i>
	In our Godspel yet askis Crist	<i>yet [again] questions</i>
	Of Sain Jon the Baptiste,	
245	(For thris the folc askid he),	
	Quat thing thai yed for to se	
	In wildernes, and at the last	
	He cald Sain Jon prophet sothefast,	<i>true</i>

- And said to thaim, "I sai you yet,  
 250 Yed ye to bihald the prophet, *Went*  
 Of Sain Jon in wildernesse?"  
 Ya, wit ye well that mar he esse *Yes; know; greater*  
 Than prophetes war in his tim, *[other] prophets [who]*  
 For prophetes spac mikel of him, *much*  
 255 Thoru quaim God hit he suld send *Through whom God promised*  
 His angel, mannes lif to mend. *amend*  
 "I send," he said, "mi messenger  
 Bifor mi face mi word to berre." *bear*  
 This sais the Fader of hevin to Crist  
 260 Of Sain Jon the Baptist,  
 That bifor Crist graythed the way *prepared*  
 Als sais our Godspel of today.
- Nou haf I graytheli you tald *truly*  
 Hou Sain Jon the Baptist es cald  
 265 Jesus Crist messenger,  
 For he was send his word to ber,  
 And I todai fourtenniht tald *two weeks ago*  
 Hou Sain Jon bodword broht bald. *announcement; bold*  
 He was ryt Cristes messenger, *truly*  
 270 For he broht word that he was ner.  
 And als was he mar than prophet *also*  
 Quen he scheued that he bihet. *demonstrated what he promised*  
 It falles to prophet for to sai *It is a prophet's task*  
 The thing that efter falle may, *afterwards; happen*  
 275 Bot Sain Jon said and scheued bathe, *both said and demonstrated*  
 For that he hit, he scheued rathe. *promised; immediately*  
 Quen Crist com to flum Jordan *river*  
 Als other men did mani an, *many a one*  
 Of Sain Jon to be baptist, *By; baptized*  
 280 Than said Sain Jon of Jesu Crist  
 Til al that folc wit swetli swar *gracious words*  
 That thar habout him gederid war, *about; gathered*  
 "This es that lamb that I you hiht, *promised*  
 That dose away this werdes pliht, *sin*  
 285 Godes lamb mai ye se her,  
 Of him spac ic als messenger."  
 Bot her mai sum man thinc ferly, *marvelous*  
 Als sais the clerk, Sain Gregorie,  
 That sin Sain Jon the Baptist *since*  
 290 Knew sa wel that Jesu Crist,  
 Quarfor send he sithen him tille, *Why did he send to him*  
 To wit quether he suld fulfille *know*  
 Thing that was said in prophecie  
 Of him that mankind suld bie? *redeem*

- 295 First Sain Jon said that Crist was he,  
 That al mankind bot suld be, *savior*  
 And sithen he spired quether he war cumen *asked*  
 To felle the fend that man havid nomen. *destroy; who had captured mankind*  
 Ful schilfuli and wit resoun
- 300 Mai men ask this questioun.  
 The god man, Sain Gregorie  
 Undos this word dohtilye, *explains; cleverly*  
 And sais that Sain Jon ful wel wist *whom*  
 That he of quaim he spac was Crist,
- 305 That tok kind of maiden Mari, *human nature*  
 Bot he no wist noht witerlye, *know; truly*  
 Quether he suld mankind bye, *redeem*  
 And heri helle als king mihtye, *harrow*  
 And forthi send Sain Jon him to,
- 310 To wit quether he war com to do  
 Thing that moht bring man fra helle, *out of*  
 Thar him bihoved ever dwelle, *he must*  
 Tille he war comen that haved mihte  
 To fulfille that the prophetes havid hyhte: *what the prophets had promised*
- 315 That es at say, to mak the fin *payment*  
 For sin, and bring thaim of pin. *out of torment*  
 To blis that may haf nan ending,  
 Our Lauerd Jesus thider us bring. Amen. *[May] our Lord*

#### 4. FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*Dominica iiiii. in Adventu Domini secundum Johannem.*<sup>1</sup>

*Miserunt Judei ab Jerosolymis Sacerdotes et Levitas ad Johannem ut interrogarent eum: Tu quid es. Et confessus est, et non negavit: et confessus est: Quia non sum ego Cristus. Et interrogaverunt eum, et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fourth Sunday in the Advent of the Lord according to John

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (John 1:19–28): *And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him, to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: [What then? Art thou Elias? and he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No. They said therefore unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou for thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them saying: I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.]*

- Today sais Jon, the god Godspellere,  
 In our Godspel, als ye mai here,  
 That Jowes thair messenger send  
 Tille Jon the Baptist, for thai wend  
 5 That he havid ben Crist, for he  
 Baptized al that baptized wald be.  
 Thir messagers Sain Jon fand,  
 And said til Sain Jon thair erand.  
 Bot first quat he was, askid thai,  
 10 And he igan to thaim gan sai:  
 "Crist that ye sek am I noht,"  
 And thus he schewed quat thai thoht,  
 For thai wend wel that he havid ben  
 Crist, that baptized folc biden.  
 15 Thai asked yef he war Elye,  
 Or man that couthe of prophecye.  
 And he ansuerd and said nay,  
 Bot quat he was, he gan thaim say:  
 "Ic am," he said, "a criand stevin,  
 20 I bid you mac the gates evin  
 To Crist, als said Saint Ysaye,  
 For Cristes messenger es I."  
 Thir messagers was Pharisenes,  
 That "sundered men" on Englys menes.  
 25 Thai war sundered of comun lif,  
 And wit Sain Jon gan thai to strife,  
 And said, "Sine thou ert noht Elye,  
 No Crist, no prophet, sai us quye  
 Baptizes thou tha folc biden,  
 30 And makis thaim of sinne clen?"  
 And Sain Jon ansuerid thanne:  
 "I mai noht baptize bot als manne,  
 For Goddhed haf I in me nan,  
 Bot Goddes sun manhed havis tan;  
 35 And you wit water baptiz I,  
 He sal baptiz you gastily,  
 Imang you wonand he isse,  
 Bot ye no knaw him noht, iwisse,  
 He es Crist that bifor me  
 40 Was Godd, and es, and ai sal be.  
 He es sa god and derworthi,  
 That I meself es noht worthi  
 Bifor him for to sit on knes,  
 The binding of his scho to les."  
 45 Betani was cald that land  
 Thar Sain Jon was than baptizand,  
 Quen thir Jowes til him yed,
- thought*  
*wanted to be*  
*found*  
*again*  
*seek*  
*revealed*  
*thought*  
*indeed*  
*if; Elias*  
*knew*  
*crying voice*  
*ways; straight*  
*Isaias*  
*That means "separated men" in English*  
*ordinary*  
*with; argue*  
*Since*  
*Nor; why*  
*people as a group*  
*purified*  
*human nature; taken*  
*spiritually*  
*Among; dwelling*  
*indeed*  
*ever*  
*so good; precious*  
*untie*  
*Bethany*  
*went*

	To spir of him and of his dede.	<i>ask</i>
50	This es the strenketh of our Godspelle, Als man wit Englis tung kan telle.	
	In this Godspelle mai we wel knawe	<i>recognize</i>
	Gret meknes in Sain Jones sawe,	<i>words</i>
	For thar man wend that he war Crist,	<i>whereas; thought</i>
	He wald that thai the sothe wist,	<i>truth</i>
55	And granted son that he was noht The Lauerd that thai thar soht.	<i>acknowledged at once</i>
	Her may ye alle ensampel tak,	<i>lesson</i>
	Ongart and rosing to forsak,	<i>Arrogance; boasting</i>
	For mani man him better mas	<i>makes himself</i>
60	Than he es in ilke place, And geres men wen that he be	<i>every</i>
	Mar worthé than other thre:	<i>makes; think</i>
	He roses him of his cumly kinde,	<i>boasts; gracious lineage</i>
	He wenes his mak mai na man find,	<i>thinks; equal</i>
65	He wald be haldin derworthi Thoru hendelaic and curtaisy;	<i>admirable</i>
	His wordes mas him man ful hend,	<i>politeness</i>
	Wit lesing serves he the fend,	<i>polite</i>
	That sal him rewli rif at eend,	<i>lying</i>
	He roses him of his cumly kinde,	<i>cruelly tear apart</i>
70	Bot he amende hym ore he wende. Thus did noht Sain Jon the Baptist,	<i>Unless he make amends before he departs</i>
	For he said that he was noht Crist. Cristes nam wald he noht tak,	
	No bettir than he was him mak.	<i>Nor; himself</i>
75	Haf we forthi in word meknes, Als Sain Jon havid in wildernes;	<i>Let us therefore have meekness in our speech</i>
	Mak we us bettir noht than we er, For Godd no mai we nangat der.	<i>Before God may we in no way dare [to do] that</i>
	In our Godspelle wille we se yete, Qui Sain Jon him prophet nitte,	<i>denied [that he was a] prophet</i>
80	And said, "Prophet nan am I," Als qua sai, I openly	
	Ken you till him of quaim I spek,	<i>Direct you</i>
	That salle the fendes bandes brek;	<i>shackles</i>
85	Bot sua did never prophet are, Forthi bird you trou me the mare,	<i>thus; before</i>
	For ic am selven in wildernes To graithe the gat of rihtwisnes.	<i>ought; believe</i>
	Als qua sai, Crist cries in me,	<i>I am myself</i>
90	And biddes al folc rihtwis be, For rihtwis gates graithes he	<i>prepare; way</i>
	That loues Godd in Trinité,	
	Bathe in thoht and word and dede,	<i>praises</i>

- 95 For this gat ledis man to mede; *reward*  
 And in this gat mai thai wel sped *succeed*  
 That wille thair lif in lewté led. *loyalty; lead*  
 That es at say, if man till nehbor do,  
 That he wald he did him to. *That which he wishes*  
 This es the gat that Sain Jon kend, *showed*  
 100 Sinful mannes lif to mend. *amend*  
 This es the gat of rihtwisnes,  
 That ledes man til joi and pes.  
 Yef we hald us in this gate  
 Ful redi sal we haf inlate *readily; entrance*  
 105 Into that blis that lastes ay,  
 For thider ledes Godes way.  
 Gern prayed Davy the prophet, *Eagerly; David*  
 That God suld wisse him to that stret,  
 And said, "Lauerd, thou scheu me *guide; path*  
 110 The wai that ledes man to thee."  
 Forthi I red we hald this gate,  
 Ai til we cum til hevin yate. *entrance*  
 This gat biddes Sain Jon us grathe *prepare*  
 Wit ded, and lef the waies laythe *deeds; abandon; loathsome*  
 115 That ledes man til pin of hel,  
 Als Crist us schawes in our Godspel.  
 Thar he sais, "Brad es that gat that ledes *broad*  
 Til hel, wit sin and wik dedis,  
 This gat es stany and thornye  
 120 Wit covaitys, and glotounye, *covetousness; gluttony*  
 Wit prid, and nithe and licherye, *pride; envy; lechery*  
 And mani foles gat tharbye."  
 And forthi I red wel that we leete *abandon*  
 This gat, and tak the hey strete, *high road*  
 125 That ledis god men full evene *straight*  
 Wit penanz to the blis of hevin.  
 Bot Satenas our wai will charre, *change our course*  
 Forthi bihoves us bewarre *we need to beware*  
 That we ga bi na wrange sties, *paths*  
 130 For Satenas ful gern us spies. *eagerly*  
 For ef this thef mai us met  
 Out of this forsaid hey stret,  
 He bes ful redi, als outlawe, *is*  
 To harl us into wod schawe, *forest*  
 135 And mak us bathe nakid and nais. *ashamed*  
 Als Sain Gregorie us says:  
 Ilk dai mak we a jorné *Every; journey*  
 Till hevin, ef we god men be.  
 Bot in our gat lis Satenas *path lies*  
 140 Wit his felawes, als thef in pas, *way*

	And spies ful gerne ef we straye,	<i>eagerly</i>
	And haldes noht the riht way.	<i>keep not to</i>
	That es at sai, ef we lef	<i>abandon</i>
	Riht livelad, he mai us ref	<i>Righteous behavior; deprive us of</i>
145	Meknes, faithe, and chastité,	<i>Obedience</i>
	Buxumnes, and charité,	<i>power</i>
	And yef he haf of us pousté,	
	He wil ref us al our lewté,	<i>cursed</i>
150	And led us in that werid waye,	
	That ledis men ware sorow es ay.	
	Of this wai riht nou I spake,	
	Forthi I red we it forsak,	<i>advise</i>
	And hald we us in rihtwisnes,	
	That riht gat tillward hevin es.	<i>toward</i>
155	Bot for I said that Satenas	
	Waites us als thef in pas,	
	I wille you tel of a pilgrim,	
	Hou Satenas bigiled him.	
	It was a man als ic herd say,	
160	That til Sain Jamis hit the way,	<i>made his way</i>
	And that day that he suld wend,	
	He mad a fest til al his frend.	<i>feast for</i>
	Fel auntour that he was sa gladde,	<i>It happened</i>
	That Satenas mad him ful madde,	<i>drove him out of his wits</i>
165	And gert him dedeli sinne	<i>made him sin mortally</i>
	Wit a womman, that was tharinne.	
	Quen he havid his sin don,	
	Apon his way he went him son,	
	And he that gert him falle in blam,	
170	Met him in liknes of Sain Jam,	<i>James</i>
	And askid him quider he wald wende,	<i>where he was going</i>
	Bot he wist noht it was the fende,	<i>knew</i>
	And said, "I mac mi vaiage,	
	Til Sain Jam in pilgrimage."	
175	The fend ansuerd and said sone,	
	"No wat thou noht quat thou havis done	<i>Do you not realize</i>
	In licheri igaines me?	<i>lechery against</i>
	Ic es Saynte Jame that spekis wit thee,	<i>I am</i>
	Thou ert unworthi me to seke,	<i>seek</i>
180	Thi vayage es noht worthe a leke.	<i>leek</i>
	Wend thou thi sin fra me to hide?	<i>Do you think</i>
	Quen thou it did, I was beside.	
	Thi vaiage may noht pai me,	<i>satisfy</i>
	Bot ef thou do that I bid thee."	<i>Unless</i>
185	This man wend that he Sain Jam ware,	<i>thought</i>
	And said, "Lauerd, ic am al yare	<i>ready</i>



	For to be boxom you to.	<i>obedient</i>
	And do al that ye sai me to.”	
	“Ga swithe,” he said,” and geld thee,	<i>castrate</i>
190	That I thi repentanze mai se,	
	And scher thi thort in tua riht son,	<i>cut your throat in two immediately</i>
	For havis thou mi wille don;	
	And quen thou havis thiselvin slan,	<i>killed</i>
	Til hevin salle I ger thee be tane.”	<i>make you be taken</i>
195	This pilgrim wend to pai Sain Jam,	
	And did himselvin mikel scham:	<i>much</i>
	And he schar al awai ful rathe,	
	His members and his penndanz bathe,	<i>penis; testicles</i>
	And sithen he schar his throt in tua.	<i>cut</i>
200	And son quen he hafede don sua,	<i>as soon as</i>
	Satanas was ful redie,	
	And tok that sawel gredilye,	
	And mad ful gret joi of his prai,	<i>prey</i>
	And tilward helle he tok the wai.	
205	Sain Peter and Sain Jam him mette,	
	And bathe thai gan his wai to lette,	<i>hinder</i>
	And Sain Jam said to the fend:	
	“Quider wil to wit mi pilgrim wend?”	<i>Where are you going with my pilgrim</i>
	And he ansuerd and said, “Til helle,	
210	Thar he sal for his sinnis duel,	<i>because of; dwell</i>
	For he was his awen ban,	<i>own slayer</i>
	Forthi in him part haf ye nan,	<i>share; none</i>
	Wit riht and resoun he es mine,	
	To wend wit me til helle pine.”	<i>pain</i>
215	Than ansuerd Sain Jam for his man,	
	And said, “Thou lies, traytour Satan,	
	Thou wat wel, thef, thou havis the woh,	<i>know; blame</i>
	For in my nam himself he sloh,	<i>killed</i>
	He wend wel that thou havid ben I,	<i>thought</i>
220	Quen thou gert him do his folye;	<i>made</i>
	In deed was he til me bowxom,	<i>obedient</i>
	And forthi sal he wit me com.”	
	The fend said, “That mai noht be,	
	Wit riht and law mai thou se	
225	That he es min thoru jogement,	<i>judgment</i>
	For quen he on his vayage went,	
	He filed his sawel dedelye	<i>defiled; mortally</i>
	Wit the filth of licherye;	
	And sithen wit his awen knife	<i>then</i>
230	He set him selvin of his life.	<i>killed himself</i>
	Wy, sai me, Jam, on quatkin wisse	

- Moht he mar dey in mi servise?<sup>1</sup>  
 Loc quether I wit riht and lawe,  
 May him wit me til helle drawe?" *See*
- 235 Sain Jam ansuerd and said him to:  
 "Wrang no wille I nan thee do,  
 Bot yef we wil the sothe treye, *discover*  
 Gon we til dom of our Leuedye, *judgment*  
 And als scho demes sal it be, *judges*
- 240 For that es riht als think me." *it seems to me*  
 And Sain Peter, his felawe  
 Said, "This think me right and lawe;  
 Mari," he said, "es god justise,  
 Scho wil do wrang on nane wyse." *in no way*
- 245 Quen thai com bifor ur Leuedye,  
 Scho demid son wit hir mercy:  
 At that sawel til the bodie *That*  
 Suld turn, and penance do worthi; *return*  
 And said, "This sawel, als it nou isse,
- 250 Mai nangat cum til hevin blis, *in no way*  
 Ar it be clensed in bodye  
 Of sin, wit penanze worthi.  
 Forthi for jugement gif I,  
 That it turn til the bodye,
- 255 And clens it wit penanze,  
 And yem it sithen fra meschanze." *protect it then from mischance*  
 The fend for this dom was sarie, *sorry*  
 And ille payed that our Leuedye *satisfied*  
 Havid reft him wit riht jogement *deprived*
- 260 That man that he wit gil had schent. *[Of] that man; guile; ruined*  
 Quen this sawel was cumen igain *again*  
 To the bodi, this man was fain, *glad*  
 And monc in Cluny he him yald, *became a monk at Cluny*  
 And this tal til his abbot tald,
- 265 Hou he was schent thoru gilri, *deception*  
 And saved thoru our Leuedi.  
 Georard he hiht, and fra that tim *was called*  
 That Satenas hafd gabbed him, *deceived*  
 Hali man he was and god,
- 270 And servid Godd wit miht and mod; *strength and heart*  
 Bot thar his throt was scorn wit knif, *where; cut*  
 A red merk was al his lif,  
 And thar his members was bifore, *genitals*  
 Havid he noht sithen bot a bore. *nothing; hole*

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 231–32: *Why, tell me, James, how / He might die any more in my service?*

275	Bi this tale har may we se, That wis and warr bihoves us be, That Sathanas ne ger us rayk Fra rihtwisnes, to sinful laik, For yef he find us out of stret,	<i>here</i> <i>we need to be wise and wary</i> <i>make us turn aside</i> <i>play</i> <i>[correct] way</i>
280	He bindes us bathe hand and fete: That es at say, ef he us find In dedeli sin, he may us bind Wit wik will, and ger us wend Fra sin to sin, and sua us schend.	<i>wicked intent; make us proceed</i> <i>so destroy us</i>
285	For als he gert this pilgrim ga Fra sin to sin, and himself sla, Sua gers he man ga gastilye, Fra glotouny to licherye, Fra lychery to covaytye,	<i>spiritually</i>
290	And sua to prid and envye, And at the last in his prisoun He dos him, als thef in prisoun, Quen he gers him in wanhop falle — For wanhop his prisoun I calle,	<i>puts</i> <i>despair</i>
295	For qua sa cumes anes tharinne, Tharof may he noht lihtli winne; For qua deyes in that prisoun, His sawel es broht til a donjoun, Thar it witouten end sal lend,	<i>whoever; once</i> <i>Out of there; escape</i>
300	Wit al faas, witouten frend; For it bes felaw wit the fend, That snellik sal it scham and schend, And quen this werd bes broht til end, Than sal the bodi thider wend,	<i> dwell</i> <i>enemies</i> <i>For it [ the soul] is companion to the devil</i> <i>quickly; destroy</i> <i>world</i>
305	Wit that sari sawel to lend, Thar wormes sal it rewli rend; Thar sal it bi that sari sinne, That it no wald noht hir blinne; That soru mai na tung telle,	<i>reside</i> <i>fiercely tear apart</i> <i>pay for; wretched</i> <i>would not here cease</i>
310	That it sal drey wit fendes felle. Hald we us forthi in stret, That Satenas may us noht met, That es at sai, in rihtwisnes, Quarof Sain Jon in wildernes	<i>suffer; cruel</i> <i>Let us remain; path</i>
315	Spac, and bad us graythe that way That ledis man til gamen and play. Our Lauerd in this wai us lede Til hevin, and yeld us thar our med. Amen.	<i>Of which</i> <i>prepare</i> <i>[May] our Lord</i> <i>grant; reward</i>

## 6. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

*Dominica infra Octavam Nativitatis Domini secundum Lucam.*<sup>1</sup>

*Erant Joseph et Maria mater Jhesu etc.*<sup>2</sup>

<p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p> <p>25</p>	<p>The Jewes made ilka yere Seven festes on thair manere. Bot till thre come yonge and alde, That was for Jewe and Jewes talde, Into the tempil for to here Goddis servyse, on thaire manere, And forto make thaire offirand thare, All eftir that thair ees ware. And fell aventer when Criste was chylde, That bathe Joseph and Mary mylde, Come to the tempil ymange thaire kithe, And toke yonge Jhesu thaim withe. And bathe Joseph and Marye, Thoght of Jhesu grete ferlye, For ferlys herd thai of him tell, Als saise Saynte Luke in his Gospell. And in the tempil fand thai than Saynte Symeon, the haly man, That had the Hali Gaste in hym, And wist what Criste suld thole for synne. He blissid Joseph and Marie, And childe Jhesu that stude him bie; And spake of Criste, and saide that he Was sett to many a man to be, Bathe in rysinge and in fallinge,<sup>3</sup> And in taken of gaynestandinge. Als wha saye, gode men sall ryse,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>three</i></p> <p><i>Who were; numbered among</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>in their</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>offering</i></p> <p><i>according to their circumstances</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>it happened</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>with their people</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>marvel</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Holy Spirit</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>knew; suffer</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>stood by him</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>as a token of opposition</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>In other words</i></p>
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<sup>1</sup> First Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord according to Luke

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 2:33–40): *And his father and mother were f wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phannuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she, at the same hour, coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom; and the grace of God was in him.]*

<sup>3</sup> Lines 24–25: *Was foreordained to be the cause of the rising and falling of many a man*

- When this childe sall be hye Justice  
 On Domesday, wehen wickid sall  
 30 Into the pyne of hell fall. *Judgment Day*  
 Bot gode men sall ryse and wende, *go*  
 Into the blisse withouten ende.  
 Bot thare he spake of takenynge, *where*  
 Was ment of Criste upperysinge, *resurrection*  
 35 That was takenynge of gaynesawe, *opposition*  
 For Jewis wald noght his risinge knawe. *recognize*  
 It made thaim sarye and unfayne, *unglad*  
 And tharefore spak thai thare agayne. *against [it]*  
 And forthi sayde Symeone  
 40 Of Criste, when he laide handes him one:  
 "This childe," he saide, "es sette in taken,  
 That bese agayne saide and forsaken." *as a sign*  
 And to oure Ladi than spake he, *who will be spoken against*  
 And saide, "So sorowfull sall tow be, *shall you*  
 45 That swerde of sorow sall thorghe stinge  
 Thi saule, for dule and for murnynge." *soul; grief*  
 Swa did hir hert for sorow thorghe stange,  
 When scho sawe hir sonne on rode hange,  
 And than was sene what Jewes thoght,  
 50 When thai thoght to bringe Jhesu to noght.  
 And als Saynte Symeon spake thus  
 To Marye, of hir sonne Jesus,  
 Swa come thare gangand ane alde wife, *walking; old woman*  
 That was a widowe of hali life;  
 55 And thorw prophecie scho wist, *knew*  
 Ful many thinges that suld fall of Criste. *happen through Christ*  
 And to the folc scho talde that tyme,  
 Thinge that suld fall of him:  
 How he was sent mannes bote to be, *salvation*  
 60 And bye mankynde on rode tre. *to redeem*  
 When Marie and Joseph had done  
 That fell to the lawe thai yede hame sone, *What was customary under the law; went*  
 And wele wer Jhesu that childe, *it was well with*  
 For grace and wisdom him full fillde.  
 65 This es the strenghe of oure Gospell,  
 Als man with Ynglihsse tonge may tell.
- Bot a worde sayde Saynt Symeon, *one*  
 That is on sere manere undone, *expounded in many ways*  
 Thare he saide Jhesu, oure kynge,  
 70 Was sette in fallinge and in rysinge.  
 On a manere thir wordis maye *In one sense*  
 Full wele betaken Domisdaie, *signify*  
 When gude men, als I saide are, *said before*

- 75 Sall ryse and into blisse fare,  
 And wickid folk sall fall doune,  
 Into hell that foule dongeoune.  
 Bot men may se anothir thinge  
 In this fallinge and this rysinge,  
 For the Jewes fell all fra gode,  
 80 When thai slowe Criste on the rode,  
 And hethen men fra synne rase, *rose*  
 That before was Criste faase. *enemies*  
 For thai rase gasteli with Criste *arose spiritually*  
 Fra synne, when that thai ware baptiste.  
 85 And wha swa evere es Cristis lyme, *a Christian (a limb of the body of Christ)*  
 Him awe to rise gasteli with hyme. *He ought*  
 For when we of oure synnes us schryve,  
 We rise gastely fra dede to lyve, *death*  
 Fra dede of synne to life of grace,  
 90 That geres us fle the fendes trace. *makes; path*  
 And we may see reeuelye, *readily*  
 That som men fallis in foly,  
 And risis of synne so wightlye, *strongly*  
 That bettir man es he in hye, *on high*  
 95 Than ever yitt before was he:  
 That be this tale we maye wele se.
- Ane ersbisschope beyonde the se,  
 Was wonande in a faire cité. *living*  
 A hali man and gude he wase,  
 100 Bot first he fell, and sithene he rase. *then*  
 The fende at him had grete envye,  
 And gert him fall in lyccherye  
 Apon a full selcouthe manere, *marvelous*  
 Als ye may be this tale here.  
 105 A nonnery was in that contree,  
 Fyve myle fra the bisschope see,  
 And in this ilk forsaide nonnrye *same*  
 Was wonand nonnes full manye,  
 That servid God and oure Ladye,  
 110 And kepid thaim wele fra vilanye.  
 And aunter fell, that to that howse *It happened*  
 Come maydens Jhesu Criste to spouse. *wed*  
 Thir maydens ware sent thaire vayles to take  
 Of that bisschope, of whaim I spake.  
 115 This bisschope, als the manere es,  
 Reveste him to synge his messe. *Put on his ceremonial vestments*  
 Thir maydens come bifore the autere,  
 And toke thaire vayles on gude manere.  
 And this bisschope his eye uppe kest

- 120 To ane of thaim that was fayrest,  
 And sone on hir his lufe was fest *fastened*  
 Swa harde, that he might have na rest,  
 For Sathanas did his maistrie, *exercised his power*  
 And fandid him with lyccherye. *tempted*
- 125 Swa nere his hert hir lufe gon lye *love of her did lie*  
 That right him thocht that he suld dye,  
 Bot he had of hir his will, *Unless*  
 And might with hir his lust fullfill.  
 Here maye ye se on whatkin wyse, *in what manner*
- 130 The fende men fandis with his qwayntise; *cunning*  
 For yerne he lokis on ilka syde *eagerly*  
 To gere us tyne hevenes pride. *make us lose*  
 Him think full lathe men come tharein, *It is hateful to him for men to come therein*  
 Forthi geres he men fall in synne.
- 135 Thir nonnes when that thai halowid ware, *consecrated*  
 Thai toke thaire leve hame to fare,  
 Full faire to thaire nonnrye,  
 Bot this bisschope left sarye. *dejected*  
 So was he fondid inwardlie, *tempted*
- 140 With brinnand lust of liccherie, *burning*  
 That might he nouthir ete ne drink,  
 Ne have night rest, ne slepe no wynk.  
 For lust him thocht his hert wald brest, *would burst*  
 And he umthocht him what was best, *reflected*
- 145 How he might this ilk nonne fange, *seize*  
 To slake his lust that was so strange. *strong*  
 Than lettirs sent he hasteli  
 Unto the abbeyes of that nonnrye, *abbess*  
 And bad scho suld come swithe him to, *quickly*
- 150 The nedes of hir house to do. *business*  
 When this abbeyes thir tithandes herd,  
 To the bisschope full sone scho ferd,  
 And sone when scho was comen thare,  
 The bisschope schewid hir all his care.
- 155 “So mikil sorowe,” he saide, “I drye, *suffer*  
 That for lufe allmoste I dye.  
 Bot if thou helpe me in this case, *Unless*  
 I may saye forever allase.  
 Helpe of me than sall thou tyne, *lose*
- 160 Bot if thou helpe me of this pyne.  
 I have halden thi hous to right, *maintained; fittingly*  
 And helpid thee with all mi might,  
 Now may thou me my travaile yelde, *effort repay*  
 If thou will to my langynge helde. *yield*
- 165 I pray thee, graunte me my will,  
 And ger that nonne come me untill, *make*

- That I had here yistirdaye,  
 For allgate buse me with hir playe;  
 Or elles forsothe, as I thee saye,  
 170 Dede mon I be or the thridde daye.  
 To do thee gude I have mynte,  
 And if thou ne do, thou hase it tynt;  
 And if thou helpe me in this nede,  
 Full wele sall I qwite thee thi mede,  
 175 For now may I wele se and fynde,  
 If thou to me will be kynde.  
 I praie thee, swithe graunte me my bone,  
 And ger that nonne come to me sone."  
 And nevened the nonne be hir name,  
 180 For he lettid for na schame.  
 When this abbes thir wordes herd,  
 Scho was forwondird and aferde,  
 For wende scho nevermare to here  
 The bischope speke of swilk matere;  
 185 And scho umthoght hir als sone,  
 What gude the bisschope had hir done,  
 And to hir hous, and hir covent,  
 For bathe he had hir given and lent.  
 And yitt scho thoght hir forthermare  
 190 That he hir gert be abbeyes thare,  
 And forthi thoght hir lathe  
 In anythinge, to make him wrathe;  
 And hir had levar Goddes wrethe,  
 Than for to have hir bisschopes lethe.  
 195 Forthi scho grauntid him his bone,  
 And went hame to hir nonnry sone,  
 And prively this nonne scho callide,  
 And talde hir what the bisschope walde,  
 And saide, bot if scho did his will,  
 200 That nonnerie walde he stroye and spill.  
 This ilk yonge nonne was unmightie  
 To stand agayne this foule folye,  
 And saide full swith, "My dere ladie,  
 To do youre will, I am redye."  
 205 This nonne to the bisschope fore,  
 And of himself scho made a hore.  
 Allas, that scho ne had halden the triste,  
 That scho made with Jesu Criste.  
 Forsothe, I saie, and scho had sene  
 210 How faire herself was, and how schene,  
 When that scho was mayden clene,  
 Had scho noght synned, als I wene.  
 Allas, that scho noght undirstude
- by all means I must*
- before intention lost*
- grant you your reward*
- quickly; request*
- named*
- did not hold back out of any shame*
- amazed; frightened*
- expected*
- such*
- remembered*
- she was reluctant*
- angry*
- rather*
- enmity*
- request*
- secretly*
- wanted*
- destroy; ruin*
- not strong [enough]*
- went*
- whore*
- kept the agreement*
- Truly; if*
- lovely*
- pure*



- How Criste, that boght hir on the rude,  
 215 Had tane hir als his leeve spouse, *beloved*  
 And broght hir to his awne howse.  
 Methink scho chaungid wricchidlye, *It seems to me*  
 When scho left Criste hir leve luttbye, *beloved paramour*  
 And toke hir to a synfull man,  
 220 For to be his lemmane. *lover*  
 A, Lorde, sorowfull had scho bene,  
 If scho hir awne state had sene,  
 How faire gasteli scho was and bright, *spiritually*  
 Whiles hir maydenhede was hir tight. *unbroken*  
 225 Lathe had hir bene to do that synne, *Loath*  
 For any werldes gode to wyne.  
 Bot for scho was als wommane waike, *weak*  
 Scho heldid sone to synfull layke, *bent; play*  
 That made hir to God full lathe *hateful*  
 230 In bodie, and in saule bathe.  
 For thare scho tynt hir maydenhede, *destroyed*  
 And tharewith all that blissfull mede, *reward*  
 That maydens sall have in that blisse  
 Thare Criste, thaire lemman, sall thaim kisse. *lover*  
 235 And all that will this tale here,  
 Gode ensaumpil may thai lere,  
 Unsikir of thaimself to be, *Unsure*  
 If thai will understand and se,  
 How wyse man this bisschope wasse,  
 240 And sithen to foly gon he passe, *then he turned to folly*  
 Sa stithelic igain him ras *strongly; rose*  
 The fend, that him feld in place. *felled him there*  
 Ful ille birs us lah and kinc, *Little should we laugh and jeer*  
 Quen apon this bischop we think,  
 245 For he, that thef that gert him falle,  
 Es about to sla us alle. *Is ready*  
 Bot sinful man gers him oft schurne, *tremble*  
 And castis him wit his awen turne, *rejects him [the devil] through his own turning*  
 Quen he hem schrifis of his sin, *confesses himself*  
 250 And kepes no mar falle thar inne. *takes care that he*  
 Lauerd, mikel es thi mercie,  
 For ay, Lauerd, es thou redye  
 For to forgif us our folie,  
 Als oft als we for mercie thee crye;  
 255 Be our sin never sa ugly,  
 Thou forgifes us sa freli,  
 That al men mai think ferlye  
 Of thi peté, and thi mercye.  
 For thar na man fal in wanhop, *no man needs; despair*  
 260 That thinkes wel on this bischop;

- For this bischop, of quaim I telle,  
 Sa dep in filth of sinne he felle,  
 That he was worthé to brinne in helle, *burn*  
 And thar evermar to duelle,  
 265 Yef it no hafd ben thi mercy  
 That gert him ris of sin in hy. *on high*  
 And forthi suld alle men lof thee *praise*  
 And bowsom to thi wille be. *obedient*  
 For thou, that geris the dumbe spek, *Since you, who make*  
 270 Thoru schrift thou gert this bischop brek  
 The fendes band, and his maistri — *bonds; power*  
 Wel birs us blis thee derworthelye. *should we bless; precious*  
     Kep I na langer her to duelle, *I will not continue*  
 Bot forth our tal wille I telle,  
 275 How this bischop, wit penanz ras *rose*  
 Out of his sin, thoru Goddes grace.  
     Quen this bischop this sin hafd don,  
 Our Lauerd send him grace ful son,  
 And gert him think wel of his state,  
 280 And son bigan he for to grate, *weep*  
 And said, “Allas, that I was borne,  
 Schamlic haf I me forlorne. *ruined myself*  
 Bischop I am, and suld wel lif,  
 And god ensampil til other gif,  
 285 And haf swa my sawel schente, *destroyed*  
 That I war worthé for to be brente. *burned*  
 Allas, thate ever was I clerc;  
 Qui tok I on me Goddes werc?  
 Forsothe ic am wele mar to blame,  
 290 And for to thol wel mar schame, *suffer*  
 Thanne er thir simpel lawed menne; *ignorant*  
 Thaim I suld bathe lere and kenne, *teach and instruct*  
 And now am I wel wer than thaye. *worse*  
 Ic haf plaied a sorful playe,  
 295 For ic haf broken Goddes house,  
 And reft ic haf Jesus his spouse, *stolen*  
 Allas, allas, that I was born,  
 For al folc mai drife me to schorn. *scorn me*  
 Hou sal I fare on Domes Daye,  
 300 Quen I salle be flemid away *banished*  
 Fra Goddes faz, tille pin of helle, *face*  
 Witouten end tharinne to dwelle?”  
     Quen he him thoht of helle pin,  
 And quat thai thol that er tharin, *suffer*  
 305 And of that joy that he hafd tinte, *desired*  
 To slan himself he hafd minte; *fearful*  
 Sa forful was this erzbischof,

- That almast fel he in wanhop. *despair*  
 Bot Goddes graz was son redye, *grace*  
 310 And wald noht thol him miscarye, *go astray*  
 Bot conforted him wit swetly sware, *gracious speech*  
 And lethed his soru and his kare; *soothed*  
 And gert him ful son haf god hop,  
 That the lestes blodes drop  
 315 Of that ilc derworthi blode  
 That Jesus sched apon the rode  
 Was of wel mar derworthines,  
 Than alle men sin of wikednes.  
 And son he gan to kalle and krye  
 320 At the yates of mercye. *gates*  
 He gert graithe him a privé sted, *secret place*  
 Thar he moht lif wit water and brede.  
 A pouer hous was son purvaide, *provided*  
 And pouer atir tharin was layde, *clothing*  
 325 And thar woned this bischop lange, *dwelled*  
 In soru of hert and penanz strange.  
 Quen paroschenis com him to,  
 Mani nedis wit him to do, *parishioners*  
 He gert his serganz til thaim saie, *sergeants*  
 330 That he in Godes bandes laie. *fetters*  
 For he fended the serganz *forbade*  
 That thai suld tel man his penanz.  
 This erzebischof lifd thare,  
 In strange penanz, and soru, and kare.  
 335 Wit hayr ful haird his bodi he cledde, *a hair shirt; clothed*  
 Wit bred and water was he fedde,  
 He wroht that bodi wa inohe, *inflicted enough misery on that body*  
 That him to filth of sin drohe. *drew*  
 He yald it that it gert him do, *requited it for what*  
 340 Wit pin, and reft it rest and ro. *deprived; peace*  
 His foul fleis drohn him to sin, *drew*  
 Forthi he mad it pouer and thin.  
 The lawed folc was ivel payed, *lay; ill satisfied*  
 And for thair bischop gern prayed, *eagerly*  
 345 For thai wend alle that he sek ware,  
 And for him was thair hert ful sare.  
 Erles, knihtes, and barounes,  
 Prestes, vikers, and parsounes,  
 Toht of thair bischop gret ferli, *Thought it a great wonder regarding their bishop*  
 350 And pleined thaim, and askid qui, *complained; why*  
 That thai ne might thair bischop se.  
 And wel thai wend that ded war he.  
 Sum mananced his durs to brek,  
 Bot yef thai moht wit him spek. *threatened*

- 355 Than wald his chamberlain thaim stille, *quiet*  
 And fair he graunted thaim thair wille.  
 He bad thaim in the palays duelle, *remain*  
 And said he suld his lauerd telle,  
 Alle thair langing and thair wille,  
 360 And ger the bisschope come thaim till.  
 This chamberlain to chamber yode,  
 And said his lauerd, wit sari mode, *told; with sorrowful expression*  
 Alle quat the folc said him to,  
 Bot yef thai moht cum him to. *Unless*  
 365 And quen the bischop herd this,  
 Ful sorful was his hert iwis.  
 He chaungid son his ouri wed, *quickly his shabby clothing*  
 And forth into the halle he yed.  
 The folc saw wel his pouer state,  
 370 And sar for him gan thai grate; *cry*  
 For well thai thoht that he was sek,  
 For pal and clungen was his chek, *shrivelled*  
 His skin was klungen to the bane, *sunk in*  
 For fleische apon him was thar nane.  
 375 Quen folc wit him thair fille havid spokin,  
 Igain in chamber was he lokin; *locked*  
 His frendes saw wel bi his faz *face*  
 That he hafd mister of solaz, *need of comfort*  
 And gert him wel eet and drinc,  
 380 And lef his utrageous swinc; *work*  
 Bot ai he thoht apon his sinne,  
 That stang his hert ful sar witinne. *pierced*  
 And quen the laud folc wel herd, *lay*  
 That thair bischop better ferd,  
 385 Ful fain thai war, and com riht son *glad*  
 Til him and askid him a bon; *request*  
 That he suld an hey fest day *high feast*  
 Sing thaim a messe, gern prayed thai.  
 The bischop son him umthoht,  
 390 That sing mes moht he noht,  
 Ar he war scrifen of his sinne *Before he was confessed*  
 That bate his hert sa sar within. *beat upon*  
 Bot nohtforthi, him was ful lathe *reluctant*  
 To wain thaim or mac thaim wrathe. *challenge*  
 395 He hiht the folk thair messe to sing, *promised*  
 And thai war fain of his hihting. *glad; promise*  
 Bathe ald and yong, and mar and lesse,  
 Com for to her the bischop messe  
 Apon a hey fest day,  
 400 For it to her ful fain war thai.  
 Quen the bischop to sing was graithid, *prepared*

- And riche atir on auter laid, *attire*  
 He stod stille, and bigan to preche,  
 Als man that cuthe the folc teche.  
 405 He preched on sa fair maner,  
 That it was joi for to her,  
 And quen his sermoun ended was,  
 The folc wit mikel joi up ras,  
 And thankid Jesus in that plaz,  
 410 That gaf thair bishop slic graz. *such grace*  
 Bot he gert thaim sit down igain,  
 And said, "You bird be unfain *You ought to be displeased*  
 Of me, that sulde be your bischop,  
 For ic es werr man than ye hop. *a worse man than you think*  
 415 Ye wen ful wel nou everilkan,  
 That I be a ful hali man,  
 And I sai you, forsothe, that ye  
 Foullic deceivid er of me.  
 For meself haf I swa schent,  
 420 That I war worthé for to be brent,  
 For ic am a kaitif lechour, *wretched*  
 And ille man, and Goddes traytour."  
 Bifor him al the folc he kald,  
 And tille thaim alle his sin he tald.  
 425 Quen he havid said his sinful ded,  
 He kest of him that riche wed, *cast off*  
 That es at sai, his vestement,  
 And thoru the folc barfot he went.  
 This folc bigan to grat and cry, *implore*  
 430 And bad him turn igain in hey. *turn; quickly*  
 Thai said, "Our Lauerd es ful redi  
 To haf of thee ful god mercy.  
 We wil," thai said, "apon us take  
 Al thi sin, and al thi wrak. *evil*  
 435 Forthi, fader, we pray thee,  
 Thou turne igain, and bischop be."  
 Bot moht thair praier noht avail,  
 For wald he noht trow thair consail,  
 Bot did him forthe, als he wair wode, *trust their advice*  
 440 Wit soru, and sit, and dreri mode. *went away; as if; mad*  
 Awai he ran, and sar he gret, *shame*  
 And wit a womman son he met, *at once*  
 That bar a child in hir arm, *carried*  
 In swethel cloutes liand warm. *swaddling cloths lying*  
 445 This child was noht an half yer ald, *old*  
 And spac, thohquethir, wordes bald *nevertheless*  
 Til the bischop, and askid qui  
 He was sa sorful and sary.

- The child spac thoru the Hali Gaste,  
 450 And bad him turne igain in haste.  
 "Ga swithe," he said, "and sing thi messe,  
 For al thi sin forgiven esse."  
 This child spac graytheli wit mouthe, *readily*  
 Bot thoru kynde, spec it ne kouthe. *by nature; could not*  
 455 Bot thoru mirakel spac he thare,  
 And bad the bischop lef his kare, *lay aside*  
 And turn igain, als ic haf said,  
 Thar it in noriz arm was laid. *nursemaid's*  
 This bischop flekerid in his thoht, *wavered*  
 460 For graitheli no wist he noht, *truly*  
 Hougat this yong child spac him tille,  
 Quethir with god gast, or wit ille. *In what manner*  
 Forthi wald he noht turne igain, *Whether through; spirit*  
 No to the childe norz be bain, *Nor; obedient*  
 465 And did him forthe als he war madde, *went forth*  
 For riht repentanz mad him radde. *fearful*  
 And an angel bi wai he mette,  
 In mannes fourm, that him grette,  
 And said, "Godd sendes me to thee,  
 470 And biddes thee bald and siker be, *confident and certain*  
 That al thi sin forgiven isse,  
 And biddes thee turn and sing thi messe."  
 The bischop for als he war medde, *went on as though he were mad*  
 And the angel to kirc him ledde,  
 475 And did his vestement him on,  
 And gert him sing his messe riht son.  
 The bischop wel sang his messe than,  
 And sithen bicom a hali man,  
 That bathe lered and lawed said, *So that*  
 480 That this auntour was for him laid, *experience was allotted to him*  
 To ger him better be manne,  
 And stither stand igain Satane. *more strongly*  
 And bi this tale, mai we se alle,  
 That God tholes god men to falle, *permits*  
 485 For he wil that thai stither rise, *wishes; stronger*  
 And be cunnand in his servise. *wise*  
 Als oft als man in sin falles, *As often as*  
 Als oft Crist fra sin him calles,  
 And biddes him turn, wit swetli sware, *sweet words*  
 490 Fra sinne, and fal tharin no mare.  
 And forthi that Crist on slic wis *such a manner*  
 Bathe lates us falle, and gers us ris, *lets; makes*  
 Symeon in our Godspel said,  
 That Crist to mani man was laid, *appointed*  
 495 In falling and in rising bathe,

For Crist lates falle and rise bath,  
 Als we mai bi this bischop se,  
 For first he felle, and sithen ras he.  
 Prai we till God of hevin forthi,  
 500 That he haf of us mercye,  
 And yef we fal in any schathe, *harm*  
 He gif us graz to rise rathe, *quickly*  
 And cum wit him to that blisse,  
 Thar nou this bischop wit him isse. Amen.

[Homilies 7–10 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

### 11. FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

*Dominica iii post Octavam Epiphanie, secundum Matheum.*<sup>1</sup>

*Ascendente Jhesu in naviculam secuti sunt eum discipuli eius; et ecce motus magnus factus est in mari ita ut navicula operiretur fluctibus. et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

Sain Matheu the wangeliste  
 Telles us todaï, hou Criste  
 Schipped into the se a tim, *one time*  
 And his decipelis al wit him.  
 5 And quen thair schip cam on dep,  
 Jesu selven fel on slep, *himself*  
 And gret tempest bigan to ris,  
 That gert the schipmen sar grise. *That made the sailors greatly fear*  
 Thai wakned Crist, and said yare, *quickly*  
 10 “Help us, Lauerd, for we forfare.” *perish*  
 And Crist, als mihti Godd, ansuerd  
 And said, “Foles, qui er ye fered?”  
 Als qua sai: Godd es in this schip, *As if to say*  
 That mai wel save this felauschip.  
 15 And Crist comanded wind and se  
 To lethe, and fair weder be. *To be still*  
 And sa fair weder was in hie, *occurred so quickly*  
 That al his felaues thoht ferlie, *thought it a marvel*

<sup>1</sup> *Third Sunday after the Octave of the Epiphany, according to Matthew*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Matthew 8:23–27): *And when he entered into the boat, his disciples followed him: And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, [but he was asleep. And they came to him, and awaked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, o ye of little faith? Then rising up he commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?]*

20	And said, "Quatkin man mai this be, Til him bues bathe winde and se?" This es the strenthe of our Godspelle Als man on Ingelis tong mai telle.	<i>What kind of bows</i>
25	Al Hali Kirc, als thinc me, Mai bi this chippe takened be, That Crist rad in and his felawes, Imang dintes of gret quawes. For schip fletes on the flode, And Hali Kirc wit costes gode, Fletes aboven this werldes se,	<i>ship signified rode blows; waves qualities</i>
30	Flouand wit sin and caytifié God Cresten men er Hali Kirc, That gladli Goddes will will wirc. This schip ful gret wawes kepes, And Crist tharin gasteli slepes,	<i>wretchedness waves fends off spiritually</i>
35	Quen he tholes god men and lele, Wit wic men and fals dele, That betes thaim wit dede and word Als se bare betes on schipbord. For wit ensampel, mai we se	<i>allows; loyal wicked; have dealings with the sea wave</i>
40	That al this werld es bot a se, That breimli bares on banc wit bale, And gret fisches etes the smale. For riche men of this werd etes That pouer wit thair travail getes.	<i>fiercely rushes ashore; harm</i>
45	For wit pouer men fares the kinge, Riht als the quale fars wit the elringe, And riht als sturioun etes merling, And lobbekeling etes sperling, Sua stroies mare men the lesse,	<i>What the poor with their labor obtain deals whale; herring sturgeon; whiting large codfish; sprats greater</i>
50	Wit wa and werldes wrangwisnes, And schathe that lesse tholes of mare Smities als storm of se ful sare. And forthi that Crist tholes this, Ite sembeles that he slepand is;	<i>With woe; worldly wickedness harm; lesser suffer; greater seems</i>
55	Bot thai that thol thir strange stowres, Thai waken Criste and askes socoures Wit orisoun, that es prayer, That wakenes Crist, and geres him her Al thair wandreth and thair wrake,	<i>difficulties help makes him hear sorrow; ruin</i>
60	And wit his miht he geres it slake. For rihtwis Cristen man praier Es til Jesus sa lef and dere, That quatsaever we ask tharin And we be out of dedeli sin,	<i>diminish beloved whatsoever If</i>



- 65 Our Lauerd grauntes it us son,  
 Yef sawel hel be in our bon. *soul's health; request*  
 For yef we prai God that he  
 Grant that igan our sawel be, *Grant that which is not for [the good off] our soul*  
 Us au to thinc na ferlye *We ought; no wonder*
- 70 Thou Godd it warnes overtlye. *Although; refuses openly*  
 For bi ensampel mai we se  
 That prayer mai unschilful be; *unreasonable*  
 Als ef thou prai Godd that he  
 Apon thi fais venge thee *foes*
- 75 Thi prayer es igan his wille, *against*  
 Forthi wil he it noht fulfille;  
 Or yef thou prai efter catele, *goods*  
 That es igan thi sawel hele;  
 Or efter werdes mensc and miht, *worldly honor*
- 80 That geres foles fal in pliht; *makes fools; sin*  
 Or ef thou praye him that he leche *alleviate*  
 Thi fandinges, and thi wandrethe, *trials; misery*  
 That dos into thi sawel gode,  
 Yef thou it thol wit milde mode. *endure*
- 85 Wit resoun mai thou Godd noht wite, *reproach*  
 Yef he thee swilk askinges nite, *such; deny*  
 For yef he graunt thee thi schathe, *harm*  
 Thou war noht lef til him, bot lathe. *dear; hateful*  
 Forthi es godd that we him praye
- 90 Thing that our sawel hele mai; *heal*  
 For ar we bigin our prayer,  
 Wote he warof we haf mester. *He knows what we have need of*
- Bot for our Godspel spekes of se,  
 Quarbi this werld mai bisend be, *symbolized*
- 95 Forthi wil I chaw other thinges, *show*  
 That er apert biseninges, *open symbols*  
 Bituixe thir wlanc werld and se, *Of; proud*  
 This werldes welt to ger yow fle. *wealth to make you flee*  
 Bi salte water of the se,
- 100 Ful graitheli mai bisend be *readily*  
 This werldes welth, auht, and catel, *possessions*  
 That werdes men lufes ful wel, *worldly*  
 For salte water geres men threst, *thirst*  
 And werdes catel geres men brest. *worldly goods; burst*
- 105 The mar thou drinkes of the se, *more*  
 The mare and mar threstes thee;  
 And ai the richer that man esse,  
 The mar him langes efter riches.  
 And in se dronkenes folc ful fele, *drown; many*
- 110 And sua dos in werdes catele; *so do they; worldly goods*  
 For water drunkenes the bodie,

- And catel the sawel gastelie;  
 For catel drawes man til helle,  
 Thar wattri wormes er ful felle,  
 115 And of thir wormes wil I tell  
 A tal, yef ye wil her mi spelle.
- And hali man biyond se,  
 Was bischop of a gret cité;  
 God man he was, and Pers he hiht,  
 120 And thar bisyd woned a kniht,  
 That thoru kind was bond and thralle,  
 Bot knihted gat he wit catelle.  
 This catel gat he wit okering,  
 And led al his lif in corsing,  
 125 For he haunted bathe dai and niht  
 His okering, sine he was kniht,  
 Als fast als he did bifore,  
 And tharwit gat he gret tresore.  
 Bot Crist that boht us der wit pine,  
 130 Wald noht this mannes sawel tine,  
 Bot gaf him graz himself to knau,  
 And his sin to the bischop schawe.  
 Quen he him schraf at this bischop,  
 This bischop bad him haf god hop,  
 135 And asked him, yef he walde tac  
 Riht penanz, for his sinful sac.  
 “Ful gladli wil I tac,” he said,  
 “The penanz that bes on me laid.”  
 And the bischop said, “Thou sal mete  
 140 A beggar gangand by the strete,  
 And quat als ever he askes thee,  
 Gif him, this sal thi penanz be.”  
 And ful wel paied was this kniht,  
 For him thoht his penanz ful liht.  
 145 And als he for hamward, he mette  
 A beggar that him cumly grette,  
 And said, “Lef sir, par charité  
 Wit sum almous thou help me.”  
 This kniht asked quat he wald haf,  
 150 “Lauerd,” he said, “sum quet I crave.”  
 “Hou mikel,” he said, “askes thou me?”  
 “A quarter, Lauerd, par charité.”  
 This kniht granted him his bone,  
 And gert met him his corn sone.  
 155 This pouer man was will of wan,  
 For poc no sek no havid he nan,  
 Quarin he moht this quete do;
- sea serpents are numerous*
- was called  
 nearby dwelled  
 nature; a bondsman; slave  
 obtained; wealth  
 usury  
 trading  
 engaged in*
- lose*
- confessed to*
- accept  
 sin*
- walking*
- satisfied  
 easy  
 went  
 graciously greeted  
 for charity's sake*
- wheat*
- Eight bushels; for the sake of charity*
- did measure; grain  
 at a loss  
 bag; sack  
 grain place*

- And forthi this kniht said him to,  
 “This quet, I rede thou selle me, *advise*  
 160 For ful pouer me think thee.”  
 The pouer said, “Lathe thinc me *I think it hateful*  
 To sel Goddes charité,  
 Bot len me sum fetel tharto, *container (vessel)*  
 Quarin I mai thin almous do.”  
 165 And he ansuerd and said, “Nai;”  
 For al that this beggar moht sai,  
 And said, “This thou selle me, *Sell me this [the grain]*  
 For fetil wil I nan len thee.”  
 The beggar moht na better do,  
 170 Bot sald this corn igain him to,  
 And toc tharfor fif schilling, *received for it*  
 And went him forthe on his begging.  
 Quen this corn to the kniht was sald,  
 He did it in an arc to hald, *chest*  
 175 And opened this arc the thrid daye,  
 And fand tharin, selcouthe to saye, *marvelous*  
 Snakes and nederes thar he fand, *adders*  
 And gret blac tades gangand, *toads*  
 And arskes and other wormes felle, *water newts; many*  
 180 That I kan noht on Inglis telle.  
 Thai lep upward til his visage, *face*  
 And gert him almost fal in rage, *caused*  
 Sa was he for thir wormes ferde; *terrified*  
 Bot nohtforthi that arc he speride, *nevertheless; shut*  
 185 And to the bischope on a rase *in a rush*  
 He ran, and tald him his cas.  
 The bischop sau that Godd wald tac  
 Of this man sin wrethful wrac. *angry vengeance*  
 And said, “Yef thou wil folfille  
 190 Wit worthi penanz, Goddes wille,  
 And clens wit penanz riht worthi,  
 Al thi sinnes and thi foli,  
 I red that thou self thee falle *advise; throw thyself*  
 Naked, imang tha wormes alle —  
 195 No gif thou of theeself na tale, *Nor take any account of thyself*  
 Bot bring thi sawel out of bale. *trouble*  
 Thou tha wormes thi caroin gnawe, *Although; corpse*  
 Thi pyne lastes bot a thrawe; *short time*  
 And than sal thi sawel wende  
 200 To lif of blis, witouten ende.”  
 This okerer was selli radde, *usurer; very frightened*  
 To do that this bischop him badde,  
 Bot of mercy hafd he god hop,  
 And yern he prayd the bischop, *eagerly*

- 205 And said, "Lef fader, I prai thee  
 That hou prai inwardli for me,  
 That God gif me his graz to fang *receive*  
 One my bodi, this penanz strang."  
 The bischop hiht this man lelye, *promised; loyally*
- 210 To prai for him riht inwardlye.  
 This man went ham thoh he war rad,  
 And did als his bischop him badde;  
 For imang al thir wormes snelle, *quickly*  
 Als nakid als he was borne ifelle. *fell*
- 215 Thir wormes ete that wreche manne, *wretched*  
 And left nathing of him bot ban. *bones*  
 The bischop went into that toun,  
 Wit clerkes in processioun,  
 And com into this knihtes wanes, *dwelling*
- 220 And soht ful gern his hali banes;  
 And til this forsaid arc he yod, *went*  
 And opened it wit joiful mod,  
 And riped imang tha wormes lathe, *groped; horrible*  
 Bot nan of thaim moht do him schathe,
- 225 And forthe he gan tha banes draw,  
 And thai war als quite als snaw.  
 Quen al tha banes outtan ware, *taken out*  
 Tha wormes geret he brin ful yare, *He had the worms burned; quickly*  
 And bar thir bannes menskelye, *honorably*
- 230 And fertered thaim at a nunnrye. *enshrined*  
 Thar Godd schewes mirakelle and miht, *There*  
 And gifes blind men thair siht,  
 And croked men thar geres he ga, *And there he makes crippled men walk*  
 And leches seke men of wa, *heals*
- 235 And schewes wel wit fair ferlikes, *miracles*  
 That thar banes er god relikes.
- This tal haf I nou tald here,  
 To ger you se on quat maner, *make*  
 That the mar catel that man haves,
- 240 The mar and mare his hert craves;  
 And namlic thir okereres,  
 That er cursed for thair aferes; *dealings*  
 Bot yef thai her thair lif amend, *Unless*  
 Thai wend til wormes witouten end,
- 245 That sal thaim reuli rif and rend *cruelly; tear*  
 In helle pin witouten ende.  
 That wist this bischop witerlye, *certainly*  
 And forthi did he quaintelye, *cleverly*  
 Quen he gert wormes ette this man,
- 250 To yem his sawel fra Satan. *protect*

	For wormes suld his sawel haf rended,	<i>torn apart</i>
	Quarsaever it suld haf lended,	<i>Wherever; dwelled</i>
	Yef he no havid wel be scriven,	<i>been shriven</i>
	And his caroin til wormes given.	<i>corpse</i>
255	Bot for his fleis was pined here,	<i>But because</i>
	His sawel es nou til Godd ful dere,	
	Thar it wones in plai and gamen,	
	Godd bring us thider alle samen. Amen.	

## 12. FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

*Dominica iiii post Octavam Epiphanie, secundum Matheum.*<sup>1</sup>

*Dixit Jesus discipulis suis: Simile est regnum celorum homini qui seminavit bonum semen in agro suo. Cum autem dormirent homines, venit inimicus eius et super seminavit. et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	Til his decipeles said Jesus,	
	Als Sain Matheu her telles us:	
	Heven es lic til an husband,	<i>farmer</i>
	That seu god sed apon his land,	<i>sowed</i>
5	And quen al folc on slep ware,	
	Than com his fa, and seu riht thare	<i>enemy (foe)</i>
	Darnel, that es an ivel wede,	<i>Cockle</i>
	Riht al imang this hosband sede;	<i>farmer's</i>
	And quen this sede quarof I mene,	
10	Was hey aboven the erthe sene,	
	Than was thar darnel sen imang,	
	That thoht this hosband hine ful strang.	<i>servants; strange</i>
	Thir hyne said til this hosband:	
	"Seu thou noht god sed on thi land?	
15	Quethen com darnel that es sen	<i>Whence</i>
	Imang thi corn nou al biden?"	<i>so soon</i>
	This hosband ansuerd thaim sone	
	And said, "Mi fa this ded haves done."	<i>enemies</i>
	Thai asked him yef he wald thaye	<i>wished that they</i>

<sup>1</sup> Fourth Sunday after the Octave of Epiphany, according to Matthew.

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Matthew 13:24–30): Another parable he proposed to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed [cockle among the wheat and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the goodman of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.]

- 20 Suld draw it op and do it awaye.  
 And he ansuerd and said, "Naye,  
 For suagat spil mi corn ye maye, *in that way; grain*  
 Yef ye draw up the darnel smalle,  
 Ye mai draw up the corn witalle, *along with it*
- 25 Bot lates it til heruest stande,  
 And I sal say til men scherande, *men who are shearing*  
 Gaderes the darnel first in bande,  
 And brennes it opon the land, *burn*  
 And scheres sithen the corn rathe, *cut; quickly*
- 30 And bringes it unto my lathe."  
 This es the strenthe of our Godspelle, *barn*  
 Als man on Ingelis tung mai telle.
- We mai wel gastli understande *spiritually*  
 Godd almihti bi this hosbande,  
 35 For God schawes in mennes hertes  
 His graz, that thaim til godnes ertes; *grace; draws*  
 For Goddes graz es gastly sede,  
 That beres froyt of rihtwis dede,  
 And other sede our Lauerd sawes,
- 40 That Cresten men til god lif drawes,  
 Quen he sendes his messageres,  
 That es at sai, thir sarmouneres, *preachers*  
 That clenses man of gastli wede,  
 And schawes in him Goddes sede; *reveal*
- 45 For quen thai snib us of misdedes,  
 Than clens thai us of gastly wedes; *criticize*  
 And quen thai scheu us hevenes mede,  
 Than sau thai in us Goddes sede. *reward*  
 This es the sede that gastli springes,  
 50 And froyt of god werkes forth bringes;  
 For it bringes forth charité,  
 And bousomnes, and chastité,  
 And riht penanz, wit almous dedes, *charitable*  
 That into the blis of hevene ledes.
- 55 Bot Satenas es Cristes fa, *foe*  
 And waites ay to do us wa.  
 He sawes imang Goddes sede  
 In mannes hert, darnel and wede,  
 That geres men oft and mani sithe, *times*
- 60 In dedes wic costes kithe, *wicked behavior show*  
 For sede of darnel geres men wed, *mad*  
 And swa dos that unseli wede, *wretched*  
 That Satan saues in our hertes, *sows*  
 For us to wekkednes it ertes; *draws*
- 65 Of this waful sede springes wrethe, *anger*

- And prid, and nithe, and brother lethe,  
 And covaitys, and tricherie,  
 And glotounye, and licherye. *envy; hatred*
- And of this sede that Satan sawes,  
 70 A god tal Sain Jerom us schawes *story*  
 Of an ermyt, an hali man, *hermit*  
 That woned in wasti bi him an;  
*dwelled in a wilderness by himself*  
 And als he in his celle sate,  
 He saw a fend ga bi the gate, *way*  
 75 And boystes on himsele he bare, *boxes; carried*  
 And ampolies, als leche ware. *And little bottles, as if he were a physician*  
 And thar biside was an abbaye,  
 And thiderward he toc the waye.  
 That hali man that saw this fende,  
 80 Asked him quidir he wald wende.  
 "Til yon abbaye," he said, "I gang,  
 For thethen haf I ben to lang." *away from there*  
 And this ermyt thoht gret ferlye *marvel*  
 Of thir boystes, and asked quie *why*  
 85 He bare on him tha boystes alle.  
 "With thaim," he said, "housel I salle *fill*  
 Al the brether of yon abbaye,  
 For wit thaim wille I fand to playe,  
 And qua sa a medecin forsake, *attempt*  
 90 Another sal I ger him take; *one; refuses*  
 Yef he wil noht of glotounye, *make*  
 I sal him housel wit envye,  
 Or with sum other specerye, *medicinal ingredient*  
 Of prid and nith and felounye, *malice (envy, anger)*  
 95 Or wit sum other lufli drinc,  
 That may ger him of sin thinc."  
 This ermet leet that fend ga,  
 And bad him com igain riht swa,  
 And prayed Godd help in that nede,  
 100 And lett that fend in al his dede. *hinder*  
 This fend intil that abbay yede, *went*  
 And faand yef he moht oht spede. *And tried to see if he might succeed in any way*  
 Quen he haved don al that he moht,  
 And sau that his dede litel doht, *availed*  
 105 And come igain bi this ermite, *hermit*  
 Wit waful cher and soru and site, *regret*  
 This ermit asked him fol son,  
 "Hou haves thou sped, hou havis thou don?"  
 And he said, "Ic haf sped ful ille,  
 110 For nan of thaim wille do mi wille;  
 Wald nan of thaim mi lare liste, *teaching, listen to*

	Bot an that hatte Teociste,	<i>was called</i>
	For I find him redi to do	
	Mi wil, ay quen I com him to."	
115	Quen this was said, he went away,	
	And this ermyt yod to the abbay.	<i>went</i>
	The monkes com al him igaine	
	For of his com thai was ful fayne.	<i>happy</i>
	He asked efter Teocist,	
120	And thai kend him til his biwist;	<i>showed; dwelling</i>
	For ilkan woned in sere celle,	<i>dwelled; different</i>
	Als it than til thair order felle.	<i>As was the custom in their order</i>
	Wit Teocist this ermit mette,	
	And aither other comly grette.	
125	This ermyt asked yef he war oht	<i>had been at all</i>
	Fanded wit fleis liking in thoht,	<i>Tempted; fleshly desire</i>
	And he ansuerd and said, "Naye,"	
	For him thoht lathe the sothe to saye.	<i>he was reluctant; truth</i>
	And this ermyt ansuerd him thanne,	
130	And said, "Ic am a wel ald mane,	
	And thohquethir, noht a day til ende <sup>1</sup>	
	Mai I mi fleis fra fanding fende;	<i>temptation; defend</i>
	Hou may thou than be in thi youthe	
	Wit fleysly fanding sa uncouth?"	<i>unknown</i>
135	Thusgat spac this ermyt him tille,	
	To ger him chaw his thohtes ille;	<i>make him show</i>
	And Teocist asked mercye,	
	And said, "Lef fader, sua am I	<i>Dear</i>
	Sua hard fandede witt licherye,	
140	That my fleys may I noht chastye."	<i>subdue</i>
	This ermyt kend him than hou he	<i>taught</i>
	Suld stithe igain Satanas be;	<i>strong</i>
	And quen this monc was broht in state,	<i>brought into a good state</i>
	This ermyt toc hamward the gate,	<i>way</i>
145	And son tharefter eft he sawe	<i>again</i>
	The fend tilward that abbay draw;	<i>toward</i>
	And sone efter com he igain,	
	And this ermyt bigan to frain	<i>inquire</i>
	At Satenas, hou he hafd spedde,	
150	And he ansuered als he war medde,	<i>mad</i>
	And said, "Allas and wailewaye	
	That ever I com at yon abbaye,	
	For in na chaffar may I winne,	<i>bargaining</i>
	Of tha lurdanes that won tharinne,	<i>sluggards; dwell</i>
155	For likes nan of thaim my play,	

<sup>1</sup> And nevertheless, not a single day from beginning to end



- Bot alle thar kache me away. *drive*  
 In thaim part may I haf nane,  
 For al the craftes that I kan —  
 For Teocist that me was left, *remained to me*  
 160 Es nou ful schamli fra me reft; *taken away*  
 To me was he won to be bain, *accustomed; obedient*  
 Nou es he stithest me igan,  
 Forthi I se that me no thare, *I need not*  
 Tilward yon abbay founde mare.” *go towards*
- 165 This ermit lofad Godde almihtye, *praised*  
 That mad the fendes craft emptye.  
 This tal ful openly us schawes  
 Quat sed of helle the fend sawes.  
 Pray we forthi that Godd us reede, *help*  
 170 And child us fra the fendes seede, *shield*  
 That he no haf miht us to tele *deceive*  
 With gastly dranc and wit darnele.  
 For sed that Satan in man sawes,  
 Thair fleys til lust and liking draws.  
 175 Our Lauerd schild us fra that sede,  
 And len us sa our lif to lede, *grant*  
 That we may gastly froyt forthe bring, *spiritual fruit*  
 On Domesday bifer our king,  
 That wic men fra god sal schille, *wicked; good; separate*  
 180 And cal the god men him tille,  
 And send the wic to tac thair hire *receive their pay*  
 For thair froit til helle fire;  
 Bot god men sal Crist than lede,  
 Til hefenes blis to tak thar mede. *reward*  
 185 Our Lauerd Jesus thider us bring,  
 Amen, amen, we alle sing. Amen.

### 13. PURIFICATION

*In Purificationem Beate Marie, secundum Lucam.*<sup>1</sup>

*Postquam impleti sunt dies purgacionis Marie secundum legem Moysy, tulerunt illum in Jerusalem, ut sisterent eum Domino, sicut scriptum est in lege Domini: Quia omne masculinum adaperiens vulvam, sanctum Domino, et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On [the day of the] Purification of Blessed Mary, according to Luke

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 2:22–24): *And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord: As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord: [And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written*

	In Hali Boc find we	
	That this dai hafes names thre;	
	The first es cald Maries clensing,	<i>purification</i>
	The tother es cald Cristes meeting,	<i>second; the meeting with Christ</i>
5	The thred es cald Candelmesse day,	<i>third</i>
	Als lawed folc it calles ay.	<i>lay</i>
	Candel that we to kirc bring	<i>church</i>
	Bitakenes Jesu Crist our king;	<i>signifies</i>
	For Crist was offered als todaye,	
10	Als I you sal nou son saye.	
	And riht als ilke man mai se	<i>every</i>
	In brinnand candel thinges thre,	<i>burning</i>
	That es at say, wax, wec and liht,	<i>wick</i>
	Sua es in Crist Goddhed and miht;	
15	And tharto sawel and bodie,	
	That er bisened apertelye	<i>symbolized clearly</i>
	Bi candel, quarin we mai se	<i>wherein</i>
	Wax, wec, liht, that er thinges thre.	
	For riht als candel haves liht,	
20	Sua haved Crist in him Goddes miht;	
	For liht bitakenis his Goddhede,	
	Als we ful oft in bokes rede.	
	Bot wec that in wax loken esse,	
	Cristes sawel bitakenesse,	<i>signifies</i>
25	That was loken and hidde in fleys,	
	For fleys es brokel als wax, and neys.	<i>brittle; soft</i>
	We ber todai thoru this resoun,	
	Our candel in processioune,	
	And bi this resoun es wel sene	
30	That this nam Candelmes wil mene.	
	The tother nam, als ar said I,	<i>other</i>
	Es cald clensing of our Lefdeye,	
	And thohquethir hafd scho na mister	<i>although; need</i>
	To be clensed on slic maner,	<i>such</i>
35	Bot for scho wald forfille the lawe,	
	And meknes in hir dedes schawe,	
	Forthi com scho this day to do	
	For hir clensing that felle tharto.	<i>pertained</i>
	For it was comanded in the law	
40	That wif fra kirc hir sold witdraw,	
	The faurty dayes all bidene,	<i>in all</i>
	Sua lang was scho halden unklen,	<i>considered [to be] unclean</i>
	Efter that scho delivered ware	
	Of knaf child, and thanne ful yare	<i>soon</i>

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*in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.]*

- 45      Quen faurty dawes wer broht til ende,  
           Than sold scho to the tempel wende *went*  
           Wit hir child, and hir hosbande,  
           To mac thar for this child offerande;  
           And yef thaie riht riche men ware, *if*
- 50      Thai suld offer a lamb riht thare;  
           Yef thai war pouer, than suld thay  
           Offer opou this clensing day  
           Tua turteles, or tua douf briddes, *turtledoves; dove birds*  
           Als Godd in Moyses law biddes; *commands*
- 55      And for Crist com noht for to spille *because; destroy*  
           The Alde Lawe, bot it fulfille, *old*  
           Forthi com his moder today,  
           To do that fel to Jowes lay, *faith*  
           And thoru resoun of this thing,
- 60      Es this day calde Maryes clensing.  
           Nou haf we herd quarfor and qui  
           This fest hatte clensing of Mary. *is called*  
           The first nam es Candelmesse,  
           The tother Maryes clensing esse,
- 65      The thred Cristes meting es cald, *meeting*  
           Als our Godspel todai us tald.  
           It sais hou Crist als this daie mette *greeted*  
           Wit tua men, that him comly gret.  
           The tan was man, the tother wif, *one*
- 70      Bot bathe thai ledde ful hali lif:  
           For he was prest in Jowes laye, *law*  
           And scho lele widow many daye;  
           And Simeon hiht the carmanne, *was called; man*  
           And the womman was cald dam Anne,
- 75      Scho wist thoru gast of prophecye, *knew; spirit*  
           That Godd suld send his Son in hye, *soon*  
           Mankind nede for to do,  
           And Cristes com lang habad scho; *arrival; awaited*  
           And als today mett scho wit Crist,
- 80      And spac of him thing that scho wist, *knew*  
           Hou he suld man on rod bye, *redeem*  
           For scho wist that thoru prophecye.  
           And Symeon the prest alsua,  
           Toc Jesus in his armis tua,
- 85      And said, "Lauerd, nou mai I deye,  
           For I se thee wit fleysly eye;  
           I se that I ber in my hande  
           Goddess awen Son and his sand, *sign*  
           That stithe igain the fend sal stand, *strongly*
- 90      And les mankind out of his band." *loose; bondage*  
           Sain Symeon slic wordes sayd, *such*

- Quen Crist was in his armes layd,  
 For wel lang thar bifer he wist,  
 That him byhoved se Jesu Crist; *he must see*  
 95 The Hali Gast haved warned him  
 That he suld dey noht ar that tim *before*  
 That he havid wit his eyen sen  
 This blized barn of quaim I men. *blessed child*  
 Forthi he said, "Quen I him seye,  
 100 Lauerd, in pes nou may I dey, *peace*  
 For thou haves don that thou me hiht, *promised*  
 And schued theeself to mi siht. *showed*  
 I se that thou mankind haves tan,  
 And for mankind bicomem man." *taken on a human nature*  
 105 Nou se ye that thoru resoun *because*  
 That Crist mett wit Sain Symeoun,  
 And withe dam Anne of quaim I tald,  
 This day es Cristes meting cald;  
 For in the tempel bathe mett thaye,  
 110 With Crist and Marye als this daye.  
 Nou hop I that ye al se  
 Hou this fest havis names thre.  
 The first nam es Candelmesse,  
 The tother Maryes clensing esse,  
 115 The thred nam als ic haf talde,  
 Es Cristes meting graitheli cald. *readily*  
 In tempele first offered was he,  
 And sithen on the rod tre, *then*  
 And ilke day in prestes hand, *every*  
 120 May we se Crist be mad offerand.  
 Thus was Crist offered for our hele, *healing*  
 Forthi bird us be til hym lele, *ought; loyal*  
 Of us self bird us offerand mak *We ought to make an offering of ourselves*  
 Quen we for his luf fast and wak, *keep a vigil*  
 125 For than pin we our bodye,  
 With torfir and with martyrye. *give pain to our bodies*  
 We offer us selven til Jesus,  
 That offered himselven for us;  
 For offered for us al was he,  
 130 Quen he for us deyed on tre.  
 Yet wil I you on Englis saye,  
 Quat was offered for Crist todaye.  
 We find that Josep and Marye  
 War bathe pouer, and forthie  
 135 Offered thai for Crist, Mari son,  
 Slic thing als pouer men war won. *accustomed*  
 Tua turteles, als I haf you tald,  
 Or tua douf briddes yef thai wald

- And I wil tel you forthie,  
 140 Quat thir foules menes gastelye,  
 In thir tua fules may we se  
 Bathe mildenes and charité;  
 For doufe a ful mec fuel es, *dove; meek bird*  
 And bitakenes riht mildenes,  
 145 And by the turtel douf mai we  
 Ful riht understand charité;  
 For yef the turtel tin hir mak, *lose; mate*  
 Never mar wil scho other thac; *take*  
 Forthi bi hir mai bysend be  
 150 Riht clen lif and charité.  
 Fand we forthi sua for to lif, *Let us try*  
 That we may Godd god offerand gif,  
 Of chastité and mildenes,  
 That bi thir foules bisend es.  
 155 We offer turtel douf gastlye,  
 Quen we feyht igain lecherye,  
 And quen we hald our hert fra wreth, *anger*  
 And hastines, and brother lethe, *hatred*  
 And loves our brether inwardlye, *earnestly*  
 160 We offer doufes gastilye.  
 We may als by thir fouls tuinne, *twin*  
 Undirstand sorue for our sinne; *sorrow*  
 For bathe thir foules haves crowding *cooing*  
 Insted of sang, and stille murning; *silent mourning*  
 165 And bitakenes that sinful man,  
 That schilwisnes and insyt can, *Who possesses reason and intelligence*  
 Suld of thir fules bisenes take, *follow the example*  
 To murne for his sin and sake. *guilt*  
 For better es that man her murne, *here*  
 170 Than for his sin til helle turne.  
 Nou understand ye, I wene *think*  
 Quat the fest of todaye wil mene.
- A tal of this fest haf I herd,  
 Hougat it of a widou ferd, *How*  
 175 That lufd our lefdi sa welle,  
 That scho gert mac hir a chapele; *had made*  
 And ilke day devoutely,  
 Herd scho messe of our lefdye.  
 Fel auntour that hir prest was gan *It happened; was gone [away on]*  
 180 His erand, and messe haved scho nan;  
 And com this Candelmesse feste,  
 And scho wald haf als wif honeste  
 Hir messe, and for scho moht get nan,  
 Scho was a ful sorful womman.

- 185 In hir chapel scho mad prayer,  
 And fel on slep bifer the auter,  
 And als scho lay and slep, hir thout *she thought*  
 That scho intil a kyrc was broht,  
 And saw com gret compaynye
- 190 Of fair maidenen wit a leuedy, *lady*  
 And al thai sette on raw ful rathe, *sat down in a row; quickly*  
 And ald men and yong bathe  
 Com efter thaim and sette thaim bye,  
 And a clerc broht cerges in heye, *tapers*
- 195 And everilcan gaf he an,  
 And an toc this slepand womman;  
 An tua clerkes scho saw comande  
 In surplices wit serges berande, *bearing*  
 And efter thaim revested, rathe *ceremonially arrayed; at once*  
 200 Com suddeken and deken bathe, *subdeacon; deacon*  
 And Crist himselven com thar nest,  
 Revested als a messe prest. *Attired*  
 Thay yod til auter gainli graythede, *went; suitably prepared*  
 And privé prayer thar thai sayde, *private*
- 205 And clerkes son bigan the messe,  
 Als costom in Hali Kirk esse;  
 And quen thai com til thair offerande,  
 This leuedy yed with serge in hande,  
 And ofered first als comly quene,
- 210 And efter hir, other bidene. *as a group*  
 This wif satte ay stille, als hir thoht,  
 For offer hir candel wald scho noht.  
 The prest abade bifer the auter, *waited*  
 Bot scho no wald noht cum him ner.
- 215 And word til hir send our Leuedy,  
 And said that scho did vilanye  
 To ger the prest bide hir sa lang, *wait*  
 And bad scho suld ris and gang,  
 And offer hir serge als other had don. *candle*
- 220 And scho ansuerd and sayd son,  
 “Wel moht the prest his messe forthe sing — *Well may the priest sing his mass*  
 My candel wil I noht him bring;  
 Bot ga and say til my lefdye,  
 That Godd havis send me, hald wil I.” *That which*
- 225 And igan yod this messenger,  
 And tald his leuedy hir ansuer.  
 His leuedi bad him suite ga, *quickly*  
 And tac the serge with steece hir fra, *force*  
 Yef scho wald noht with god it yeld. *willingly*
- 230 Bot quen he com, fast scho it held  
 For al that he moht pray and say,

- Feithely scho hir candel held aye;  
 And he raht til hir at the laste  
 And droh the cerge, and scho held fast.  
 235 This candel brac bituix thaim tua,  
 And scho stec of hir slep riht sua,  
 And fand a tronchoun redy broken,  
 And fast in bathe hir hendes loken.  
 Hir thoht tharof ful gret ferlye,  
 240 And thanked Godd and our Lefdye,  
 That wald suile priveté hir schawe,  
 And ger men it with taken know.  
 For graithe takingen was that tronchoun,  
 Of hir ferlic avisioun.  
 245 This tronchoun for relic scho held  
 Al hir lif, with worschip and beld,  
 And it dos yet, als find we tald,  
 Ful fair mirakeles mani fald.
- Bi this schort tal, als thinc me,  
 250 Mai we our Lefdyes confort se,  
 That wald profe this wifes wille,  
 And hir langing wit joy fulfille,  
 And noht allan in heven rike,  
 Bot her in erthe with fair ferlyc;  
 255 For fair ferlic was this tronchoun,  
 That scho gatte wit devotyoun.  
 Yet wil we spec of our Lefdye,  
 That bar that barn of hir bodye,  
 That was offered als himselven wald  
 260 On thrinne wis, als ic haf tald.  
 Of his offering today spec we,  
 For als today offered was he  
 In tempel, and sithen on rode,  
 Thar he for our sak sched his blod;  
 265 And on the thred wise es he  
 Offered at messe, als we mai se.  
 Forthi me thinc that god it es  
 To spek sumthing of hir godnes,  
 That bar of hir bodi that birth,  
 270 That broht mankind til mensk and mirht.  
 Mary mild and maiden clene,  
 Es Goddes moder of quaim I mene,  
 And bathe of heven and erthe quen,  
 And helpes sinful men biden;  
 275 Bot namlic helpes scho tha,  
 That turnes noht thair lof hir fra,  
 Bot menskes hir on al thair wyse
- Faithfully*  
*went*  
*tugged at*  
*arose*  
*fragment*  
*marvel*  
*mystery*  
*ready sign*  
*vision*  
*strength*  
*test*  
*heaven's kingdom*  
*miracle*  
*in three manners*  
*honor (love); bliss (salvation)*  
*praise*  
*honors; in every way*

- And er sysel in hir servyse. *occupied*  
 Bot scho es moder of mercye,  
 280 And til sinful men ay redye.  
 Scho fayles nevermar in nede,  
 That mai we se bi many dede  
 That scho dos oft for sinful man  
 That haves igain hir Son mistan. *acted against*  
 285 For do man never sa gret sinne,  
 And he haf wil his sinne to blin,  
 And ask hir holp riht inwardlye,  
 He may be siker of mercye.  
 That may ye se bi a lefdy,  
 290 That was abbes of a nunrye;  
  
 Bot als scho for apon a day  
 About nedes of hir abbay *duties*  
 In cloutes bi the gate scho fande *Wrapped in rags*  
 A yong mayden child suelande. *screaming*  
 295 Scho havid pyté of this funding *foundling*  
 And gert it til hir nunry bring,  
 And gert it be ful gaynli gette,  
 And sithen til boc scho it sett,  
 And mad hir nunne in that nunrye,  
 300 And lufed hir ful inwardlye;  
 For scho lufid als god womman  
 Hir dohteris gastely everilkan,  
 And sa wel order lufed scho  
 That na misse moht hir dohteres do, *mistake*  
 305 That scho no chastid thaim in hye,  
 And gert thaim lef thair folie.  
 And god wimmen lufid hir forthie,  
 And foles hated hir dedelye.  
 And at hir haved the fende envye, *envy*  
 310 And fanded hir ful ithenlye. *tempted; busily*  
 For niht and day he was bysye  
 To kindel lust in hir bodye,  
 And at the last in licherye  
 He gert hir fal ful wrechelye *miserably*  
 315 For hir spense knew hir fleyslye, *butler had intercourse with her*  
 And hir wamb wex gret in hye, *grew; soon*  
 Bot fair scho bar hir nohtforthye, *But nevertheless she behaved graciously*  
 Als wimmen can that dos folye.  
 Scho umthoht hir niht and daye, *pondered (reflected)*  
 320 Quaim scho moht best hir consayl say; *secret*  
 And hir thoht wele that best moht scho  
 Hir dern dede til hir undo *secret; reveal*  
 Quaim scho hafd a funding fedde, *Whom she had fed as a foundling*



- And fair in nunne wede cledde;  
 325 For scho was halden til hir mast,  
 To be til hir lele and stedefast.  
 Scho cald this nunne ful privelye,  
 And said til hir, "Dochter mercye,  
 Ic haf a derne priveté  
 330 To schew bytuixe me and thee,  
 Bot dede war me lever to be,  
 Than thou of my dede melded me,  
 For yef thou tharof me melde,  
 Ic haf tinte werdes mensc and belde."  
 335 This nune ansuerd and said, "Leuedye,  
 For al this werld gold ne wald I  
 Do thing that war igaines thee;  
 Forthi, lefedy, thou telle me  
 Witouten dout thi priveté,  
 340 For than mai thou prof my leuté;  
 Schew baldely thi wil to me,  
 For siker may thou of me be."  
 This abbes trowed wele hir sawe,  
 And hir sinne scho gan hir schawe,  
 345 And said, "Lef dochter, me es wa,  
 For gret with child riht now I ga."  
 This nunne ansuerd and said, "Lefdye,  
 Be thou for this thing noht sarye,  
 For wel I sal thi consayl hele,  
 350 And do wit thee als dochter lele,  
 For quen the childe es born, sal I  
 Do it of daw sa prively,<sup>1</sup>  
 That na wiht sal the squeeling here,  
 And delf it sithen in our herbere."  
 355 This abbes troued hir ful wele,  
 And wend that scho war treu als stele.  
 Bot qua sa leses fra hinging  
 Thef, or bringes up funding,  
 Of nauther getes he mensc ne mede,  
 360 No socour quen he havis nede.  
 For that was sen ful openlye  
 In this funding, that hir leuedye  
 Wreyed til the bischop sone,<sup>2</sup>  
 And tald him al quat scho havid don.  
 365 And qua was wrathe bot that bischop?  
 For of this abbes haved he hop
- clothing; dressed*  
*obligated; most*  
*secretly*  
*hidden secret*  
*rather*  
*informed on*  
*lost worldly honor; happiness*  
*For all the gold in the world I would not*  
*fear; secret*  
*loyalty*  
*secure*  
*believed; words*  
*dear*  
*hide*  
*loyal*  
*no one; squealing*  
*bury; garden*  
*whoever spares*  
*foundling*  
*honor nor reward*  
*help*  
*he had thought*

<sup>1</sup> *Secretly do away with it [literally: do it from daylight]*

<sup>2</sup> *Lines 361–63: For that was openly seen / In this foundling who / Betrayed her lady to the bishop immediately*

- That scho havid ben a god womman,  
 And forthoght that scho havid mistan. *was displeased; done amiss*  
 Hir dohteres herd of hir folye,  
 370 And sum war gladd and sum sarye;  
 For fole wimmen war ful fain *foolish; glad*  
 That thai haved chesoun hir igain,  
 And wit thair letteres prayed thaye  
 [To the bisschope, and he sette daie  
 375 For to prove the prioires plaie *prove; wrongdoing*  
 That scho might noght it agaynesaie. *deny*  
 When daie was sette hir tyme come nye  
 That this prioires hir payne suld drie *suffer*  
 And be deliver of hir chylde,  
 380 Scho made hir mane to Mary mylde. *moan*  
 That night scho in hir chapell woke *kept a vigil*  
 That wyves on the morn suld hir loke,  
 For the bihsschope againe the morne  
 Gert somonde wifis him beforne, *So that; women; examine*  
 385 That him all the sothe suld saie *in preparation for*  
 Whether this prioires ware wife or naie;  
 And forthi was scho full ferde  
 When scho this sorowfull tithandes herd.  
 Scho grette full sare on oure Ladie  
 390 And askid hir help and mercie;  
 When scho was werie of hir praier  
 On slepe scho fell before the awtere. *cried out to*  
 Than sone to hir come oure Ladie  
 And reprovid hir of hir folie,  
 395 And on hir wambe scho laide hir hand,  
 And this prioires was all slepeand  
 Delyvir of a knave chylde,  
 That sithen was a gude man and a mylde.  
 Oure ladie toke this childe all warme  
 400 And laide it in ane aungele arme,  
 And bade him bere the childe tyte *quickly*  
 Apon hir halve to ane ermite *on her behalf*  
 That wonid theine ovre myles sevene;  
 And the childe name gon scho nevene *Who lived over seven miles from there*  
 405 And saie, "I bid him this childe baptise  
 And bringe him uppe als gode norise." *to name*  
 When this was saide scho wynte awaie,  
 And this prioiresse woke thare scho laie.  
 Than on hir bare knees scho hir sette,  
 410 And sweteli scho oure Ladi grette  
 And saide, "Marie, I thank thee,  
 Full wele hase thou delivird me."  
 Thus in that chapell all that night

- Scho looued oure Ladie to daie light. *praised; until*  
 415 The bisschope come with his clergie  
 Apon the morn to that nonnerie,  
 To give lawfull juggemente  
 Of the priores that thare was schent. *ruined*  
 Bot he gert wives noghtforthi  
 420 Luke allthir first hir bare bodie, *First examine*  
 And gert thaim swere that thai suld saye  
 Whether thai fand hire wife or naie.  
 And when thai had hir bodi sene,  
 Scho semid mayden als clene, *pure*  
 425 Als scho never had touchid bene.  
 And than thir wives all bedene *together*  
 Come and swore scho was mayden clene;  
 And than the bisschope was full tene *angry*  
 To the nonne that tolde him the tale,  
 430 And bad scho suld be brente in bale, *fire*  
 Als wickid woman that wickidlie  
 Had lyed on hir awne ladie.  
 This priores had of hir pité  
 That scho for hir dampnid suld be,  
 435 And talde the bisschope privelie  
 The sothe and how oure dere Ladie  
 Delivird hir and made hir qwite, *acquitted her*  
 And sent hir sonne to ane ermite  
 To kepe him and sette to lare. *instruction*  
 440 And than the bisschope right evene thare *directly*  
 Assoylid hir and loudid Marie *absolved; praised*  
 That es to sinfull aie redie.  
 And to the ermete he sente his sande *messenger*  
 And thare this childe in credil fande. *cradle*  
 445 And when it was of sevene yere  
 The bisschope it made a gode scolere. *scholar*  
 And when this ilk bisschope was dede  
 This childe was bisschope in his stede.
- Be this tale may we wele se  
 450 That thar na sinfull schamid be, *need*  
 Have thai done never so mikil folie,  
 If thai will call on oure Ladie,  
 Sothelie scho will helpe full yare  
 To bringe all sorowfull oute of care.  
 455 Forthi if we in any synne fall  
 I rede we fast on Marie call,  
 That scho purchase us grase to rise  
 And sithen to dwell in hir servise  
 Evermare to oure lyves ende.

460 Than may we siker be to wende  
 Into that courte thare scho es Qwene  
 Thidir scho bringe us all bedene. Amen.] together

#### 14. SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

*Dominica in Septuagesima. Evangelium secundum Matheum.*<sup>1</sup>

*Simile est regnum celorum homini patrifamilias. Et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	Lythis all I sall yow tell	<i>Listen</i>
	What Mathewe sais in this Gospell.	
	Criste spak, he sais of hevene rike	<i>the heavenly kingdom</i>
	To his folowars, and made it lyke	
5	Till a husband that areli yede	<i>overseer; early went</i>
	Till hyre werkmen to do his dede.	<i>hire; work</i>
	He hyrid men for a penye o the daye	<i>on</i>
	And bad thaim grubbe fast for thaire laye	<i>told; dig; wages</i>
	In his vyneyard, and thai did so.	
10	And aboute undrone he hyrid mo,	<i>midmorning</i>
	And bad thaim wirk eftir thaire might,	<i>according to their strength</i>
	And he suld give thaim that ware right.	<i>what</i>
	About myddaie and aboute none	<i>midafternoon</i>
	Sawe he werkmen stand and hone,	<i>loiter</i>
15	And all forouten graythe forward.	<i>without a ready contract</i>
	Sent he thaim till his vyneyard,	
	And eftir none he yode and fand	<i>sought (went); found</i>
	Tome werkmen in strete standand;	<i>Idle</i>
	And to thir werkmen sone he come	<i>at once</i>
20	And askid thaim whi thai stode tome.	<i>idly</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Septuagesima Sunday. The Gospel according to Matthew*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Matthew 20:1–16): *The kingdom of heaven is like to an householder [who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore they were come, that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house, Saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering said to one of them: Friend I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil, because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.]*

	Thai said, "We stand tome all daie For naman will us to werk laie."	<i>no one; put</i>
	This husband till his werk thaim sende, And when that daye was broght till ende,	
25	His sergeaunte sone till him he callid, That his godes had in walde;	<i>goods; control</i>
	And bad he suld his werkmen call And penye hyre give to thaim all;	<i>penny wages</i>
	And bad he suld at thaim begynne	<i>begin with those</i>
30	That last come thair hyre to wynne. This sergeaunde did his lorde will And callid thir werkmen him untill,	<i>earn</i> <i>to</i>
	And gave thaim first penye to laye That last come of all that daye.	<i>for wages</i>
35	And to the first last hyre he gave; <sup>1</sup> And mare began thai for to crave, And said, "All daie have we wroght fast, And othir werkmen that come now last	<i>more; desire</i> <i>worked hard</i>
	Takis for thair werk als mikil laye,	<i>as much wages</i>
40	Als we that wroght all this daye In heete, and in paynes strange All the daye that es so lange." This husband herd thaire menyng,	<i>complaining</i>
	And answerd att thaire allir askinge,	<i>And responded to the request of all of them</i>
45	And to ane was thaim ymange He saide, "Frende, I do thee na wrange. Ne hyred I thee noght todaye For a penye to thi laye?	<i>one [who]</i>
	Thou take thi hyre and ga in blisse,	<i>wages</i>
50	For I do thee na wrange ne misse. Have I noght leve to do my will Of that thinge that fallis me till? For als mikil will I give him	<i>offense</i> <i>permission</i> <i>belongs to me</i> <i>as much</i>
	That come to wirk the last tyme	
55	Als I will give to thee iwise. Therof me think I do no misse. Thof I be gode, what scathis thee? It thayres thee noght if I be fre."	<i>certainly</i> <i>If; harms</i> <i>hurts; generous</i>
	When Criste had this ensawmpil said,	
60	A gude resoune thareto he laide: He saide thus sall som men be last That first was in this werlde rotestast; And som that last in this werld was born Sall come to hevene thaim befor	<i>explanation</i> <i>firmly established</i> <i>before those</i>

<sup>1</sup> And to those who had come first, he gave them their wages last

- 65 That first in this werld was borne to be. *Who were born first*  
 And be this resoune maye we se  
 That Cristen men that laste come  
 Sall be first on the Daye of Dome, *Judgment Day*  
 Before the Jewis for to take
- 70 Thaire mede that nevermare sall slake. *reward; diminish*  
 For Cristen men come wele lattere *later*  
 Than the Jewes, forthi sais Criste here:  
 Thai that ware first sall be laste,  
 When he sall deme bathe leste and maste. *judge*
- 75 Bot a worde es in oure Gospell *one*  
 That burde wele oure pride fell, *ought well; destroy*  
 Als I sall tell yow now sone  
 When oure Gospell es all done.
- 80 The gude prechore, Saynte Gregorie  
 Unduse this Gospell full doghtili: *Explicates; skillfully*  
 And first betaknes he full evene *designates; directly*  
 Be this husband, the Fadir of Hevene.  
 And be this vyneyard will he mene *all together*  
 The folk of Hali Kirk bedene.
- 85 For Hali Kirk es vyneyarde callid, *plentifully*  
 That fruyte forthe bringes manyfalde,  
 When it to God thaire saules sendes *end [their lives]*  
 That here in Goddes servys endes.  
 God sent into this Hali Kirk
- 90 His werkemen areli to wirk, *early*  
 When he sent prophetes for to schawe *reveal*  
 His worde to the folk of the Alde Lawe.  
 And about undrone sent he ma *midmorning; more*  
 When he bad his apostles ga
- 95 In the werld, Cristen lawe to kenne *make known*  
 Bothe to Jewes and to haythen menne. *heathen*  
 And sithen aboute middaye and none *then*  
 Gert this husband his dede be done;  
 For he sent many gode clerk
- 100 Into this yarde to do his werk, *vineyard*  
 When he sente Austyne and Bernarde *Augustine*  
 And Gregore into his vyneyarde.  
 Thai ripid the rote of Hali Writte, *brought to maturity the essence*  
 And to Cristen folk undid it;
- 105 When thai kende us what boke wald saye,  
 In gude vyneyard grubbid thaie.  
 Of scorffe thai clensid Hali Buke *dross*  
 To thaim that on thaire werke wald luke.  
 Yitt eftir non er werkmen sende, *In the evening; workmen are sent*
- 110 To preche and mennes lyves to mende.

- For now er prechors sent to preche  
 And all men the rightwaie to hevene to teche.  
 Now se ye wele how he gon sende  
 His werkmen mannes life to mende *amend*  
 115 Areli aboute undrone dayes, *Early; midmorning of the day*  
 Als Criste in oure Gospell sayes.  
 Aboute none and myddaye also,  
 Se ye how God geres prechurs go *makes*  
 Mannes sawle wele to tylle *cultivate*  
 120 With worde, and bringe his folk him tyll;  
 And yitt geres he eftir none *in the evening*  
 With gode prechurs his dede be done.  
 Be morne tyde may ye wele se *time*  
 The tyme fra Adam to Noe *Noah*  
 125 And undrone tyde betaknes the tyme *midmorning*  
 Betwix Abraham and hyme. *him [Noah]*  
 And be myddaie betakned es  
 The tyme fra Abraham to Moyses,  
 And fra Moyses to Kynge Davye  
 130 Als tellis us Saynte Gregorye.  
 And be the nonetyde he schewis us  
 The tyme fra David to Jesus.  
 For than come tyme that Goddis worde  
 Sulde fede man at Goddis borde. *table*  
 135 Bot a worde in oure Gospell is *one*  
 That touchis many man iwisse;  
 That es thare oure forsaide husbande *where*  
 The last werkmen all tome fande, *idle*  
 And askid whi thai stode tome all daie.  
 140 And thai saide, "Na man walde us laye."  
 Als who saye: noman come us to,  
 To saye us what that we suld do.  
 For nouthur prechure ne prophete *neither*  
 Kende us oure synnes for to lete *Showed us how; cease*  
 145 Right so may now thir Sarzines saie, *Saracens*  
 For na man techis thaim the waie  
 How thai sall wende to heven blisse —  
 Forthi me think the pape duse misse, *pope; does wrong*  
 That will noght send prechours thaim to  
 150 To fande if thaire worde might oght do. *find out; anything*  
 On Domisdaye with mare resoune *Judgment Day*  
 Maye thai have mare excusacioune, *claim to forgiveness*  
 Than we that heris wele in sermoune  
 How we thareto sall make us boune. *obedient*  
 155 Forthi sall synfull caytives *wretches*  
 That in Cristen lawe here lyves,  
 And will noghte bete thaire synnes here, *atone for*

	In hell pyne be wele deppere	<i>pain; deeper</i>
	Than Sarzynes — for Cristen men knawes	
160	All Goddes will thorghe prechoure sawes;	<i>words</i>
	Bot Sarzynes heres na man tell	
	Nouthir of hevene ne of hell.	
	Forthi be we on Domisdaye	
	Wele mare blamid for synne than thai.	
165	Forthi rede I that we do	<i>advise</i>
	Als this prechurs saise us unto;	
	And stand we noght here all daye tome,	<i>idly</i>
	Bot think we of the Daie of Dome	
	When God sall yelde us for oure dedes	<i>grant</i>
170	Outher hevene or hell till oure medes.	<i>Either; rewards</i>
	If we in Goddis vyneyard wirk,	<i>work</i>
	Be we noght sone of Goddes werk yrk;	<i>discouraged</i>
	For he that wirkes wele to the ende,	
	He maye be sikir to blisse to wende.	<i>certain; go</i>
175	Thof man lede all his life in synne,	<i>Although</i>
	And he will in his elde blynnne,	<i>If; old age cease</i>
	God es aye full redye	<i>always</i>
	To have of him full gode mercye.	
	That may we se in oure Gospell	
180	Thare ye herd of that husband tell	
	That all the tymes of the daye	
	Was redi werkmen for to laye;	<i>hire</i>
	This ilk daye whareof I mene	<i>same</i>
	Betaknes all oure lyfe bedene.	<i>as a whole</i>
185	For ilka daye hase tymes sere,	<i>every; different</i>
	So hase oure life in the werld here.	<i>As</i>
	For pryne betaknes oure barnehede,	<i>sunrise; childhood</i>
	When we begynne oure life to lede;	
	And undirstand full wele we maye	
190	Oure yowthede be undrone of the daie;	<i>youth; by; midmorning</i>
	For than waxes the sonne full hate,	<i>sun; hot</i>
	And we begynne in youthe to bate.	<i>quarrel</i>
	For kyndeli it geres us schewe	<i>by nature it causes</i>
	Wantonhede and als unthewe.	<i>also bad habits</i>
195	And myddaie full graytheli schawes	<i>readily</i>
	Oure myddil elde that to ende us drawes.	<i>middle age</i>
	And eftir mydday comes none	<i>afternoon</i>
	And eftir myddes elde wax we sone	<i>middle age become</i>
	Stabil men, for than we drawe	<i>Stable; are drawn</i>
200	To fode and eese, and waxes slawe	<i>comfort; become slow</i>
	Als men att none drawes to sete	<i>are inclined to sit down</i>
	Thare thai maye eeseli sitt at the mete.	<i>Where; comfortably; dinner</i>
	Bot ovrenone betaknes right	<i>evening</i>
	Oure laste elde when us wantis might.	<i>we lack strength</i>



- 205 For than begynnes the sonne to helde, *incline*  
 And so do we in oure laste elde,  
 For than we bowe als hevy lede, *bend; lead*  
 And drawes fast toward oure dede. *death*  
 Now se ye wele all oure lyve
- 210 Es betakned be oures fyve *hours*  
 Be pryme, undrone, myddaie, and none,  
 And ovrenone that passis sone.  
 Sithen all this life es bot a daie, *Since*  
 Agayne the life that lastis aye, *Compared to*
- 215 Than rede I we oure lyfe amende *advise*  
 With penaunce or oure lyves ende. *before*  
 For God es of so grete suffraunce *patience*  
 That he abydes oure penaunce *waits for*  
 Fra daie to daie, fra tyde to tyme; *age to age*
- 220 And biddis us come and wirk with hyme, *tells us [to]*  
 And hightis us a peny to oure laye: *promises; wages*  
 That es the joye that lastis aye.  
 For a peny es rounde and hase nane ende
- 225 Swa es the blisse where we sall lende  *dwell*  
 If we be lymes of Hali Kirk *limbs*  
 And Goddes will therin will wirk.  
 And in oure Gospell may we se  
 That yof we all oure life be *although*  
 Ydile, and we will att oure ende *Idle; if*
- 230 With penaunce fight agaynes the fende,  
 Redi es God at that last tyme  
 To hyre us for to wirk with hyme,  
 And gife to us that rounde peny, *loyally*  
 If we do his werke lely. *know*
- 235 Man aght to witte that ydilnes  
 Full mikil agayne the saule es.  
 Forthi if we sitte tome at pryme,  
 God will us hyre att undrone tyme; *midmorning*  
 That es to saie if we wende wede *mad*
- 240 And lye in synne in oure barnhede, *childhood*  
 In youthe he callis us him to  
 To fande if we his dede will do. *find out*  
 And if we serve noght than oure laie *do not work for our wages*  
 Yitt will he hyre us att middaye,
- 245 That es to saye att oure myddil elde,  
 If we will to his will than helde. *incline*  
 And thof we than forworthin be *though; enfeebled*  
 Att none gladdli hyre us will he; *afternoon*  
 That es to saye in stabilnes *in trustworthiness*
- 250 Will he call us in rightwisnes.  
 And thofe we stand ydil that tyme,

	He callis us eftir none to hyme,	<i>in the evening</i>
	That es to saye in oure last elde,	
	If we forsake werldes belde,	<i>happiness</i>
255	And torne us than to his servyse	
	And wirk wele eftir his avyse.	<i>judgment</i>
	Now se ye wele that Cristen man	
	Att the dede when tyme of werk is gan	<i>death</i>
	Assoyne agayne God may last nane	<i>No excuse may avail against God</i>
260	If he in dedelye synne be tane.	<i>taken</i>
	For God has given him gude abade,	<i>long time</i>
	Bot all his tyme he ovir slade	<i>slid over</i>
	In ydilnes, for wald he noght	<i>would</i>
	Wirk for his saule that Criste boght.	
265	Forthi maye he that Criste noght wyte	<i>blame</i>
	Thof he make him of heven qwite;	<i>shut out from heaven</i>
	For he drave God lange to hethinge	<i>long held God up to scorn</i>
	Whyles God abade lange his tornynge,	<i>awaited; turn</i>
	And lokid aie when and when he walde	<i>looked always [to the moment] when</i>
270	Come to him and with him halde;	<i>remain</i>
	Bot when he wald noght come him to	
	With right behovid God with him do	<i>Justly God had to do with him</i>
	Als with man that his lorde forsakes,	<i>who forsakes his lord</i>
	And of his lorde his enemy makes.	
275	Forthi es gude we do penaunce	
	And ovresitt noght Goddis suffraunce.	<i>disobey; will</i>
	To do penaunce than es to late	
	When the wayne es atte gate.	<i>cart</i>
	This wayne the dede I may wele call	<i>death</i>
280	That beres awaie oure mightis all.	<i>powers</i>
	Yitt will I of that grucchyng tell	<i>grumbling</i>
	That Criste schewid in oure Gospell	
	Thare he sais werkmen hyre takand,	
	Grucchid to this forsayde husbande, <sup>1</sup>	
285	That he gave thaim als mikil that come last	<i>those who came last as much</i>
	Als thaim that all daie grubbid fast.	
	The gude clerk Saynte Gregorie	
	Saise that tha men that come arely	<i>early</i>
	Betaknes folk of the Alde Lawe,	<i>old</i>
290	That tholid many a hard thrawe	<i>suffered many hard pains</i>
	To gete that joye that lastis aye.	<i>forever</i>
	And before Cristen men come thaie,	
	And forthi thai dwellid lange,	
	When thai ware dede in prisone strange.	<i>strong</i>

<sup>1</sup> Lines 283–84: *Where he says that the workmen taking their wages, / Complained to this aforementioned overseer*

- 295 And now rightwise men that dyes,  
 To blisse withouten dwelling flyes, *waiting*  
 And takes als mikil blisse als thai  
 That come before thaim many a daie.  
 Forthi thai that before thaime come
- 300 May think apon the Daie o Dome,  
 That thai ware worthi to take mare mede *a greater reward*  
 For thaire werk and thaire lange dede  
 Than thai that come late and dyed,  
 And na payne eftir thaire dede thare dried. *death; suffered*
- 305 For in the Alde Lawe was nane *under the Old Law*  
 So rightwise ne so hali begane, *endowed with holiness*  
 That thai ne dwellid in prisoune,  
 When thai ware dede als kinges feloune;<sup>1</sup>
- 310 Aye to Criste gave thaire rawnsoune, *Forever until*  
 And boght thaim with his passyoun.  
 And forthi es that lange dwellinge *waiting*  
 In oure Gospell callid grucching;  
 For gruche burd thaim full sare, *For well might they grumble*  
 For of all blisse ware thai bare. *deprived*
- 315 And forthi the Jewis in dede *death*  
 Was first and sall be last in mede. *reward*  
 Forthi er thai on the Daie of Dome  
 Betaknid be thaim that first come  
 To thaire werke, and toke na mare laie *wages*
- 320 Than thai that laste come on the daie.  
 And thus es Cristis wordes sothefaste *true*  
 Thare he sais: the first men sall be last  
 For Jewis come first to thaire dede,  
 Bot Cristen men bese first in mede. *are*
- 325 And so sall first men be last,  
 Bot wickid men bese aye outecast  
 For parte of hevene gete thai nane *share*  
 With God, ne yitte with Cristen mane.  
 Bot the laste worde of oure Gospell
- 330 Burd make all men full ferde of hell: *Ought to; fearful*  
 That Criste saide many men er callde  
 To hevene, bot chosin thynne falde. *small numbers*  
 Many er callid bot fewe er chosen,  
 For mikel Cristen folk bese losen. *lost*
- 335 For Criste callid us to do his werk  
 When we atte fontestane toke his merk. *baptismal font*  
 His merk beres ilk a Cristen man  
 That Cristendome hase on him tane. *has taken upon himself*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 307–08: *That they did not dwell in prison / As the king's felons after they were dead*

- Bot als ye herd me langare tell *earlier*  
 340 Mikil deppare bese he in hell *deeper is*  
 If he be Cristen man untrewē  
 Than a Sarzyne that Criste never knewe.  
 Forthi thof we to Criste be calld,  
 Be we noght therof to balde;  
 345 For we may noght witte here whether we *know*  
 Be chosin in his blisse to be.  
 For he sayse many menne er callde  
 Bot foue for chosen men er talde. *few; accounted*  
 And be this a worde maye we se *one*  
 350 That here maye na man sikir be: *certain*  
 Bot doute God and on him crye *fear*  
 For we er all in his mercye.  
 We wote that we to Criste er callde, *know*  
 Bot foue for chosen men er talde  
 355 Ymange the blissid folk that he  
 Hase chosen in his blsse to be.  
 Tharefore aye the unsikerere *less certain*  
 That we erre of his chesinge here, *are; choosing*  
 The bettir yeme than buse us take *heed; behooves us to take*  
 360 That we noght fall in dedeli sake; *sin*  
 And be aie radde als foule on twiste *fearful as a bird on a branch*  
 For God duse with us als him list. *it pleases him*  
 For we may se many man beginne  
 Full wele, and sithen ende in synne;  
 365 And so did Salamon the wyse  
 That endid noght in Goddes servyse.  
 And the whethir beganne he wele *nevertheless*  
 And endid in schame and unsele, *unhappiness*  
 For wymmen gert him God forsake *caused*  
 370 And to mawmetes wirschipe make. *idols*
- Als we find writen of ane hermite  
 That lived lange withouten wyte. *blame*  
 He servid God in rightwisnes,  
 And als he woned in wyldirnes, *dwelled*  
 375 Sathanas full oftsythe *oftentimes*  
 Agayne him gon his maystrie kythe. *began; power; show*  
 He come to him in knave liknes, *the likeness of a servant*  
 And haylsid him with myldenes. *greeted*  
 And sayde, "Thi modir and thi frendes  
 380 Hidir to thee now me sendes,  
 And wele thee gretes and prayes thee  
 That thow will come to thaim with me,  
 To luke to thi fadir thinge  
 That he thee left att his endinge. *see to; affairs*

- 385 For whyles he lived yern prayed he  
That thow his sectoure suld be.” *executor*  
“That daye,” he sayde, “thi fadir dyed.”  
Bot that foule fende falsli lyed.  
Thir wordes saide the Devyl of hell
- 390 To bringe this ermyte oute of his cell.  
This ermite wende that all sothe ware *thought; true*  
That this messenger talde him thare,  
And hamwarde with him gon he wende, *went*  
Bot he wist noght it was the fende.
- 395 When he come hame his fadir he fand  
In stallworthe state and wele lyvande; *healthy*  
And sone when he his fadir sawe,  
Oute of his sight was his felawe.  
And his fadir full fayre him callde;
- 400 Than to his fadir all he talde,  
How the fende gert him come hame,  
And therof thought him than grete schame.  
Bot werldes welthe full sone him gert  
Putte sorowe and schame oute of his hert.
- 405 For swa lange in his fadir howse  
Was he that he thought wife to spouse. *marry*  
He toke him wife als wight unwise, *unwise creature*  
And dyed in the devyles servyse.  
Be this tale that I have talde
- 410 Maye we se, thof we be callde  
To religyoun, noghtforthie  
Maye we noght witte wityrlye, *know certainly*  
Whethir we er chosin in blisse to be.  
Als we maie be this hermite se,
- 415 For he was callid bot never chosene,  
For his dedes gert him be losene. *lost*  
Forthi unsiker er we aye  
Whether we be chosen or than naye, *not*  
Therfore the Mekere behoves us be,
- 420 And praye oure Lorde Criste that he  
Have of us his grete pité  
And late us of his chosen be.  
For he says many men er calde  
Bot thai er chosin thin falde.
- 425 Thow swete Jhesu that us boght  
We praye thee that thou tyne us noght *forget*  
Bot bringe us, Lorde, unto that blisse  
That to thi chosen graythid is *prepared*  
That we maye thare in joye endeles
- 430 Looue thee als Lorde that us chees *praise; chose*

Amen, amen, all we saye,  
For thare es endeles gamen and playe. Amen.

### 15. SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

*Dominica in sexagesima. Evangelium secundum Lucam. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Cum turba plurima convenirent. Et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	In oure gospell Saynte Luke saise us,	
	That mani folk come to Jesus	
	Of citees and of other townes;	
	To here his sawes and his resoues.	sayings
5	Thai stode aboute him thik falde	a great number
	And a parabile he thaim talde:	parable
	He sayse, "A man on felde yede	went
	To sawe apon his land his sede;	sow
	And som fell besyde the strete,	way
10	And foules sone it uppe ete.	birds
	And som fell apon the stane,	
	And forworthid sone onane;	perished at once
	For it had nowther erde ne wete	Because; water
	It dryed and witid awaie full skete.	withered away quickly
15	And some sede fell ymange the thornes	
	Als oft sithes on felde duse cornes,	times; grain
	And forworthid, for thorne and wede	
	Grewe it aboute and it ovreyede.	overcame
	And som fell in gude erde and yalde	yielded
20	Gode fruyte and croppe a hondrethe falde."	
	This saide Criste and sithen he badde	

<sup>1</sup> Sexagesima Sunday. The Gospel according to Luke. In that time

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 8:4–15): *And when a very great multitude was gathered together, [and hastened out of the cities unto him, he spoke by a similitude. The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock: and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. / And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock, are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots; for they believe for a while and in time of temptation, they fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.]*

	That all suld here that eres hadde.	<i>ears</i>
	Than his dissiples sayde him to	
	That he suld this ensawmpil undo;	<i>parable explicate</i>
25	And Criste saide, "Grace es given to yow To witte on what manere and how Man aght to ga the right waie Unto the joye that lastis aie. Bot other men behoves be kende	<i>ought forever must be taught</i>
30	With ensawmpils to hevene at wende That seand men be noght seande, And undirstand and noght undirstand." This ensawmpil that I sayde here Sall be undone on this manere:	<i>to come to heaven through examples So that seeing, men may nonetheless not perceive</i>
35	The sede betaknes Goddis worde That prechurs bringes of his horde. This sede fallis in mannes hertes, For synnefull manne to gode it ertes. Bot it falles oft besyde the waie	<i>signifies store urges</i>
40	And foules beres it awaie. Foules betaknes Sathanas That oute of thaire hertes Goddes worde tase. For bathe gode men and ylle Heres sermounes with gode will;	<i>birds takes wicked</i>
45	Bot ylle men therof na hede takes For fendes out of thaire hertes it schakes, And fruyte therfore forthe bringe thai nane For fell fendes it oute hase tane. This sede fallis als in thornes and breres	<i>sinful evil</i>
50	When ryche men with will it heres Bot thaire hertis ovregrownen es With covetyse and besynes Of werldes catell, so that thaie Na gude fruyte forthe bringe maye.	<i>preoccupation with worldly goods</i>
55	The sede yitte falles apon the stane, Bot rote tharein may it gete nane, When hard men of hert it heres That trowes that the prechoure leres; Bot if fandinge fall in thair thoght	<i>root believe; teaches temptation</i>
60	Of Goddes worde gife thai right noght. In thaire hert es na wete of grace, Forthi tharein na rote it tase. Bot Criste betaknes in oure Gospell Be that sede that in gode erde fell	<i>They care nothing for God's word particle root; takes</i>
65	Goddes worde that gode men heres And kythis it with gode maneres. Thai bringe forthe fruite of gode sede In tholemodenes in worde and dede	<i>make it known patience</i>

- 70 This es the strenghe of oure Gospell  
Als man in Ynglihsse tonge may tell.
- 75 This spell has Criste himself undone,  
Forthi thare me noght speke thareone.  
Bot of a worde that tharein es,  
That es to saye of tholemodenes  
Will I speke, for it is a thinge  
That geres men gasteli fruyte forthe bringe —  
Als Criste schewid in oure Gospell,  
Thare he saide sede in gode erde fell  
And in hervestes gode fruyte yalde  
80 Of ilk a corne hondrethe falde.  
For right gude erde that gode fruyte gives  
Menes Cristen menne that wele lyves  
And bringes forthe fruyte in tholemudnes  
That es moder of all godenes.  
85 For nanekyn man may be right gude  
Bot he in angere be tholemode.  
Tholemode es he that can have methes  
In werldes wa and in wandrethe,  
And forgives thaim that duse thaim scathe,  
90 And prayes that God schelde thaim fra lathe,  
Als Criste did when he hange on rode  
And kende us thare to be tholemode.  
Bot now es many foles iwise,  
That sone when any hase done thaim misse,  
95 Gode rest ne roo may thai have nane;:  
Bot thai be vengid of that mane.  
In thaim es na tholemodenes  
Bot felonye and bittirnes.  
Thai may wele bere gode fruyte in dede,  
100 Bot thaire fruyte getes thaim na mede;  
For right als fruyte that suld springe,  
Es slane with thondir and levenynge,  
Swa geres wrethe and wickid will  
Gode fruyte of the werkes wysen and spill,  
105 For fruyte wisynes of worthi dede,  
When he that duse it tynes his mede,  
And ilk a man may sikir be,  
That mede of gode dede tynis he,  
If he in wrethe and yre lyve  
110 And nanegates will misdede forgive.  
Bot he that haldes him fra wreth  
When his faas steres him to brethe  
And duse thaim gode agaynes the hill  
May noght the fruyte of his dede spill.
- narrative; explicated*  
*I have no need to*  
*one*  
*patience*  
*makes; spiritual*  
*yielded*  
*grain hundredfold*  
*Means*  
*no*  
*restraint*  
*misery; wretchedness*  
*cause them injury*  
*harm*  
*taught*  
*fools*  
*wrong*  
*peace*  
*reward*  
*lightning*  
*causes anger*  
*wither and spoil*  
*loses his reward*  
*certain*  
*reward; loses*  
*anger*  
*in no way*  
*But he who holds back from anger*  
*enemies stir; anger*  
*in return for ill*  
*work destroy*



- 115 For suffraunce yemes it fra wynde *patient endurance protects it from the force*  
 Of wrethe, forthi sall he it fynde  
 Rype before God on the Daye of Dome *Ripe (ready)*  
 That geres oure fruyte here sproute and blome.  
 Than sall that fruyte that he here wroght *produced*
- 120 In tholemodenes gere him be broght  
 To take with myrthe his mede in blisse  
 That to tholemode men graunted is.  
 Forthi I rede we be tholemode *advise*  
 And think on him that dyed on rode,
- 125 And askid of his faas na wrake *enemies no vengeance*  
 Bot tholid it mekeli for mannes sake.  
 He grucchid noght when men him sloghe, *complained; slew*  
 Ne when thai him to hethinge droghe; *held him up to scorn*  
 Bot askid to thaim forgiveness
- 130 To give ensawmpile of tholemodenes.  
 Forthi I rede we ensawmpile take  
 Of Criste for to forgive all wrake *hostility*  
 Till oure enemyes for than live we  
 In bowsomnes and charité. *humility*
- 135 Of tholemudenes will I yow tell  
 A tale, if ye will here my spell. *words*
- A ryche man be alde daies *old*  
 Thought for to leeve this werldes plaies *pleasures*  
 And torne into religyoun,
- 140 And tharto he made him redy boune. *prepared*  
 A doghtir he had that he betaght *entrusted*  
 To his frendis with all his aght, *possessions*  
 And bad thaim take on hir gode tent. *pay good attention to her*  
 And sithen to ane abbaye he went, *then*
- 145 And tharein was schaven monk full yare, *tonsured; readily*  
 And swa bowsome lyved he thare, *obediently*  
 That his abote lufid him mare *abbot*  
 Than any other for all thaire fare. *behavior*  
 He lived thus lange in that abbaie,
- 150 And servid God bathe night and daie  
 Bot radde was he that God suld tyne *afraid; damn*  
 His doghtir that hight Mawryne, *was called*  
 And oft for hir his herte was sare, *sore*  
 For in some ordire he wald scho ware.
- 155 His abote sawe him be sarye,  
 And askid him wharefore and whi.  
 He made ylle chere, and he him talde *showed an unhappy countenance*  
 That he a sohne had that was callde *son*  
 Mawryne, and saide full fayne he walde *gladly*  
 160 That he ware broght to Goddis falde. *keeping*

- This abote saide, "I will him have  
 If that he be a gude knave." *lad*  
 And bad him ga eftir him swithe — *quickly*  
 Bot here ye maye grete ferly lithe: *hear a great marvel*  
 165 This monk eftir his doghtir yede *went*  
 And cledde hir all in careman wede, *dressed; man's clothing*  
 And techid hir how scho sul live  
 And all hir hert to Jhesu give;  
 And bad that scho suld nevermore  
 170 Late man witte that scho wommane wore. *know; was*  
 When he had kend hir hir lessoune, *taught*  
 He broght hir to religyoun, *into the religious life*  
 And sone monk was scho schaven thare, *tonsured as a monk*  
 And monk abyte thare scho bare. *habit; wore*  
 175 And Frere Mawrine was scho callde, *Brother*  
 And did full wele in Goddes falde;  
 For scho was gode and serviseabile  
 And in hir ordire full devotabile. *devout*  
 Hir wommanhede so wele scho hidde  
 180 That mannes maners wele scho kidde. *showed*  
 Scho wonid in hir fadir cell, *dwelled*  
 And he hir kend that to hir fell: *And he taught her everything she needed to know*  
 How scho suld bathe night and daie *both*  
 Hir Sawter and hir Servyse saie. *Psalter; Divine Office*  
 185 And when dede had hir fadir tane, *death; taken*  
 Scho wonid in his celle be hir ane *by herself*  
 In harde penaunce and gude prayere  
 That made hir to Criste full dere.  
 Fell awntir that hir brether yede *It happened that her brother monks went*  
 190 In labore for to do thaire dede, *As laborers*  
 That was on barowes stane beringe *carrying stones in barrows*  
 To the werk of thair bigginge. *building*  
 And for Mawryne was wyse and warre *careful*  
 Scho was sette to lede a carre. *appointed; wagon*  
 195 Fer fra thaire abbaie was thaire quarrere, *quarry*  
 And thare was wonand a brewstere, *brewer*  
 And thare laye Mawryne oute all night,  
 For scho might noght come hame be light. *before night*  
 And fell awntir that a yonge swayne *man*  
 200 Had the brewster doghtir oft forlayne; *lain by*  
 And sone when childe in wambe was sene *womb*  
 Hir frendes att hir ware ful tene, *with her; angry*  
 And askid wha had bi hir lyne.  
 And scho talde tham that monke Mawryne  
 205 Had forsid hir, and thai ware wrathe, *forced*  
 And till hir abote it talde rathe, *quickly*  
 That Mawryne had that mayden forlayne.

	Bot the abote saide thare agayne,	<i>denied [the charge]</i>
	For wende he noght it sothe might be,	<i>thought; true</i>
210	Swa wele monk Mawryne trowid he.	<i>trusted</i>
	He callid the whether Mawryne sone	<i>nevertheless</i>
	And spirid if scho that synne had done;	<i>asked</i>
	And Mawryne stude and hir bethoght	<i>reflected</i>
	How sakles Criste on rode hir boght,	<i>guiltless</i>
215	And tharefore to hir walde scho take	
	Sakles schame for Goddes sake.	<i>Sinless</i>
	And saide, "Leve fadir, praye for me	<i>Dear</i>
	That my synne may forgiven be.	
	I may noght saye agayne this chaunce	<i>deny this happening</i>
220	For I am worthi to do penaunce."	
	And when the abote herd this,	
	He was full wrathe with hir iwise,	
	And sayde, "Mawryne, allas, allase,	
	That thou in this house schaven wase.	
225	Thi fadir was a haly mane	
	And thorghe him was thou hyder tane.	
	Allas that ever thou come herein	
	For thou has schent this house with syn;	<i>brought ruin on</i>
	And for thou hase this abbaie schent	<i>Because; shamed</i>
230	I do thee here oute of the covent.	<i>expel</i>
	For thou hase wretthid swete Jhesus,	<i>angered</i>
	Thou sall noght dwell ymange us."	
	Than was scho done to the gate	
	And sare began scho for to grate,	<i>weep</i>
235	And prayed eftir tholemodenes,	
	For scho wist wele scho was sakles.	
	And hard penaunce scho toke hir one	
	Right als scho had that ylk synne done.	<i>as if; very</i>
	On werk dayes when the covente	
240	Forthe atte gate to laboure wente,	
	Thai sawe Mawryne than sitte thare schent.	<i>ruined</i>
	And som of thaim full sare hir ment,	<i>pitied</i>
	And som spittid on hir thare	
	Als scho Jewe or Sarzyne ware.	<i>Saracen</i>
245	Brede and watir hir broght thai,	
	And tharewith lived scho many a daie.	
	This brewstare doghtir of whaim I ment,	<i>to whom I referred</i>
	That had Mawryne thusgate schent,	<i>harmd</i>
	Had a knave chylde in hir tyme;	
250	And sone when scho had spanid hyme,	<i>weaned</i>
	Scho it betaght to monke Mawryne.	
	And saide, "Monk, loo, this es thine,	<i>behold</i>
	I have wele fedde it hidir till;	<i>up until now</i>
	Fede thow it now, if that thou will."	

- 255 And tharewith Mawryne the childe left scho,  
 And Mawryne toke the chylde hir to  
 And gladli gave scho it atte ete *she fed it*  
 Of swilk almos als scho might gete. *With such alms*  
 And thus twa wyntir scho fedd it thare,
- 260 Right als it hir awne childe ware. *own*  
 When Mawryne had ledde thus hir lyve  
 In strange penaunce yeres fyve,  
 The covent had of hir pité,  
 And prayede thaire abote par charité, *for the love of God*
- 265 He suld late Mawryne come thaim ymange;  
 And saide, "His penaunce es to strange, *too severe*  
 For att the gate es he to lange;  
 And us think that men duse him wrange.  
 Before us all his synne he talde,
- 270 And hase lyen atte gate full calde,  
 And theine wald he never ga, *thence*  
 Bot dwellis still in all his wa.  
 We praye yowe that he moght come in,  
 For God forgiven hase all his synne."
- 275 And atte last with grete barete *after much argument*  
 Att the abote leve gone thai gete *They obtained permission from the abbot*  
 That Mawryne moght come fra the gate,  
 And thus thai gert hir have inlate; *entrance*  
 For thai praied for hir swa fast, *so earnestly*
- 280 That scho was focchid in atte last. *fetched*  
 When scho before the abote come, *abbot*  
 The abote talde hir hir dome, *judgment*  
 And saide, "To penaunce give I thee  
 That thou to us a drivell be, *drudge*
- 285 The covente schone for to smere *shoes; polish*  
 And watir to thair forayne bere. *privy*  
 For thou a mayden hase forlayne, *Because; seduced*  
 Thou sall clens oure forayne;  
 And oure kicchine sall tow make clene
- 290 And wesshe oure vessel all bedene; *indeed*  
 And eftir I se thi tholemudenes *patience*  
 Thi travaile sall be lesse and lesse." *labor*  
 Monk Mawryne into kicchin went  
 And fullfillid his commaundment.
- 295 Withouten grucchinge wele did scho *grumbling*  
 All that hir abote bad hir do. *ordered*  
 Bot sone eftir did God his will  
 Of hir, and toke hir saule him till. *soul*  
 And hir abote when scho was dede
- 300 Toke with all his covente rede *decision*  
 Oute of the kirkgarthe hir to delve *Outside; churchyard; bury*

	In a stede all be hirselve.	<i>place</i>
	Till his monkes he saide, "In hye	<i>Quickly</i>
	Gase and wehssis yone bodie,	<i>wash</i>
305	And sithen delve it on the felde	<i>bury</i>
	That Sathanas the sawle ne welde.	<i>So that; would not have power over</i>
	The mare schame the bodie dryes	<i>suffers</i>
	The tittir fra payne the sawle flyes."	<i>quicker</i>
	To the fermerye the monkes went	<i>infirmary</i>
310	To do the abotes comaundment,	
	Bot when thai sawe scho was wommane	
	Thai fell cryand to the erde ylkane,	<i>every one</i>
	And saide, "Ladye, allas, oghane!	<i>alas, woe [is me]</i>
	Agaynes thee we have missetane	<i>transgressed</i>
315	In dede and wordes many ane,	
	And now to thee we make oure mane.	<i>plea</i>
	Praie for us that God us mende	<i>amend</i>
	For we se othir than we wende:	<i>thought</i>
	We wend that thou had careman bene	<i>man</i>
320	Bot now forsothe es othir sene.	
	Forthi to thee now may we mene	<i>make moan</i>
	That ever we did thee traye or tene,	<i>attack; harm</i>
	For openlye may all men se	
	That Goddis werkis er here privé	<i>hidden</i>
325	For will he nouthir cry ne yelpe	<i>speak aloud</i>
	Thare he with his grace will helpe."	<i>Those whom</i>
	Thir monkes to thaire abote ran	
	And saide, "Frere Mawryne was wommane!"	
	Ferli him thoght of this tithand	<i>A marvel; news</i>
330	And to the corse he come rynnand;	<i>body</i>
	And sone when he the sothe sawe with eye	<i>at once</i>
	He fell and sayde, cryand full hye:	
	"Leve Mawryne, for Jesus sake,	<i>Dear</i>
	Late God na vengeaunce on me take;	
335	For unwittand did I thee misse	<i>unwittingly; mistake</i>
	Als man that oft dissaivid is.	<i>deceived</i>
	Forthi I praye thee forgive me	
	The mikil schame that I did thee."	<i>great</i>
	When he had saide this and mare,	
340	With gretinge and with hert sare	<i>weeping</i>
	He gert schroude that corse right thare	<i>had shrouded</i>
	With bawdekynes and with riche fare;	<i>oriental silk cloth woven with gold/silver</i>
	And sithen bare it worthilie	
	With joyefull sange in the kirk to lye;	
345	Thare the cors was layde in tounge	
	And gives hele bathe to deeve and doumbe.	<i>gives healing both to deaf and dumb</i>
	The brewstare doghtir wexe wode,	<i>brewer's; went mad</i>
	And come cryand with gryseli mode;	

- And talde the folk als wodewise wylde *wild creature*  
 350 Wha gatte on hir this forsaide chylde. *begat*  
 Hir frendes sawe that for hir synne  
 The fende was commen hir within,  
 And harde with rapes thai hir band *ropes; bound*  
 And ledde hir sithen sare greteand  
 355 To Mawryne tounge, and woke hir thare, *watched over her*  
 And God hir sente helpe full yare. *soon*  
 This lange tale I have yow talde  
 To ger you in youre hertes halde *cause you*  
 That ilka man full blissid es  
 360 That lyves here aie in tholemodenes, *always; patience*  
 And grucchis noght agayne missawe. *grumbles; misrepresentations*  
 For thof men do him wrange a thrawe, *although; for a time*  
 He may be siker of gode mede, *certain; reward*  
 If he thole mekeli thaire missdede. *Suffers meekly*  
 365 For aye the mare wrangewisnes *wrong*  
 That godemen here tholes sakles, *suffer guiltless*  
 Aye the mare sall thair mede be *Always*  
 Before Criste that dyed on tre; *the cross*  
 For he taght us tholemodenes  
 370 When he swelt for oure wickidnes. *died*  
 Forthy Jesus lene us grace *Therefore; grant*  
 To folowe in tholemodenes thi trace, *path*  
 And come tharewith into thi blisse,  
 That to tholemode men grauntid is.  
 375 Thare we may fynd Saynte Mawryne,  
 That here tholid bathe schame and pyne.  
 Scho folowide Criste in tholemodenes  
 That best of all vertues es,  
 For it ovrecomes the warlawe *devil (warlock)*  
 380 And geres man himselven knawe,  
 And gives his hert all to mekenes  
 That wones aye with tholemodenes; *dwells*  
 For wha swa haldes wele this twa; *whoever holds well to these two*  
 To hevene maye he lightly ga.  
 385 Oure Lorde Jhesus Criste us spede *help*  
 To be tholemode and thidir us lede. Amen.

## 16. QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

*Dominica in quinquagesima. Evangelium secundum Lucam. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Assumpsit Ihesus duodecim discipulis suis et ait illis: Ecce ascendimus Jerosolimam et consummabuntur. Et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	Saynte Luke tellis us that Criste himselve	
	Toke to him his dissiples twelve	<i>Drew towards him</i>
	And saide, "To Jerusalem we wende	<i>go</i>
	And all thinge bese broght to ende.	<i>will be brought to pass</i>
5	That es writen in prophecye	
	Of Goddes Sonne that man sall bye.	<i>shall redeem</i>
	To haythen men he bese bekende	<i>will be given up</i>
	That sare sall pyne him with thair hende.	<i>sorely; torture; hands</i>
	For all sall him with schenschip schende	<i>bring him to destruction</i>
10	And do him wa als men unhende;	<i>woe; cruel</i>
	And when thai have done him this wa	
	Than sall tay atte laste him sla,	<i>they; slay</i>
	And he sall rise the thrid daie."	
	Bot what Criste ment never wist thaie:	<i>understood</i>
15	Wist thai noght what Criste walde mene	
	For nane of thaim had fandid bene.	<i>put to the test</i>
	When Jhesu Criste had saide this sawe,	<i>saying</i>
	Towarde a cytee gon he drawe	
	That Jericho was callid than,	
20	And with him many a man.	
	And als thai yede be the strete	<i>went</i>
	A pure blynde man gon thai mete,	<i>poor</i>
	And he spirid wha yede be the waie?	<i>asked who went</i>
	"Jesus the prophete," for sothe saide thaie.	<i>in truth</i>
25	And he cryed als blynde er wone	<i>accustomed</i>
	And sayde, "A, Jhesu, David sone,	

<sup>1</sup> *Quinquagesima Sunday. The Gospel according to Luke. In that time*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 18:31–43): *Then Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished [which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, when he drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the way side, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing, commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, Saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.]*

- Of me that es blinde have mercye."  
 And the folk bad him be still his crye,  
 Bot mare and mare aye cryed he,  
 30 And saide, "Jesue, thou rewe on me."  
 And Jhesus stinte and stude him still  
 And bad bringe the blind man him till.  
 When he was nere Criste saide him to  
 "What will tow that I to thee do?"  
 35 "Lorde," he saide, "gife me my sight."  
 And Criste thare schewid Goddes might  
 And saide, "I bid thee that thou se  
 For thi trouthe has savid thee."  
 And als swithe had he his sight,  
 40 And folowid Criste and loudid his might.  
 And all the folk that sawe that dede  
 Loued God and his godhede.  
 This es the Gospell of todaye,  
 Als man in Ynglisse tonge mai saye.
- 45 Here on spekis Saynte Gregorye,  
 And saise that Criste schewid openlye  
 His passyoun lange before the tyme,  
 To gerre the apostles trowe in hyme.  
 For he schewid on whatkin wyse  
 50 He suld first dye and sithen ryse  
 Fra dede to lyve, to gere thaim fande  
 And se that all his worde suld stande,  
 When thai sawe him right swa be graythid  
 Als he before to thaim had saide:  
 55 That thai might trowe thorghe pinyng  
 And be right sikir of his risinge;  
 For when thai sawe his pynes all  
 Als he said suld on him fall  
 Of his risinge borde thaim be sikir  
 60 And therof nouthir doute ne flikir  
 For he saide he suld first drye  
 Full harde paynes, and sithen dye  
 And ryse apon the thrid daie  
 Fra dede to lyve, als wha saye  
 65 "Sikir maye ye of mi risinge be  
 When ye all this with eye se."  
 Yitt es thare another enchesoune  
 Whi Criste thaim schewid his passyoun:  
 For his dissiples suld be resoune  
 70 To thole harde dede be balde and boune,  
 When thai sawe thaire maistire take  
 Gladli his dede withouten sake.
- have pity  
stopped  
commanded  
do you wish  
belief  
at once  
praised  
divinity  
revealed  
make; believe  
in what manner  
then  
death; to make them understand  
be upheld  
prepared  
[his] suffering  
certain  
would befall him  
ought  
waver  
suffer  
as if to say  
reason  
So that; according to reason  
suffer; death; be bold and ready  
death; guilt*



- Forthi before thaim warnid he *Therefore ahead of time*  
 And talde thaim all how it suld be:  
 75 First pynid and sithen slayne *tortured; then*  
 To ger thaim to thaire dede be bayne. *make; ready*  
 Before thaim to dede he yede, *went*  
 And gave thaim ensaumpil of his dede, *And offered them an example through his death*  
 How thai suld thole willfulli *suffer willingly*  
 80 For his lufe pyne, and sithen dye.  
 For thaire hele than tholid he *healing; salvation*  
 Harde pyne apon the rude tre. *cross*  
 Bot for thai might noght undirstande *But because*  
 What he ment with worde tellande, *by speaking words*  
 85 With dede he schewid thaim his might *power*  
 And gave a blynd man his sight.  
 Forthi will we luke forthermare *examine*  
 What oure Gospel menes thare,  
 Thare it is saide Criste yede into  
 90 A towne that was callid Jericho,  
 And fand bi the gate sittand  
 A blynde man on him fast calland.  
 And Criste stude and gave him sight,  
 And schewid bi this dede full right,  
 95 That all mankynde with synne was blynde,  
 For na man coude the right waie fynde  
 To hevene, or Crist come to do *before*  
 Oure aller nedes in Jerycho. *all that was necessary for us*  
 Jericho, es for to saye  
 100 On Ynglis, mone that chaunges aie *moon*  
 And it betaknes the werld thatt es *signifies*  
 Chaungeand with synne and wickidnes.  
 This wickid werld es so chaungeabile  
 That nathing es tharein stabile  
 105 For now es leve and now es lathe, *pleasing; hateful*  
 And now er we gladde and now wrathe. *angry*  
 Now er we hale, now er we seke, *healthy; sick*  
 And now wode and now meke, *irritable*  
 Now calde and now hate;  
 110 And swa dwellis never a thinge in state *in one state*  
 And for this werld es swa chaungeande  
 Be the mone we may it undirstand.  
 For the mone ye wate wele chaunges aye *know*  
 Swa duse this werld bath night and daye  
 115 And Jerycho betaknes the mone *explicated*  
 On Ynglihsse when it es undone:  
 And forthi may we undirstand  
 Bi Jericho this werld chaungeand.  
 Thidirward yede Criste full right

- 120 And gafe a blynde man his sight.  
 When he come for to hele mankynde  
 That Adam synne made gasteli blynde; *spiritually*  
 For gasteli blynde may be callde  
 He that canne noght the right wai halde. *keep to*
- 125 That was sene on oure fadir Adame *That was shown through*  
 That broght his ospringe all in blame: *offspring*  
 For thorghe him yede mankynde ille *went*  
 Aye to Jesus come us till, *Forever until*  
 And broght us into the right waie
- 130 Unto the blisse that lastis aie;  
 And gave us sight this waie to halde  
 For right trouthe gasteli sight es callde. *Because spiritual insight is called true faith*  
 For trouthe of Hali Kirk es sight  
 That ledes man to lemes light, *rays of light*
- 135 Into the blisse that graithid es *prepared*  
 To thaim that lives in rightwisnes.  
 Bot for mankynde held noght the waie, *because*  
 Forthi sais oure Gospell todaie  
 That this blind man gon noght sete *did not sit*
- 140 In the waie, bot all besyde the strete.  
 Als to saie mankynde was oute gane  
 Of the strete for sight was fra him tane, *As if to say; gone out*  
 Aye to God gave him gasteli sight *taken*  
 And broght hin into wayes right. *until*
- 145 In synne he fand him blynd sittand,  
 Bot Criste him kende full stiffe to stand *taught; resolutely*  
 With rightwisnes ageyn the fendis,  
 That rightwisemen wit schame schendis. *destroy*  
 The folk that yede be the strete
- 150 Bad this blynde man his cryinge lete. *cease*  
 Thare maye we se that in oure bedes, *prayers*  
 Bathe in kirk and other stedes. *places*  
 Evyle thoghtes comes us in,  
 And biddes us of oure prayers blynne. *tell; cease*
- 155 Forthi suld we ensaumpile take *follow the example*  
 Of this blinde man prayere to make,  
 That callid on Criste and wald noght lete *stop*  
 His cryinge, for folk that yede be the strete. *despite*  
 The mare thai bad him leeve his crye,
- 160 The mare he cryed Criste mercye.  
 And for he callid on Criste swa fast,  
 He gave him his sight atte last;  
 And so duse Criste with Cristen man  
 That callis on him als he can;
- 165 If he leve noght for thoghtes yll *cease; on account of*  
 His bedes, Criste grauntis him at his will.

- Bot now es many a man that prayes  
 And his thoght to wyde strayes,  
 That he ne wote noght what he sayes;  
 170 For he thinkes on werldes playes:  
 He thinkes of halles and of boures,  
 And now of castelles and now of toures,  
 And now of fayres and marchawndise,  
 And so his prayers he forlyes. *forfeits*  
 175 How suld Jhesu here his prayere  
 When he himself will it noght here?  
 Of swilk prayers Jhesus ne kepes: *To such; attends*  
 Thaire lippis spekis and the hert slepes.
- We find writen of Saynte Bernarde  
 180 That anes fore to a cytee warde *once; travelled toward*  
 Ane erande in his abbaye nedes, *his abbey's business*  
 And sawe a tyllman do his dedes. *ploughman; work*  
 And Saynte Bernard bad him wele spede *greeted him*  
 And spake to him of sawle mede; *the soul's reward*  
 185 And als he spak on this manere,  
 He askid him what was his prayere.  
 He saide, "Prayere canne I nane *know*  
 Bot the Pater Noster allane." *Except for the Our Father alone*  
 And Saynte Bernarde answerd than,  
 190 And sayde unto that ilk tyllman: *same*  
 "What thinkes thou, godeman, all waies,  
 When thou thi Pater Noster sayes?" *do you think about; at any rate*  
 He saide, "Than es all my thoght  
 On Criste that me on rode boght."  
 195 Than Saynte Bernarde sayde him to:  
 "Full wele es thee that so maie do  
 For so ne fares it noght of me *it goes not thus for me*  
 That man of ordir suld be; *Who ought to behave like a man in holy orders*  
 For my thoght flyes ferre and nere  
 200 Umstonte, when I make my prayere." *Frequently*  
 This tyllmane saide, "That ware ferlye *That would be marvelous*  
 That thou suld be wers man than I:  
 Thou hase gode pees in thine abbai,  
 Thou suld noght late thi thoghtes straye."  
 205 And Saynte Bernard answerd than  
 And saide, "Thou ert a haly man;  
 Bot whether fande if thou maye  
 Withouten any evyle thoght saye  
 A Pater Noster all this daye  
 210 And I sall give thee my pallfraie." *stead*  
 And wha was fayne bot this tillman?  
 And Pater Noster he began, *who was happy if not this ploughman*

	Bot or he might thre wordes saie	<i>before</i>
	His thocht was all on this palfraie.	
215	“Lorde,” he thocht, “Whether I sall have, Bathe sadil and bridil and the knave?”	<i>Which of these will I have servant</i>
	This Pater Noster was saide sone, Bot he sawe wele when he had done That he thocht thoghtis tharein,	
220	And he wald it eftsones begynne.	<i>would; again</i>
	This hors was in his thocht allwaies, So he it tynt and all the hernayes.	<i>lost; harness</i>
	For Saynte Bernard wist what he thocht Forthi of him gatte he right noght	<i>knew</i>
225	Thus fares it now of folk full fele That thinkes mare of thaire catele In prayere than of thaire saule hele And swagates thaimself thai tele;	<i>many are more mindful; possessions thus; deceive</i>
	For God will noght thaire prayere here	
230	That praies him on swilk manere. Forthi es gude that we oute steke Thoghtes that maie oure prayers breke, And sett oure thoghtes in Cristis woundes	<i>thrust out interrupt</i>
	That for us tholid harde stoundes.	<i>hard times of suffering</i>
235	For than will he us gladli here Aye when we make oure prayere, And freli graunte us oure bone And all oure langinge gerre be done.	<i>request desire; cause</i>
	Oure Lorde fullfill oure langynge	<i>[May]</i>
240	And till his blisse he us all bringe. Amen.	

[Homily 17 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

## 18. SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

*Dominica ii in Quadragesima secundum Matheum. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Egressus Jhesus secessit in partes Tyri et Sidonis etc.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Second Sunday in Lent according to Matthew. In that time*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Matthew 15:21–28): *And Jesus went from thence, and retired into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. [And behold a woman of Canaan who came out of those coasts, crying out, said to him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Who answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us. And he answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. But she came and adored him, saying: Lord, help me. Who answering, said: It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs. But she said: Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then Jesus answering,*

	Saynte Mathewe sais in oure Gospell	
	That Jhesu Crist yode, als awntir fell	<i>went, as it happened</i>
	Oute of Tyri into a lande	<i>Tyre; country</i>
	Thare haythen folk ware in wonande.	<i>dwelling</i>
5	Thare mette he with a haythen wommane	
	That made to him a rewefull mane:	<i>sorry moan</i>
	Scho prayede him on hir to rewe,	<i>pity</i>
	And hele hir doghtir of cares newe	
	That scho was in, for scho wode wasse,	<i>was out of her mind</i>
10	For in hir woned Sathanase.	<i>dwelt</i>
	And Criste hir herd bot he stude stille,	
	And his dissiplis saide him till:	
	“Helpe this wommane and late hir gange	<i>let; go</i>
	For scho cries on us full lange.”	
15	And Jhesu saide, “I am noght sende	
	Bot to Jewes thaire lyves to mende.”	<i>amend</i>
	Than this womman come him unto,	
	And loutid him als hir aght to do,	<i>bowed down to; ought</i>
	And what scho wald, hir askid he.	
20	“Lorde,” scho saide, “helpe now me.”	
	And he saide that nane suld think gode	<i>none should think it good</i>
	To take brede fra childir fode	<i>children’s food</i>
	And give it houndes als wha saie:	<i>as if to say</i>
	Gode Jewes, that haldes wele thaire laie	<i>maintain; law</i>
25	Er Goddes sonnes, and haythen mann	<i>God’s sons</i>
	Es callid hounde for lawe he ne cann.	<i>he knows not the law</i>
	“Forthi me think it is na right	
	To schewe ymange houndes mi might;	
	Bot Jewe that Goddes sonne es callde	
30	Suld knawe mi might if he walde,	<i>wishes</i>
	And fede his sawle with my worde,	
	Als bodie es fedde with brede atte borde.”	<i>table</i>
	To his worde toke scho gode tente,	<i>paid good attention</i>
	And wist graytheli what he mente.	<i>quickly</i>
35	Scho answerd him full wiseli thare,	
	And saide to him with mylde fare,	<i>words</i>
	“Thir smale whelpes etes crommes in halles	<i>puppies</i>
	That of thaire lordes borde falles;	
	Als to saie, I wote wele we are	<i>know</i>
40	Likknid to houndes for oure missefare.	<i>Likened; error</i>
	Forthi I likken me to a whelpe	<i>compare myself</i>
	To gete with mekenes att thee helpe.”	<i>help from thee</i>
	And Criste answerd and saide than,	

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*said to her: O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was cured from that hour.]*

45	<p>“Thi trouthe es mikil to loue, wommane,  In this case be thi will done.”  And with that worde scho had hir bone,  For hir doghtir had hir hele,  That tyme that he gon with hir mele.  This es the strenghe of this Gospell,  50 Als man with Ynglisse tonge mai tell.</p>	<p><i>faith; greatly to [be] praised</i></p> <p><i>request</i>  <i>was healed</i>  <i>During the time; speak</i></p>
55	<p>Gode clerkes that grete clergie can  Spekis mikil of this ilk womman,  And sais when scho spak with Jhesus,  Full gude costis schewid scho us.  Thir gude costis er callid rewthe  Of hert, and tholemodenes, and trewthe,  Lastinge in gode, and rightwisnesse,  And the sexte coste es callid mekenes.  For rewthe of hert scho kende us thare  60 Thare scho rewid hir doghtir sare.  Scho prayed for hir that scho bare  Als it hir awne evyle ware.  Scho kende us rewthefull for to be,  When we oure even Cristen se  65 Thole any sorowe or any wa:  To helpe thaim of it wher so thai ga,  And be als wa of thaire sekenes  Als seke man for his awne sorow es;  And fande if we may helpe him oght,  70 And for him have rewthe in thoght;  And helpe the pore at oure powere  With mete or drink or clothe to were.  We awe to legge thaim of thair poverté  Or elles have we no rewthe in herte.  75 Bot here er riche menne to wite,  That hase in thair herte na syte,  When thai se the pouere hase nede,  And maye thaim helpe with almusdede,  And will thaim nowther clethe ne fede,  80 Bot latis thaim dye for honger and nede.  Allas, allase, what mai thai saie,  When Criste sall apon Domisdaie  Thaim chalange for thaire allir dede  That wald the pouer give na brede?  85 He sall than saye thaim wordes grymme,  And tell thaim than how thai lete hymme  Thole honger and calde and wandrethe  And wald him nouthir fede ne clethe.  “I hungrid sore,” schal he say.</p>	<p><i>learning possess</i>  <i>much (often); same</i></p> <p><i>moral qualities</i>  <i>compassion</i>  <i>patience; faith</i>  <i>constancy; righteousness</i></p> <p><i>compassion; showed</i>  <i>pitied</i>  <i>gave birth to</i>  <i>affliction</i>  <i>compassionate</i>  <i>fellow Christians</i>  <i>Suffer; woe</i>  <i>wherever</i>  <i>sorrowful for</i></p> <p><i>see; in any way</i>  <i>compassion</i>  <i>to the best of our ability</i></p> <p><i>ought to relieve</i></p> <p><i>blameworthy</i>  <i>no understanding</i></p> <p><i>allow</i></p> <p><i>suffer; misery</i></p>

- 90 "And full seke in prisoune I laie;  
 Bot none of yow walde bete mi bale  
 For of me gave ye never tale."  
 Than answer sall tha sinfull men  
 And ask Jhesu Criste, "Whare and when  
 95 Saw we thee pore or in nede,  
 And we walde thee nouthur clethe ne fede?  
 Or when sawe we thee sekenes have  
 Or in prisoune us almus crave?"  
 And Criste sall saie thaim, "Wele ye witte  
 100 That when ye fra pore folk held it,  
 That had nede and praied yow,  
 Ye warned it me, ye maie me trowe.  
 Tharefore ye schall wende to hell pyne,  
 For ye ne helpid me ne myne."  
 105 Than sall tha sinfull ga to hell,  
 Als Criste himself sais in the Gospell.  
 Forthi yow riche men, I rede  
 Ye think ofsithes on the dede,  
 And fede the pore with youre brede  
 110 That ye ne well noght in hell lede.  
 I rede you of the pore ye rewe  
 That ye noght tyne that blissfull glewe  
 That riche men sall have to mede  
 That gladli here duse almusede.  
 115 Now se ye wele that rewthe of hert  
 Geres men helpe other in thaire povert,  
 And sore forthinkes of all tho  
 That er seke or pore or wo.  
 For this womman als ye have herd  
 120 Rewde fore that hir doghtir misseferd;  
 Forthi scho prayed inwardelie  
 Criste on hir to have mercye.  
 Hir rewthe of hert gasteli us ertes  
 To have rewoffnes in oure hertes,  
 125 And helpe thaim that hase nede  
 With prayere and with almousede.  
 The tother coste that scho us kende  
 Was tholemodenes us to defende  
 Fro hastie wordes and fro brethe,  
 130 Fra hatereden and fro neghbore lothe.  
 This tholemodenes kend scho us  
 When scho mekeli tholid Jesus  
 Betaken hir and all hir kynde  
 To a whelpe that es nyne nightes blynde.  
 135 For in wannetrouthe full blind ware thai  
 To Criste thaim kende the right waie
- help; suffering  
you had no concern for me*
- ask us for alms  
know  
withheld*
- refused; believe  
pain*
- advise  
frequently*
- So that you will not live in hell  
have pity  
lose; joy  
as reward*
- Causes  
are grieved by*
- suffered*
- urges*
- second quality; showed  
patience  
anger*
- hatred; hostility to neighbors*
- allowed  
Compare; sort*
- unbelief  
Until*

	Of trouthe, that ledes man full evene	<i>directly</i>
	With rightwise life to the blisse of hevene;	<i>righteous</i>
	And that he grauntid this wommane rathe,	<i>quickly</i>
140	For scho ne was for his wordes wrathe,	
	Bot loudid him als hir aght to do.	<i>praised</i>
	And rightwisnes us thare kende scho:	<i>taught</i>
	Rightwisnes in dede we schawe	
	When we yelde all lellye that we awe.	<i>give; loyally; owe</i>
145	To God we awe klannes of hert	<i>purity</i>
	And wirschipe and willfull poverte;	<i>willing</i>
	For pore he was for oure sake,	
	When he on him oure kynde walde take.	<i>nature</i>
	We awe to fullfill his biddinges	<i>ought; commands</i>
150	And doute his domes in all thinges.	<i>fear his judgment</i>
	We awe to mensk him for his might,	<i>honor</i>
	And halde that we have him hight.	<i>keep to; promised</i>
	We awe to have hope of his come	<i>coming</i>
	To deme us all on the Daie of Dome,	<i>judge</i>
155	And be graithe taken may we knawe	<i>by ready sign</i>
	All the dette that we God awe,	
	Bi the lowtinge of this wommane	<i>kneeling</i>
	When scho to Criste made hir mane.	<i>lament</i>
	To prelates awe we bowsomnes	<i>clergy; obedience</i>
160	If thaire biddinges be in godenes.	<i>commands are</i>
	Bot if thaire biddinges be in ylle,	<i>evil</i>
	We awe noght for to wirk thaire wille.	
	Till oure evene Cristen awe we	<i>fellow</i>
165	Right lufe of hert and charité;	
	And schewe thaim charité in dede	
	Of oure helpe if thai have nede.	
	And if we yelde thus that we awe	
	Rightwisnes in dede we schawe.	
	This rightwisnes es betakned thare	<i>demonstrated</i>
170	Whare this wommane lowtid Criste are.	<i>honored; earlier</i>
	Scho yalde him mensk that scho aght —	
	Thus rightwisnes scho us taght.	
	The ferde coste that scho kende us	<i>fourth quality</i>
	Was trouthe that scho had in Jesus;	<i>faith</i>
175	For scho trowid with thocht lele	<i>believed; loyal</i>
	That Criste might give hir doghtir hele;	<i>health</i>
	And sithen scho that was a haythen wight	<i>since; heathen creature</i>
	Had so gode hope in Cristis myght,	
	Full wele suld Cristen menne with right	
180	Trowe in him and hald thaim fro plight.	<i>Believe; keep themselves; sin</i>
	For trowthe mai nothings us awayle	
	If we of rightwise dedes faile.	
	For truthe is ded withoute good dede	



- Als we in haly bokes rede.  
 185 And forthi everilk a man  
 That Cristendome has on him tane, *taken*  
 Trouthe hase he nane bot yif he do  
 Gode dedes that fallis thare unto. *Good deeds that accord [with faith]*  
 For Cristen man bothe ylle and gude  
 190 Trowes that Criste thaim boght on rude,  
 And many cayteve noghtforthi *wretch; nevertheless*  
 Wretthis so Criste thorghe his folie *angers*  
 That his trouthe es noght worthe a stra. *straw*  
 For synnes catchis Criste him fra: *snatch Christ away from him*  
 195 With trowthe es he Cristis frende  
 And with dede againe Criste unhende. *deeds against; discourteous*  
 If Cristen man trowe witirlie *truly*  
 In Criste, and lyve wickidli, *and [yet]*  
 His trouthe helpis him right noght,  
 200 Bot lawere geres it him be broght *lower causes*  
 Eftir his dede in hell pyne *death*  
 Than outhir Jewe or yit Sarzyne. *either*  
 Bit yif he make amendes here *Unless*  
 With schrift, penaunce, and with prayere.  
 205 Lyve we than so in dede and worde  
 That oure lyfe to oure trouthe acorde. *life accords with our faith*  
 For trouthe us noght awayles elles *does no good otherwise*  
 Als Saynte Jone the apostil telles.  
 The fifte gude coste that this wommane  
 210 Kenned us when scho made hir mane *complaint*  
 Es langelastinge till oure lyves ende *perseverance*  
 In gude, and this coste scho us kende, *In goodness*  
 When scho wald noght leeve hir prayere  
 Thof Criste hir gave noght sone answe;e;  
 215 Botte more and more scho praied faste,  
 And gatte hir will atte laste.  
 Thus openli scho kende us here  
 To be lastand in gude prayere *constant*  
 And noght stynt of oure bone, *cease; request*  
 220 Thof Criste us graunte it noght sone. *Even if; right away*  
 For oft he taries oure askinge *delays [in answering]*  
 To kindil in us gude langinge; *incite; desire*  
 Mare langinge he geres us have him till,  
 Than if he grauntid us sone oure will.  
 225 Forthi I rede ensawmpil we take *advise*  
 Of this wommane, praier to make  
 And noght alsone of prayere stint, *quickly*  
 For we ne wate what God hase mynt. *know; intended*  
 Now se ye wele thir costis fyve  
 230 Schroudes Cristen mannes lyve: *Adorn*

- Thai er callde trouthe and tholemodenes,  
 Rewthe, langelastinge, and rightwisnes.  
 This forsaide womman thaim us taght  
 When Sathanas with hir doghtir faght.  
 235 The sext gude coste that scho us kende  
 Es mekenes, that may us defende *guard*  
 Fra Sathanas and his felawes,  
 For aie fra mekenes he him drawes; *draws back*  
 For mekenes ymange all vertues  
 240 The fendes pousté moste destrues. *power; destroys*  
 This mekenes kende this womman us  
 When scho spak mekeli to Jesus.  
 Scho likkende hir to lesse than hounde  
 To gerre Criste make hir doghtir sounde, *whole*  
 245 And Criste for hir answeere meke, *because of*  
 Helid hir doghtir that was seke.  
 This wommane that thus made hir mane,  
 Betaknes ilk a synfull mane, *Signifies every*  
 That hase a doghtir seke in bedde:  
 250 That es his flehsse when it is ledde  
 With will or lust or lyccherie,  
 That es callid wodenes gastelie. *spiritual madness*  
 For it geres a man do fonde dedes *foolish*  
 And forgete his saule nedes.  
 255 That maie ye se be ane ermite  
 That for lust lefft his abite; *discarded his habit*  
 And be this tale maie we wele kenne  
 How fule luste mase unwise menne. *makes men unwise*  
 Tharebi a tale now will I telle  
 260 If ye will here a while dwelle.  
  
 To wildirnes yode a yonge man  
 To live als hermite be him ane; *by himself*  
 And he was fandid swa fellie *tempted; wickedly*  
 With lust and likinge of his bodie, *desire*  
 265 That rest ne pese might he none have, *peace*  
 And till ane ermete he him schrave. *hermit; confessed*  
 That ermite was a hali mane,  
 Bot flehssli likinge had he nevir nane; *carnal desire*  
 Forthi unlevene to him was he, *unsympathetic*  
 270 And unskilfull als think me.  
 For when this man was schriven him to,  
 He saide him noght what he suld do;  
 Bot saide, "I can na skill of thee,  
 Swa foule thoghtes thou schewes to me, *I cannot help you*  
*Such*

- 275 For God, me think, may thou noght paie,<sup>1</sup>  
 That lates so thi thoghtes straye. *[You] who so let*  
 Thow thinkes so on ydil dedes  
 It will thee drawe to hell gledes. *coals*  
 Me think that thou unworthi es
- 280 To serve God in wildirnes;  
 Forthi ga schryve thee whare thu will,  
 For of thee can I na skill."  
 This yonge ermete was full sarie,  
 And saide, "Allas, that born was I!
- 285 I wald be saved bot I ne maie, *I wish to be*  
 Als wele may I ga live in plaie *I may as well; pleasure*  
 Ymange thir werldes men and tyne *worldly; lose*  
 Mi joye and sithen go to pyne; *heavenly joy; pain*  
 With yllir wane, me bettir is *Despite the bad consequences*
- 290 To take mi parte of werldes blisse,  
 Than thole here bathe pyne and wa *suffer*  
 And in other stede alswa." *place as well*  
 When he had saide this and mare,  
 To the toune he wente greteand full sare, *weeping*
- 295 And als he yode with chekes wete, *went*  
 Ane alde ermete he mette be the strete. *way*  
 This alde ermete Apollo hight, *was called*  
 And knewe this yonge man wele be sight.  
 He askid him whider he walde *was going*
- 300 And he his fandinge all him talde, *experience*  
 And saide, "Leve fadir, me es full wo  
 For to the seclere will I go; *world*  
 God wald I serve, bot I ne maie, *I wish to serve God*  
 So am I fandid night and daie. *tormented*
- 305 Bothe with mi flehsse and with the fende,  
 That geres me now to the towne wende;  
 For atte yone ermete I me schrave,  
 Botte nanekin penaunce he me gave. *no kind of penance*  
 He sais that I am noght worthi
- 310 To serve God, and forthi  
 Will I live in werldes plaie,  
 And take me joye whiles that I maie.  
 What bote es to thole here tene and traye,<sup>2</sup>  
 Sithen I ne maie serve God to paye? *Since; satisfactorily*
- 315 Bettir es me here some joye to make,  
 Than to pyne here and never joye take."  
 This alde ermite him answerd than *suffer pain*

<sup>1</sup> For you may not please God, it seems to me

<sup>2</sup> What is the point of suffering here distress and pain

	And saide, "I ame ane alde man, And live the whether I ne maye	<i>And nevertheless I may not live</i>
320	Withouten flehsse fandinge a daie; Forthi thar thee think na ferlie, Thof thou be fandid inwardlie. For aye the more that God lufis thee	<i>a single day you need not think it surprising</i>
	The more fondinge thee sendis he;	<i>temptation</i>
325	And, leve sonne, that ilk ermite That thee schrave es greteli to wite: For thare he suld with wordes hende Have comforte thee agaynes the fende Thare did he als ane ebbir fole	<i>blameworthy gracious</i>
330	That gert thee leeve Cristis scole. Of flehsslie lust never fondid was he, Forthi unleve was he to thee. Thou maie be thi fondinge se That God lufis him wele lesse than thee;	<i>outright Christ's way</i>
335	Forthi, sonne, here now my counsaile, For mikil mai it thee avayle: Thou torne agayne into thi cell And still in Goddes servis thou dwell; And I sall praie God that he	<i>advice much; help go back service</i>
340	Take all thi flehssli lust fro thee, And late it fall on the ermite That gert thee with missecomforte syte; That he maie of thi fondinge prove And lere to have in schrift some hove."	<i>be anxious experience moderation</i>
345	This yonge man of this rede was faine And tornid to his celle agayne; And this Apollo yode privelye Unto that ilk ermetrye, Thare this alde ermete was wonande,	<i>counsel; glad secretly hermitage</i>
350	And sette him on his knees God prayande; And saide, "Lorde that heryed hell I praie thee, thou yone fondinge fell Of yone yonge man, and gerre it light Of yone olde man to fonde his might,	<i>harrowed that temptation destroy make it settle</i>
355	That he maye lere tendir to be To thaim that er fondid for thee." And be his prayere was broght to ende Aperteli he sawe the fende Stand with arowe and with bowe	<i>test learn</i>
360	And schote in atte a windowe; And his fell arowe even smate To the olde man thare he sate; And so fell fondinge he felid sone, That uppe he rose als he ware undonee.	<i>as soon as Openly</i>  <i>evil; directly hit</i>  <i>felt</i>

- 365 For flehssli lust he yede nere wode *went nearly mad*  
 And fast fro wawe to wawe he yode, *wall; went*  
 And of him his abite he kest, *[hermit's] habit*  
 Als mad man that had na rest.  
 He yode to towneward atte last,
- 370 And him Apollo folowid fast,  
 And be his name he him callde,  
 And askid him whidir he walde;  
 And him thoght so mikil schame,  
 That his abite was left at hame
- 375 That he stode als he fonde ware. *deranged*  
 Than this other spak to him thare,  
 And askid him whare his abite wasse,  
 And he answerd and saide, "Allasse,  
 For I am casten in a sarye case, *have been cast into a sorry state*
- 380 Thorow the fandinge of Sathanase  
 For schamefulli on myne alde tase *toes*  
 To tounne I rynne with evil rase; *run; speed*  
 I fall in fight agaynes the fende  
 For to the seclere will I wende *world*
- 385 To take me wife for I mai noght  
 Wone here, so es mi flehsse in floght. *Dwell; in a flutter*  
 Mi foule flehsse prikked me so, *goads*  
 That allmoste wode it geres me go."  
 Apollo bad him think on than:
- 390 "That thou saide to yone yonge man  
 That schrave him in fandinge thee to,  
 And was redie penaunce to do.  
 Bot thareof litil skill couthe thou, *you had little skill*  
 And forthi ertow fondid now;
- 395 For with thi worde thou gert him ga *drove him*  
 His awne saule for to sla.  
 Forthi prayed I God that he  
 Suld ger his fondinge fall on thee."  
 When he had saide all this and more,
- 400 This ermite fell on knees thore,  
 And saide, "Fadir, I ask mercy —  
 I knawe wele that I did folye.  
 I praie thee, praie God for mi plight, *condition*  
 For gode amendes I thee hight." *promise*
- 405 Apollo saide than to him rathe: *at once*  
 "Sitte we on knees, and praye we bathe  
 That God the fendes fondinge slake *alleviate*  
 And bothe fro thee and him it take."  
 Thai praiede God inwardelie,
- 410 And God thaire praier herd in hye;  
 For thaire fondinge witid awaie, *withered*

- And eftirward gude pees had thaie.  
 Be this tale that I have talde  
 Se ye how flehssli lust es callde  
 415 Wodenes, and right callid es it,  
 For it geres wyse men tyne thaire witte. *lose their wits*  
 For who es woder than that man, *crazier*  
 That mikil skill and insight can, *knowledge and insight has*  
 And wote that man for dedeli synne, *And [who] knows*  
 420 Tynes that blisse that never sall blynne;  
 And gase wele and witandlie; *Loses; end*  
 And lepes in the fendes balie, *knowingly*  
 And tynes the joye that lastis aie, *domain*  
 For lust that lastis bot a daie;  
 425 To be in pyne that never endes,  
 Ymange the feleschipe of foule fendes.  
 Forsothe me think woder es he  
 Than any wylde beste may be;  
 For thare a beste perile sees *where*  
 430 Thorow right resoune fast he flees;  
 And witti man willfulli gase, *clever*  
 And makes him omageoure to his fase, *himself a vassal; foes*  
 When he with lust his saule slase, *slays*  
 For than he serves Sathanase.  
 435 Forthi if we this lust will slake, *calm*  
 Of this wommane ensawmpil we take,  
 That gert Criste thorghe hir mekenes  
 Hele hir doghtir of wodenes;  
 With mekenes gatt scho Cristis helpe  
 440 When scho hir likkned to a whelpe.  
 Tharefore I rede ilk a daie, *every day*  
 To Criste fast that we praie,  
 That he lene us oure flehsse to teme *grant; tame*  
 That it putt us to no greme; *So that; shame*  
 445 And sithen give us grace that we  
 Maye serve him in chastité,  
 And bringe us all to that blisse  
 That to chaste men grauntid is.  
 That it mai so to us fall,  
 450 Amen, amen, praye we all.

## 19. ANNUNCIATION

*In Annunciacione Dominica. Evangelium secundum Lucam. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Missus est Angelus Gabriel.*<sup>2</sup>

	Manne, whilk Adam synne made thrall,	<i>whom; slave</i>
	Who made us fre herd have we all;	<i>[Of him] who</i>
	Bot thou ne wote, lawde man,	<i>know; ignorant</i>
	How first thi fredome springe began.	
5	Saynte Luke us schewes the beginnyng	
	Of thi fredome and thi biyng,	<i>redemption</i>
	In the Gospell of todaye:	
	I rede ye bere it wele awaie.	<i>keep it in mind</i>
	He saise that God sent ane awngell,	
10	His name es callid Gabriell,	
	Into the lande of Galilee;	
	In message to a cyté.	
	That hight Nazareth, in lede	<i>in the land</i>
	Of Galilé, the Jewes thede.	<i>country</i>
15	Thare woned a man that come full right	<i>dwelt; directly</i>
	Of David kynde, and Joseph hight,	<i>lineage; was called</i>
	And had a maye with him in howse,	<i>maiden; dwelling</i>
	That hight Marie and was his spouse.	
	To Joseph house this aungell went,	
20	Fra God of hevene to hir was sent;	
	And when he with that mayden mette,	
	With swete wordis he hir grette:	
	“Hayle be thou, Marie,” to hir saide he,	
	“Full of grace and God with thee.”	
25	When scho this herd scho was in floght,	<i>in a flutter</i>

<sup>1</sup> *The Annunciation of Our Lady. The Gospel according to Luke. In that time*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 1:26–38): *And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent [from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren. Because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.]*

	And what he ment scho hir umbthoght.	<i>contemplated</i>
	Than saide the aungel to hir in hye:	<i>quickly</i>
	“Ne drede thee nathing, blissid Marie,	
	For thou hase fonden grace iwisse,	<i>found; certainly</i>
30	Before God that es kinge of blisse.	
	For thou sall fange sede and bere	<i>receive a seed</i>
	Of thi flehsse, that fendes sall fere.	<i>that which; fear</i>
	His name sall tow Jhesus call,	<i>you</i>
	His mikil mercie bese ovre all.	<i>is</i>
35	He sall be grete full mani falde,	<i>many times over</i>
	And Goddes Sonne he sall be calde;	
	And God sall give him als he gone hete,	<i>did promise</i>
	Kinge David his fadir sete.	<i>The throne of his father King David</i>
	And regnande he bese als kinge hende	<i>ruling; is; gracious</i>
40	In Jacobes howse withouten ende.”	<i>perpetually</i>
	Jacob house here callis he	
	Jacobe kynde and his menye:	<i>household</i>
	That es to saie, all folc that is	
	Chosen for to have hevene blisse;	
45	Thare Marie Sonne bese comli kinge,	<i>Where Mary's; is gracious</i>
	Of whas kyngerike bese nane endinge.	<i>whose; there shall be</i>
	Thir wordes said Gabriel to Marie,	<i>These</i>
	And of his sawe hir thoght ferlye;	<i>at his words she was amazed</i>
	And saide, “Gabriel, how may this be	
50	Sithen ertheli man neghid never me?”	<i>Since; came near</i>
	Than answerd Gabriel in haste,	
	And saide, “Marye, the Hali Gaste	
	Sall come in thee, and Goddes vertue	
	Sall thee umlowke for mannes prow.	<i>encompass; advantage</i>
55	For of thee bese borne a birthe	
	Sinfull men to mensk and mirthe;	<i>To the honor and joy of sinful men</i>
	That bese named Goddes Sonne, and lo,	
	I give thee graythe takenynge thareto:	<i>ready</i>
	That thine alde nees Elizabethe	<i>old kinswoman</i>
60	Hase gane with childe, this es the sext monethe.	
	All hir lyfe scho hase gan yelde,	<i>has been barren</i>
	And now a sonne beres in hir elde;	
	And herebi may thou se full right,	
	That nathing es agayne Goddes might;	
65	For God that made all, maie fullfill,	
	Agaynes kynde all his swete will.”	<i>Contrary to nature</i>
	When mylde Mary thir wordes herd,	<i>these</i>
	To Gabriel scho thus answerd:	
	“Lo me here Goddes awne handemaydene,	
70	To me be done als thou hase saydene.”	<i>said</i>
	Thir er the wordes of this Gospell	
	Als Saynte Luke here gon us tell.	



	The maistir sais apon this spell,	
	That Criste toke flehsse oure fo to fell;	<i>enemy; destroy</i>
75	He armid him with oure manhede,	<i>human nature</i>
	To fell the fende stithe on stede;	<i>potently everywhere</i>
	For stythe he satte on wickidhede,	<i>For he was strongly preeminent in wickedness</i>
	That wide was spred in ilk a thede,	<i>every land</i>
	Aye to Criste come him to fell,	<i>Forever until</i>
80	With lare of trouthe and gasteli spell.	<i>knowledge; spiritual wisdom</i>
	He toke the fende that was full taite,	<i>eager</i>
	Als fihsse es tane with hoke and baite;	<i>As fish</i>
	For his Godhede call I that hoke,	<i>Divinity</i>
	That with his manhede the fende toke.	
85	For right als baite the hoke felis,	<i>conceals</i>
	And so it the gredi keling stelis,	<i>codfish</i>
	So tholid Jesus with flehsse and blude,	<i>suffered</i>
	Gromonde the gredie him take on rude.	<i>cross</i>
	Gromonde the gredie him I call,	
90	That swelows synfull sawles all;	<i>swallows</i>
	That never es full, bot aie redie	
	To stroye thaim all he es aie gredie.	<i>destroy</i>
	Bot he was wiryed on a hoke,	<i>brutally killed</i>
	When Goddes Sonne oure flehsse toke.	
95	Wiryinge the bodi slase,	<i>Slaughter; kills</i>
	And so did Jhesu Sathanase.	<i>so did Satan [kill] Jesus</i>
	He fondid Jhesus saule to fange,	<i>attempted; seize</i>
	Whan he saw him on the rode hange;	<i>cross</i>
	Bot for he fand in it na synne,	<i>But because</i>
100	Na chalange he had tharein;	<i>claim</i>
	With Godhed occupied he it fand,	
	That toke him, and so fast him band	<i>bound</i>
	That his bandes bese never broken,	<i>will never be</i>
	Ne his persone bese never unloken.	<i>body; set free</i>
105	Now se ye wele a parti whi	<i>in part</i>
	Criste toke oure kynde of oure Ladie.	<i>human nature from</i>
	Forthi es gode that I yow tell,	
	The undoyng of this Gospels:	<i>explication</i>
	Als mikel to saie Gabriel is	<i>much</i>
110	Als "Goddes strenghe" apon Ynglihsse; <sup>1</sup>	
	For mikel strenghe was thare kidde,	<i>revealed</i>
	Thare Godhed was in manhede hidde;	<i>Where</i>
	For that werk past to oure kynde,	
	That the craft thareof may no man fynde. <sup>2</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Lines 109–10: *That is to say, Gabriel means / "God's strength" in English*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 113–14: *For that divinity was transmitted to mankind, / in such a way that no man can understand how it was done*

- 115 Was never yit clerk so craftye, *clever*  
 That coude ever prove kyndelie, *according to human nature*  
 How a wommane modirhede,  
 Moght be copplid to maydenhede. *joined*  
 Bot God that made kynde of noght, *who made the physical world*  
 120 Agayne kynde this werk wrought. *Against the laws of nature*  
 Oure kynde was filid thorow Adame plight, *defiled; sin*  
 And Criste it clensid thorghe his might.  
 For als the sonne passis thorghe the glasse,  
 And leves it hale aie als it wasse,  
 125 And whether the glasse be grene or bla *blue*  
 The sonne we se therof hewe ta. *take its color*  
 So come the Sonne of rightwisnes  
 Into oure Ladie clene flehsse,  
 And toke him thareof oure kynde,  
 130 Withouten brekinge of mayden rynde; *maidenhead*  
 And left hir hale withouten wemme, *whole; stain*  
 For may na stekil godhede stemme. *barrier; stop*  
 This Godhed thorghe Marie yede  
 And left all hale hir maydenhede;  
 135 For so crafti es Goddes might, *whole*  
 That it passis thorghe and leves all thight. *cunning*  
 Forthi es "Gabriel" full right, *intact*  
 Als mikel at saie als "Goddes might." *rightly*  
 That messandger to Marie yede, *As much as to say*  
 140 To bringe bodworde of mannes nede. *went*  
 Oure Ladie es wele Mary callde, *news*  
 Thorghe faire resounes many falde:  
 For Marye will on Ynglihsse mene  
 Sterne of the se that oft es sene *Star of the sea*  
 145 Of schippmen that therof hase nede, *By sailors*  
 For eftir it thaire schippe thai lede; *by it; steer*  
 So ledes manne resoune iwise, *So man's reason leads*  
 His saule towarde hevenes blisse,  
 When he takes yeme to Mary life *takes heed of Mary's*  
 150 That is in Hali Kirk full rife. *well known*  
 For Mary life es sterne bright,  
 That ledes man the waies right *the right way*  
 To blisse, if he thareeftir wirk, *works accordingly*  
 And of gode dedes be noght yrk; *reluctant*  
 155 And wele es Marie callid sterne, *star*  
 Whas life we suld folowe yerne, *eagerly*  
 For sterne hase of the self na leme, *itself; light*  
 Bot of the sonne takes it beme. *radiance*  
 So toke Marie leme and light, *gleam*  
 160 Grace and godenes of hir Sonne might, *her son's power*  
 And gives forth grace that scho fanges, *receives*

- To all that thare eftir langes. *who long for it*  
 Forthi was scho callid full of grace,  
 Of the aungel in that place; *By*  
 165 Thare he hir mette and saide hir till:  
 "Haile full of grace and Goddes will."  
 Forthi scho helpes to thaim all,  
 That herteli apon hir will call. *sincerely*  
 That maie ye se be a ladye,  
 170 That was savid thorghe hir mercie.
- It was a knight beyonde the se  
 That riche man was wont to be; *had always been*  
 That ilk a yere was wonte to make *every year was accustomed*  
 A feste for oure Ladi sake. *feast*  
 175 Bot he dispendid so largelie,  
 That in poverté he fell in hye. *spent; generously*  
 A gude wommane he had to wife,  
 That lufid oure Ladie all hir life. *rapidly*  
 The fende was att hir full tene, *angry*  
 180 Als eftirward was wele sene;  
 For when tyme come this knight suld make  
 Feste, and noght had of to take, *had nothing with which to make it*  
 Durst he noght dwell att hame, *He dared not*  
 Bot went him to the wode for schame;  
 185 And dwellid thare all be his ane, *all by himself*  
 Aye to the tyme o the daie was gane. *Until the time of the feast had passed by*  
 Thus fore the knight many yere, *acted*  
 And made mornynge and ylle chere.  
 The fende that aie es ylle wylie, *ever is wickedly cunning*  
 190 Sawe this knight and thocht in hye,  
 That he for werldes gode was sarye,<sup>1</sup>  
 And wald be vengid on his ladie, *And [Satan] wished*  
 Bot he moght noght come hir nere,  
 For hali life and gude prayere. *On account of*  
 195 Bot till hir lorde in wildirnes,  
 He come in a mannes liknes, *in the likeness of a man*  
 And askid him whi he was sarye,  
 And he saide him the resoune whie:  
 "I was," he saide, "a riche mane,  
 200 And mikil catell es fra me gane.  
 A feste was I wont to make —  
 Now have I noght whareof to take.  
 Forthi think thou na ferlie,  
 Thof I be sorowfull and sorie." *think it no wonder*

<sup>1</sup> That he [the knight] regretted the loss of his worldly goods

- 305 The fende answerd and saide him to:  
 “And thou will all mi will do, *If*  
 I suld thee ger wele bettir fare *make*  
 Than thou before did evere are. *before*  
 Of ricches plenté I sall thee give,
- 210 Whareon thou maie right menskli live.” *honorably*  
 This knight him hight to do his will, *promised*  
 And he answerd and saide him till:  
 “Go swithe and grave thee uppe thare golde, *dig*  
 Thare it lyes helid undir molde; *Where; hidden; earth*
- 215 And come sithen and speke with me, *then*  
 And bringe hidir thi wife with thee;  
 And loke that thou bringe hir thee withe,  
 For with yow bothe I will me kithe.” *make myself known*  
 This knight wist noght it was the fende, *knew*
- 220 Bot toke leve and home gon wende. *did go*  
 When he come home gold fande he laide  
 Thare whare the fende before had saide.  
 The knight was fayne of that findinge, *glad*  
 And thought to fullfill his biddinge *promise*
- 225 That he are hight unto the fende, *previously promised*  
 Or ellis him thought he was unhende. *discourteous*  
 Bot he him did als he him bad,  
 Thorghe whaim he so mikil gode had; *Unless; requested*  
 For more than he was wont to do,
- 230 Mo menne he festid and callid thareto.<sup>1</sup>  
 When tyme come that the fende had sette  
 To come to him whare thai first mette,  
 He bad his wife suld with him wende, *come*  
 To speke a while with a frende.
- 235 His wife for him was all radde, *ready*  
 And did als hir lorde hir badde,  
 And on thaire palfraies fore thai bathe, *proceeded*  
 And bi a chapell thai rade full rathe. *quickly*  
 This ladi till hir lorde spake,
- 240 And saide, “I rede, sir, that we make *advise*  
 In this chapell oure prayere,  
 Thatt Criste us bringe hale and fere *strong*  
 Home agayne till our menye: *household*  
 Praie we to Crist that it so be.”
- 245 This knight was full of jolyté, *gaiety*  
 And of prayere na forse made he, *took no account*  
 Bot saide, “Wele mote thou byde and praye, *remain*  
 For I will fare forthe on my waie,

<sup>1</sup> Lines 229–30: *For he acted more generously than usual, / He feasted more men and invited them thereto*

- And if thou dwell lange, I be wrathe."  
 250 "Sir," scho saide, "that ware me lathe."  
 This ladie lightid noghtforthi,  
 And made hir praiere inwardeli.  
 Scho praied so longe scho fell on slepe —  
 Here mai ye ferli here take kepe — *take note of a miracle*  
 255 For oure Ladie als scho thare laie,  
 Come and lepe on hir palfraie  
 In hir liknes, and forthe scho rade  
 Right to this knight thare he abade.  
 This knight wend witrli scho ware *was certain*  
 260 His awne wife and forthe gon fare,  
 When thai come thare the fende had sette, *appointed*  
 With the fende thare thai mette;  
 And when the fende sawe oure Ladie,  
 He knewe hir wele and made a crye  
 265 Apon this knight, and saide sone:  
 "Allas, traytoure, what hase tow done?  
 "I bad thee bringe thi wife with thee  
 And Goddis modir here I se.  
 Hangid be thou bi the hals, *neck*  
 270 For fikil man thou ert and fals."  
 Who was abaiste than bot this knight, *abashed*  
 And of his palfraie gon he light,  
 And fell doune to oure Ladie fete,  
 And askand mercie, sore gon grete. *began to weep*  
 275 Scho reprovind him als knight unhende,  
 For he this forward made to the fende;  
 And bad him that he suld be wise,  
 And be more bisie in hir servise;  
 And do awaie the fendes gift, *get rid of*  
 280 And God with catell suld him lift. *goods; exalt*  
 When this was saide scho went awaie,  
 And he than lepe on his palfraie,  
 And rade to the chapell and fande  
 His wife before the awtere slepeand;  
 285 And he thankid Mari inwardelie,  
 That savid him and his ladie.  
 Be this tale maie we se all  
 That all that will on Marie call,  
 Scho helpes thaim in all thaire nede,  
 290 And scheldes thaim fra wickidhede.  
 Praie we hir that scho us spede,  
 That we maye come to hevene mede.  
 Amen, amen, I rede we synge,  
 For of that joye es nane endinge. *grant us success*  
*heavenly reward*

## 20. THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

*Dominica iii in Quadragesima secundum Lucam.*<sup>1</sup>

*Erat Jesus eiciens demonium etc.*<sup>2</sup>

	Saynte Luke saise that a man doumbe was,	<i>mute</i>
	Of whaim Criste chasid oute Sathanas;	
	This man spake when the fende was oute,	
	And all folk ferlied that was aboute;	<i>marveled</i>
5	And Jewes that had at Criste envye,	<i>were envious of</i>
	Saide Criste did oft swilk maistrie,	<i>powerful deeds</i>
	In a fendes name that hight	<i>was called</i>
	Beelzebub of mikil might,	<i>great</i>
	That than was halden fendes maistire,	<i>held to be; ruler</i>
10	And of other fendes faystere.	<i>boss</i>
	For haythen man god was he,	<i>god of heathen men</i>
	Als clerkes may on bokes se,	
	And of fendes prince was he callde,	
	And for thaire allir lorde talde.	<i>accounted the lord of them all</i>
15	Forthi saide the wickid Jewes,	
	That Criste wroght thorghe his vertues	<i>through [Beelzebub's] powers</i>
	And did mirakles thorghe his slightis,	<i>performed; skills</i>
	And noght thorghe his awne mightes.	
	For wald thai noght for God him knawe,	<i>recognize</i>
20	Bot bad he suld som ferli schawe	<i>commanded; marvel show</i>
	Of hevene, als who saie: "We trowe in thi slightis,	<i>From; will believe; powers</i>
	If hevene bere wittnes of thi mightis;	
	For rightli maie thou make na ruse	<i>boast</i>
	Of thinge that thou in erde duse.	<i>earth</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Third Sunday in Lent according to Luke*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 11:14–28): *And he was casting out a devil, [and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke: and the multitudes were in admiration at it: But some of them said: He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven. But he seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub: by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out devils; doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him, and overcome him; he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out / And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.]*

- 25 Bot ger us taken of hevene se, *let us see a sign from heaven*  
 And than es right we trow in thee;  
 For if thou taken of hevene schawe,  
 For Goddes sonne we will thee knawe.”  
 When Criste wist what thai walde mene, *understood*
- 30 He saide to thaim than all bedene: *at once*  
 “That kingdome that gase in twynne *divides in two*  
 Sall barette thole if were beginne; *suffer strife; war*  
 And ilk howse on other sall fall, *each*  
 Thare conteke sondres berness all. *Where strife divides all men*
- 35 Forthi if Sathanas kyngerike, *kingdom*  
 Es sondrid in itself with swik, *divided against itself; treachery*  
 How sall it stand or be stedfast,  
 For ye saie here that I outecast *cast out*  
 The fende in Belzebus name.
- 40 If I so did, it ware his schame, *would be to his shame*  
 Als so saie, if I, with his might, *That is to say*  
 Caste oute the fende that es his knight; *servant*  
 Than ware ayther with other wrothe so, *each would be angry with the other*  
 And swilk kontek betwix thaim two, *such strife*
- 45 That nowthir walde do other will.  
 Bot nowe ar thai anefalde in ylle, *unified; evil*  
 And for thaire willes anefalde ere, *because their wills are united*  
 Will none of thaim on other were. *make war*  
 For aye the langare that Sathan
- 50 Wonnes within a synfull man, *Dwells*  
 The bettir paied es Belzebub, *satisfied*  
 That first fellid Adam with his club.  
 And be this resoune may ye se,  
 Thatt ye lyed forsothe on me.”
- 55 Yit proved Criste with mo resounes, *further*  
 That thai saide als fals felounes, *What*  
 Thare thai saide that he kest oute wightis, *When; spirits*  
 Thorghe the craft of Belzebub mightis:  
 “If I,” he saide, “fendes outecast
- 60 In Belzebub, that of fendes es maste, *Through; greatest*  
 I ask yow how and in whas mightis, *with whose power*  
 Youre sonnes dryves oute ylle wightis?” *evil*  
 Thaire sonnes his folowars he calde,  
 That sall with him in dome be balde, *judgment; certain*
- 65 On Domesdaie with him to deme, *judge*  
 And synfull man fra joye to fleme. *banish*  
 Forthi saide Jesus, sothe to saie,  
 Thai sulde deme the Jewes on Domesdaie; *judge*  
 For som men folowid Criste in lare, *teaching*
- 70 That tha Jewes sonnes ware,  
 And oft in Cristis name thai kest, *cast*

	Fendes full fell oute of thaire rest.	<i>evil; resting place</i>
	Forthi askid Criste in whase name,	
	Thaire sonnes didd the fendes schame.	<i>did shame to the fiends</i>
75	Als who saie — “Sithen ye selcouthes se,	<i>Since; wonders</i>
	That mi dissiples duse thorghe me,	<i>do</i>
	Ye mai wele witte that I am he,	<i>know</i>
	That gives thaim crafte and pousté,	<i>skill; power</i>
	To dryve develes oute of thaire denne,	<i>dwelling place</i>
80	Thare thai er in synfull men.”	<i>Where</i>
	Yit schewes Criste that God gon him sende,	<i>did send him</i>
	Mankynde fro fendes to defende;	
	For he saide, “If I outecaste	
	In Goddis fingir the foule gaste,	<i>By; spirit</i>
85	Goddess Kingdome es commen now,	
	Forsothe here ymanges yow.”	
	Goddess Kingdome was Criste,	
	That es God in werld to triste	
	For when Criste had mankinde here tane	<i>taken on human nature</i>
90	Than was God and man all ane;	<i>one</i>
	And Goddess fingir in Hali Writte,	
	Betaknes Goddess might and his witte,	<i>Signifies; knowledge</i>
	That all thinge may leefe and bynde,	<i>loose and bind</i>
	Als we in Hali Boke writen finde.	
95	Yit proves Criste with resoune hende,	<i>skillful</i>
	That he es strengre than the fende;	
	And sais whiles ane armid wight,	<i>as long as; man</i>
	Yemes his howse with all his might,	<i>Guards</i>
	All that he weldes es in pese.	
100	Bot if a man that strangere es	<i>stronger</i>
	Him ovrecome, his gude he him reveis,	<i>belongings; steals</i>
	And him in howse no wepen leves,	
	Als so saie, “Thof the fende be stythe,	<i>strong</i>
	And armid hard with este and nythe,	<i>malice and envy</i>
105	Agaynes me fallis he full swithe,	
	If I with him mi maistrie kithe;	<i>make known</i>
	And oft sithis I fell him with fight,	<i>often; vanquish</i>
	For he haves to me no myght.	
	For or I come to him he ese,	<i>before; is</i>
110	In synfull man wonand in pese.	<i>Within</i>
	Bot als swithe als he me seese,	
	Als a thefe oute of hole he flees;	
	And be this resoune maye ye se,	
	That I am stranger than es he:	
115	With mi Godhede I ger him fle,	
	And noght thorghe Belzebus pousté.”	<i>power</i>
	Thus provid Criste with resoune right,	
	That he kest oute with his awne might	



- The fende of this combird manne, *wretched*  
 120 Fra whaim the fende his speche had tane.  
 Yit schewid Criste apertelie *revealed; openly*  
 The Jewis pride and thaire envye,  
 And saide, "He that es noght with me,  
 Agaynes me forsothe es he;  
 125 Als so saie, "So fares it of yowe, *is it with you*  
 For mi Godhede will ye noght trowe; *Since; believe*  
 And he that gedirs noght with me, *joins not together*  
 His gude thewes sckatirs he; *habits squanders*  
 Als so saie, ye that suld me knawe,  
 130 And haythen folk toward me drawe,<sup>1</sup>  
 And will noght sawles with me gadir *But*  
 To God, that es youre gasteli fadir,  
 Ye skatir thaim with costis ylle *separate; evil behavior*  
 Fra God, for ye gere thaim ga will; *make them willingly go [astray]*  
 135 For ye suld teche thaim the lawe  
 Of rightwisnes, and ye thaim drawe *but*  
 With wickid costis and ylle lates *evil behavior and false pretence*  
 Fra rightwisnes to wrange gates." *ways*
- This worde es mikil agaynes clerkes, *clergy*  
 140 That suld kenne lawde men Goddes werkes, *teach ignorant men*  
 And gedir thaim to Goddes horde, *flock*  
 With rightwisnes and Goddis worde;  
 And leves for forworthinnes, *But fail [to do this] out of feebleness*  
 So mikil thai lufe thaire awne ese. *comfort*  
 145 Thaim burd think, if thai ware wise, *They ought to think*  
 How thai sall stand at Goddes assyse, *judgment*  
 To yelde acounte of all thaire witte, *give; knowledge*  
 How thai in the werld have spendid it. *dispensed*  
 To God what sall this persounes saie, *parsons*  
 150 When thai er chalangid on Domesdaie, *required*  
 To yelde of all thaire live acounte? *give*  
 And what thair rentes maye amounte, *income; may amount to*  
 That thai of the lawde takes here, *from the laity take wages*  
 And of God will thaim noght lere, *teach*  
 155 How thai sall thaire sawles save,  
 That the fende thaim noght crave, *So that; claim*  
 To bringe thaire sawles to hell pyne?  
 Thus God for slewthe sall thaim tyne. *because of their laziness; destroy*  
 Than mai thir men of Hali Kirk, *may these*  
 160 Drede full sare for thai ware yrk *reluctant*  
 Thaire parihssenes for to teche, *parishioners*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 129–30: *As if to say: you who ought to recognize me, / And to bring heathen folk to me*

	For thai er made Goddes leche.	<i>helper[s]</i>
	Bot now lives ovre mani in lust,	<i>too many [of the clergy]</i>
	And lates thaire sawles in synne rust,	
165	And lawde mennes als swa,	
	For att thaim ensaumpil thai ta,	<i>For they take their example from them [the clergy]</i>
	To life in synne and in folye,	
	In lust of flehsse and glotonye.	
	Thus in wickidnes thai live,	
170	For othir ensawmpil nane thai give.	
	The lawde amende thai ne maie for drede,	
	When thai er coupeabil of wickid dede. <sup>1</sup>	
	Thir persones and vikars that riche are,	<i>vicars</i>
	Thai suffir thaire parihssenes missefare.	<i>allow; to go astray</i>
175	Of thair godes thai suld thaim dele	<i>distribute</i>
	To all tho that had no catele.	<i>possessions</i>
	And pure clerkes to sette to lare,	<i>poor; teach</i>
	And helpe chappemen to gette thaire ware;	<i>merchants; look after</i>
	And pure maidens to give to howse,	<i>bring to the home</i>
180	To gude yomen for to spouse;	<i>Of; marry</i>
	And other gode dedes at thaire powere,	
	To do till all that had misstere.	<i>need</i>
	Bot now than do thai nothings so,	
	That geres thir lawed menne missego;	<i>go wrong</i>
185	For thai live all in likinge and lust	<i>lechery</i>
	Of flehsse, that geres the saule rust;	<i>makes</i>
	For riche persones lufes now,	
	Flehssli lust more than sawle prowé.	<i>reward</i>
	Thai wene to folowe Cristis trace,	<i>think; path</i>
190	With lust, likinge, rivere and chase.	<i>lechery, robbery and hunting</i>
	Thai fede thair flehsse with gode metes,	
	That lawde folk bringes to thaim and getes.	
	Thai live of lawde folc travayle,	<i>off of ignorant people's work</i>
	And right noght till thaim thai awayle;	<i>do nothing worthwhile for them</i>
195	For thare thai suld with sermoune till	<i>persuade</i>
	The lawde folk hertes and will,	
	To right langinge of hevenes rike,	<i>kingdom</i>
	With wickid ensawmpil thai thaim swike;	<i>betray</i>
	For wickid ensaumpil thai thaim give,	
200	In wickidnes forthe for to live;	
	For thare thai suld thaim mekenes schewe,	<i>bad habits</i>
	Thai schewe thaim pride and other unthewe;	<i>teach; share</i>
	And thare thai suld kenne thaim to dele,	
	And parte with god of thaire catele,	<i>divide well; possessions</i>
205	Thare kenne thai thaim with covetise,	

<sup>1</sup> Lines 171–72: *They dare not correct the laity, out of fear, / When they themselves are guilty of wicked deeds*

- To spare thaire godes on ylle wise. *hoard; evil manner*  
 For we se so thir persones spare, *in such a way*  
 That thai lat pure men missefare;  
 We se thaim faire grehoundes fede,  
 210 And thole the pure dye for nede. *poor*  
 And ylle ensaumpil thus thai give,  
 To thaire parihssenes wele to live.  
 Forthi methink it na ferlie,  
 Thofe lawde folk live in folye,  
 215 When thai se prestis and persounes, *parsons*  
 Missetake agaynes God als felownes: *Do wrong; evildoers*  
 Goddes felounes I thaim call, *sinner*  
 That thus geres men in synne fall, *cause people*  
 With ensaumpile of ylle life,  
 220 That now es in this werld full rife. *plentiful*  
 Forthi I rede persounes and prestis, *advise*  
 That thai bere God in thaire brestis,  
 And think that all thaire mete and drink, *remember*  
 Comes of thaire parihssen swink; *work*  
 225 And give thaim ensawmpil how that thai,  
 Sall toward hevene take the waie,  
 And sithen hald thaim wele tharein,  
 And yeme thaim fra dedeli synne. *protect*  
 For wele es thaim that with prechinge,  
 230 Mai bringe saules to hevenes Kinge;  
 For all that till him saules ledes,  
 Maie siker be of heveneli medes. *rewards*  
 And thof the prechoure may no man drawe,  
 Fra synfull will to Cristen lawe,  
 235 Tyne he ne maie his travaile, *His effort will not be in vain*  
 For mede of God maye he noght faile;  
 For God that his entente wele knawes, *who knows his intention*  
 Es full wele paid of all his sawes. *satisfied; words*
- That mai we se be Saynte Bede,  
 240 That mikil wroght Goddes dede.  
 For writen in his lyfe we finde,  
 That he was in his elde blynde;  
 Bot noghtforthi he prechid aie, *nevertheless*  
 And nameli everilk a hali daie. *every single*  
 245 Thof he ware blynde wald he noght leve  
 The fende fele saules for to reve.  
 And als he ones to prechinge fore,  
 His knave wexe werie on a more;  
 His knave wexe werie on a more;  
 Him to rest had he gude will, *Though; desist*  
 250 And bad his maistir thare stand still; *many; deprive of*  
 And saide, "Mikil folk es commen here, *proceeded*  
*servant; grew; moor*  
*He desired greatly to rest*

- Youre preching now for to here.”  
 And Bede wende his sawe sothe ware, *believed; true*  
 And stude and prechid right thare.  
 255 His knave restid him ynoghe,  
 And his marstire to hethinge loghe; *laughed his master to scorn*  
 For na man herd his spell bot he, *no one; words*  
 And stones and fowhles on the tre. *birds*  
 A fayr mirakel maie men here se,  
 260 Of Godes awne faire priveté; *divine mystery*  
 For when he had saide what he walde, *wished*  
 The hard stones on him callde,  
 And all thir fowhles also,  
 Or ever thai wald ferrer go; *Before*  
 265 And said to him als thai ware menne: *as if*  
 “Blissid be thou that can so kenne — *teach*  
 Wele has thou prechid here saule hele, *soul's health*  
 For Goddes wordes will tow noght fele.” *you not conceal*  
 Here mai we se withouten faile,  
 270 That God was paied of his travaile;  
 So es he of all verraymente, *truly*  
 That prechis his worde with gode entente.  
 This mirakel have I tolde yow here,  
 To gerre thir lerid men lawde lere, *To cause these learned men to teach the laity*  
 275 For siker may thai be of medes,  
 That oft spekes of saule nedes.  
 Bot of all es thare no men,  
 So mikil halden the lawde to ken, *So greatly required to teach the laity*  
 Als parihse prestis er and persounes,  
 280 And vikars als with thaire brade crownes.  
 For all thaire livynge of the lawde thai take:<sup>1</sup>  
 Forthi thaim aght be warre for wrake. *wary of vengeance*  
 Thai take of thaim offirand and tende, *offerings and tithes*  
 And techis thaim noght fro the fende.  
 285 Thai gedir noght to Goddes horde  
 Sawles, with lare of Goddes worde.  
 Forthi, saise Criste in oure Gospell,  
 Als ye before hafe herd me tell:  
 “He that gadirs noght with me  
 290 His sawles mede skatirs he.” *reward wastes*  
 For man skatirs with wickidnes,  
 The gude of kynde that in him es. *human nature*  
 Yitt es a worde in oure Gospell,  
 That almos ware yow for to tell;  
 295 For when Criste had casten obak *charitable; would be back*

<sup>1</sup> For they receive their entire income from the laity

- The Jewes, that agayne him spak,  
 He saide to thaim, "When Sathanas  
 Oute of the combird mannes hert gase,  
 He gase be stedes unwattirye,  
 300 To seke him rest and findis all drye.  
 Forthi in thaim may he noght geste,  
 For in weete stede findes he moste reste;  
 That es to saye when Sathanase,  
 Oute of a synfull mannes hert gase,  
 305 He gase thir hali men to spye,  
 If thai be thorghe penaunce drie;  
 Or if thaire willis be watterye,  
 With wete of willis of liccherye.  
 And if he find thaim noght wate,  
 310 In thaim hase he than nane inlate.  
 Than saise the fende, "Agayne I go  
 Into the stede thare I come fro."  
 He comis and findis his chaumbir swepid,  
 Thare he and other gastis er kepid;  
 315 For with him bringes he sevene gastes  
 That mannes godenes gasteli wastis.  
 For all samen wone thai thare,  
 And mase that man werse than he was are.  
 Thare Criste spekis of swepynge,  
 320 Es for to saie gasteli clensinge,  
 For schrift clenses man of synne.  
 Bot if he eftsones fall tharein,  
 Than findis Sathan him tome and lendes  
 In him with other sevene fendes;  
 325 That es to saie with synnes all,  
 That his schrift gert fra him fall.  
 For man that schrives him of his synne,  
 And sithen falles eft tharein,  
 He is coupeabil of all that wyte,  
 330 Whareof his schrift made him qwite.  
 For when man schrives him of synne,  
 He makes a vowe his sake to blynne;  
 And bettir him ware no vowe to make,  
 Than eftir the vowe to fall in sake.  
 335 Forthi he that will him right schrive,  
 His schrift he hald with clene lyve,  
 For wers than he was es he elles,  
 Als Jhesu in oure Gospell tellis.  
 When Criste had saide this last sawe,  
 340 A wommane thare spak that folowid o rawe,  
 And saide full hye till him right thare:  
 "Blissid be the wombe that thee bare,
- wretched*  
*passes through waterless regions*  
*take his lodging*  
*wet places*  
*wet*  
*entrance*  
*place*  
*swept*  
*spirits*  
*Who destroy man's spiritual goodness*  
*together dwell*  
*make; previously*  
*again*  
*empty; enters*  
*deserving; punishment*  
*acquitted*  
*sin to cease*  
*it would be better*  
*[again] into sin*  
*[Let him] hold to his shrift*  
*behind*  
*quickly*

And the pappis that thou soukid, breasts  
 For all es in thi handis lowkid. enclosed  
 345 “Ya, and als,” than saide he,  
 “Blissid mote thai all be  
 That heres Goddes wordes in lede among the people  
 And fullfillis it in dede.”  
 This er the wordes of oure Gospell,  
 350 Als man with Yngliss tonge mai tell.  
 God gife us grace his worde to yeme, heed  
 So that we maie finde him qweme, agreeable  
 On Domesdaie when blast of beme, blast of trumpet  
 Sall ger us come whare he sall deme;  
 355 And that we may with him wende  
 Into the joye withouten ende. Amen.

[Homilies 21–24 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

## 25. EASTER MONDAY

*Feria ii. Evangelium secundum Lucam. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Ibant duo ex discipulis Jhesum.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Second Feast [of Easter]. The Gospel according to Luke. In that time*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 24:13–35): *And behold, two of them went, [the same day, to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus himself also drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held, that they should not know him. And he said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom he said: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; And how our chief priests and princes delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped, that it was he that should have redeemed Israel: and now besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who before it was light, were at the sepulchre, And not finding his body, came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it is so as the women had said, but him they found not. Then he said to them: O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures, the things that were concerning him. And they drew nigh to the town, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go farther. But they constrained him; saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the scriptures? And rising up, the same hour they went back to Jerusalem: and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them. Saying: The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to*

- Saynte Luk saise how dissiples two,  
 That with Jesu was wont to go, *were accustomed*  
 Yede als todaie the waie right, *Proceeded*  
 To a castell that Emaus hight;  
 5 Fyve myle or more of that contré,  
 Fra Jerusalem that hye cité.  
 And of Criste gon thai wordes warpe, *did they [with] words converse*  
 And of his ded sorowfull to carpe; *death; speak*  
 And als thai of Criste carpande yede,  
 10 He ovretoke thaim in palmare wede, *pilgrim's clothing*  
 And askid thaim what thai spak, and whie  
 That thai ware sorowfull and sarie.  
 Bot knowynge of him had thai nane, *recognition*  
 Forthi thus answerd him the tane *the one of them*  
 15 That Cleophas hight, and saide to him: *was called*  
 "Ertou in Jerusalem a pilgrim, *Are you*  
 And wote noght of tha plightfull plaies *know; terrible events*  
 That tharein es wroght in thir daies."  
 Than askid Jesus what thai ware,  
 20 And bothe answerd and saide with care: *sorrow*  
 "Swilk mornynge and dole, allase, *Such mourning; grief*  
 That es of Jhesu that prophete wase,  
 Before God in worde mightie,  
 In werk to folk in werld traystie;<sup>1</sup>  
 25 And how oure princes with the prestis rede, *priests' counsel*  
 Gert him on rode be done to dede. *Had; put to death*  
 We wend he suld oure folk have boght, *thought; redeemed*  
 And Israel of thraldome broght, *out of bondage*  
 And this daie es the thrid daie,  
 30 Sithen this was done, bot we herd saie *Since*  
 That he now lives, for wymen ware  
 Areli at his tounge and sawe thare *Early*  
 Ane aungele that saide he es livand;  
 And some of oures yode thider and fand,  
 35 Right als the wymen thare had saide:  
 Noght thai fand thare he was laide; *where*  
 And sone onane thai come agayne, *at once*  
 And thus er we a parti fayne; *partly glad*  
 For risen hope we that he be  
 40 Bot siker thareof yitt er noght we."  
 Than saide Criste, "A, foles unwise, *certain*  
 And late to trowe the propheciese. *slow*  
 Behoved noght Criste on rode to dye *Was it not necessary*

*Simon. And they told what things were done in the way; and how they knew him in the breaking of bread.]*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 23–24: *Mighty before God in his words, / Trustworthy to worldly folk in his deeds*

- And so into his blisse to stye?" *ascend*  
 45 Than he undid with wordes swete, *interpreted*  
 The sawes of Moyses the prophete;  
 And of other prophetes ma *sayings*  
 That saide the Jewes suld Criste sla.  
 And als he spak thus bi the waie,  
 50 Nere thaire innes neghid thaie. *lodging approached*  
 And Criste toke leve with worde hende, *gracious*  
 And saide, "Ferrer behoves me wende."  
 And thai him praied till thaire innes sone, *Farther must I*  
 And saide the daie was nere done. *invited*  
 55 Thai gert him to the sopere dwell,  
 Als saise Saynte Luke in oure Gospell.  
 Criste satte with thaim at the supere,  
 And blissid thaire mete on fayre manere,  
 And brak thaire brede, and in the brekinge  
 60 Had thai of him full graithe knowynge. *immediate recognition*  
 And of that sight full fayne ware thaie,  
 Bot of thaire sight he went his waie. *But out of*  
 When Criste was thusgate went thaim fra  
 Thai spak and saide betwene thaim twa:  
 65 "Ne was oure hertes brinnande hate *burning*  
 Whiles he spake with us in the gate? *on the way*  
 And undid us wordes wyse  
 Of Hali Writte and prophecise?"  
 Apon the morn areli als daie  
 70 To Jerusalem than tornid thaie,  
 And fand thare when thai come thidir,  
 Ellevene of the apostlis togidir;  
 And thai thaim talde that Criste risen wasse,<sup>1</sup>  
 And schewid to Symon sythen he rase. *revealed; after; rose*  
 75 This Symon of wham I mene, *speak*  
 Was Sainte Petire als I wene: *believe*  
 For first was he Symon callde,  
 And sithen Petir als Criste walde; *afterward; wished*  
 For Petir on Ynglihsse stane es saide,  
 80 In the grounde of wall to be laide;<sup>2</sup>  
 For Criste him sette grounde wall to be, *established foundation*  
 In Hali Kirk, als writin finde we.  
 Bot noghtforthi als I you talde, *nevertheless*  
 Saynte Petir was Saynte Symon callde.  
 85 That ylke man forsothe hight Lucas,  
 That sawe Jhesu Criste with Cleophas;

<sup>1</sup> And they [the eleven apostles] told them [the two others] that Christ was risen

<sup>2</sup> Lines 79–80: For Peter means in English a stone, / To be laid in the foundations of the wall



- And talde with him how thai Criste kende,  
 When Criste brak brede with his hende.  
 This es the strenghe of oure Gospell.  
 90 Als man with Ynglihsse tonge mai tell.
- This spell es bothe sermoune and tale,  
 And lange withall, forthi I sale  
 Leeve it all bot the last worde,  
 That es whi Criste brak brede on borde.  
 95 And in that brekinge knawen wasse,  
 With Lucas and with Cleophas.  
 Thir twa betaknes all men bowsome,  
 To gasteli mete gladli to come;  
 That es to saie to Goddis worde,  
 100 That prechurs bringes of Goddes horde.  
 For Goddes worde es brede gastelie,  
 Als Criste saise us aperteli:  
 For right als brede the bodi fedis,  
 And makes it stithe in werlde dedes,  
 105 Right so fedes Goddes worde the gaste,  
 And it in trouthe mase full stedefaste.  
 And Criste before us brekes it,  
 When he unduse us Hali Writte,  
 And brekes it small to us to schewe,  
 110 Bothe the Alde Lawe and the Newe.  
 For when we se wele what thai mene,  
 Than es Criste gasteli of us sene.  
 Bot Crist of that man sight sone witis,  
 That him in prechinge noght delitis;  
 115 For mani foles heres sermoune,  
 Withouten ani devocioune;  
 And som man comes to the sermoune,  
 That ware bettir be in the toune,  
 For to do thaire other thinges,  
 120 For in his hert na likinge springes,  
 To here of thinge that lastis aie,  
 Bot thinkes all on othir plaie.  
 On werldes welthe som men thinkes so mikil,  
 That fals and fayleand es, and fikile,  
 125 That prechinge savours thaim right noght,  
 So es thair hertes on other thinges broght.  
 And som men comes thidir full yare,  
 All anerli for to be sene thare,  
 For to be halden in felde and toune,  
 130 Man of grete devocioune;  
 Bot of the prechinge lital he kepis,  
 For att the prechinge he routis and slepes.
- recognized  
hands*
- long, moreover, [and] therefore  
omit*
- By  
willing  
spiritual nourishment*
- bring forth from God's treasure*
- openly*
- strong*
- makes [us]*
- expounds*
- But Christ soon withers the sight of that man  
Who*
- would be better off*
- desire  
perpetually  
pleasure*
- failing  
has no savor for them*
- readily  
solely  
regarded  
[As a]*
- snORES*

	Att Goddes worde he es slepeande, And att the taverne all wakande;	
135	And atte lykehouse for to plaie, Thare will he wake to it be daie. Bot when he comes sermoune to here, He es so hevy and so swere, That he may noght his heved hald uppe,	<i>tomb</i> <i>remain awake</i> <i>slothful</i> <i>head</i>
140	Bot bringes it in the fendes cuppe; For Sathanase gase than aboute To ger men drink his cuppe alloute. His cuppe forworthinnes call I, That geres men slepe and be hevy,	<i>make; completely</i> <i>sloth</i> <i>indolent</i>
145	When that thai Goddes worde suld here: Oure Lorde us schelde fra his pycchere! Herebi ligges a litil tale, How the fende geres men drink dwale, And geres thaim slepe for dronkennes,	<i>pitcher</i> <i>lies</i> <i>error</i>
150	And helde unto forworthinnes.	<i>cleave to</i>
	A hali man at preching gon site And thocht the preching ferli swete, And als he lokid him besyde, The fende sawe he bi him glyde,	<i>did sit</i> <i>wondrous</i>
155	With a picchere in his hande, And yede aboute with cuppe birland. And ilk man that his cuppe kepid And drank therof, full swith he slepid. Thus duse the fende for to lette	<i>offering</i> <i>every; took</i> <i>quickly</i> <i>hinder</i>
160	The folk that er at preching sette, To here that es spoken thare; For he wote wele that gastli lare Geres thaim leewe his wickid trace, And fro him torne and go to grace.	<i>spiritual instruction</i> <i>path</i>
165	For he that Goddis worde techis, The sinfull man tharewith he lechis; How he sall leve the fendes servyse, And sare he geres the fende than gryse. Forthi the fende fondes to spere	<i>heals</i> <i>makes; fear</i> <i>attempts to close</i>
170	With slepe the sinfull mannes here, That he ne maie here his saule hele, Thus fast he fondes mannes saule to stele. Oure Lorde us schelde fra his steling, And to the blisse of hevne us bringe. Amen.	<i>ear</i> <i>protect; theft</i>

[Homilies 26–31 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

## 32. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

*Dominica infra octavam Assencione. In illo tempore dixit Jhesus suis discipulis, secundum Johannem.*<sup>1</sup>

*Cum venerit paraclitus quem ego mittam vobis etc.*<sup>2</sup>

	Unto his dissipils saide Criste, Als saise Saynte Johan the Evangeliste: “When the Gaste es commen that I sal sende	<i>Holy Spirit</i>
	Fro mi Fadir youre mode to mende,	<i>grief</i>
5	That es the Gaste of rightwisnes, Of me sall he bere wittnes; And wittnes sall ye of me bere For fro the begynnyng with me ye ere.”	<i>righteousness</i>
	He callis his forluke the begynnyng	<i>foresight</i>
10	Wharein he aghtild all thinge; For than the apostlis aghtild he To folow him and wittnes be; And for he wist before that thai	<i>destined</i>
	Suld thole for him bothe tene and traie	<i>knew</i>
	And werldes wandrethe and uppebraide	<i>suffer; harm and suffering</i>
15	Forthi he warnid thaim thus and saide: “This saye I now that ye ne be Schamid for the lufe of me; For tyme sall come that all thase	<i>miserly; scorn</i>
	That in the spyte of me yow slase Sall wene to serve on all wyse God, and paye him wth swilk servyse.” <sup>3</sup>	<i>those</i>
20	This schendinge sall thai in yow schawe, For nouthur mi Fadir ne me thai knawe.	<i>for hatred; kill</i>
	Of this wa I warne yow now, To ger you mene and on me trow	<i>harm; do to you</i>
25	That I you warnid of all this, When thair tyme comes to do yow misse.”	<i>neither</i>
	Thir er the wordes of oure Gospell,	<i>make you remember; trust</i>
30	Als man with Ynglihsse tonge mai tell.	<i>injury</i> <i>These are</i>

<sup>1</sup> *The Sunday within the octave of the Ascension. In that time Jesus said to his disciples, according to John*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (John 15:26–27; 16:1–4): *But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you [from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you; because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.]*

<sup>3</sup> Lines 21–22: *Will think that they are serving God in this way, / and satisfying him with such service.*

- Gode gasteli lare als think me,  
 Maye we in this Gospell se,  
 Thare Criste gladdes his felawes,  
 And the come of the Hali Gaste thaim schawes;  
 35 And warnes thaim of thaire harde thrawes,  
 That thai suld suffir for his lawes.  
 He schewid thaim thare bothe wele and wo,  
 And till all gode men duse he so;  
 For werldes welthe aie mengid es  
 40 With wandrethe and with bittirnes;  
 For es none Empoure ne no kinge,  
 That he ne es whylome in murnynge —  
 For when he thinkis of his endinge,  
 The drede of dede slakis his likinge.  
*spiritual teaching; I think*  
*Where; makes glad*  
*coming*  
*suffering*  
*he does likewise*  
*is always mingled*  
*disappointment*  
*[there] is no emperor*  
*at times; mourning*  
*death diminishes; pleasure*
- 45 Als I finde writen of a kinge,  
 That never wald laghe for no gladdinge.  
 He had a brothir that had ferlye,  
 And askid him wharefore and whi,  
 He was aie sorowfull and sarie,  
 50 And noght might ger him luke gladli.  
 The kinge saide that he suld him saye  
 His answer on the tother daie.  
 Than in his lande was a custome,  
 That when a man suld have his dome,  
 55 Before his dure men suld stand,  
 Agaynes his dede fast blawand.  
 And tharebi suld he witte right sone  
 That to schames dede suld he be done.  
 Apou the morne the kinge gert blawe  
 60 With trompors a full lange thrawe.  
 Before his brothir maners gate.  
 And than his brothir began to grate,  
 For he wende have bene slayne in hye,  
 And he ne wist wharefore ne whye.  
 65 The kinge come to behald his chere,  
 And spake to him on this manere:  
 “Brothir,” he saide, “What ayles thee?  
 Thou ert unblithe als think me.  
 Thou was wonte be glad of chere —  
 70 Whi gretis thou now on this manere?”  
 His brothir answerd and saide than:  
 “Me burd wele be a sarye man,  
 For takenynge of my dede I here  
 Of thir trompors that standes me nere.  
 75 How maye I, lorde, blithe be  
 When I my dede before me se?”  
*laugh; pleasure*  
*was amazed*  
*look cheerful*  
*next*  
*was to have his judgment*  
*In front of his door*  
*Blowing [a trumpet] to announce his death*  
*know immediately*  
*shameful death; put*  
*time*  
*Before the entrance of his brother's manor*  
*cry*  
*expected to be killed immediately*  
*countenance*  
*I ought*  
*a sign; death*

- |     |   |                                      |
|-----|---|--------------------------------------|
|     | Than spak the kinge and to him saide:   |                                      |
|     | “So es mi dede before me laide;         | <i>Because; know</i>                 |
|     | For dede I wote wele sall me take;      | <i>Therefore</i>                     |
| 80  | Forthi may I no gude chere make.        | <i>you should think it no marvel</i> |
|     | Forthi thar thee think no ferlie,       | <i>Although; often</i>               |
|     | Thof thou me se oftsithis sorye.        |                                      |
|     | Yisterdaie thou askid me whi            |                                      |
|     | I was aye murnand and drerye,           |                                      |
| 85  | And whi I aie swilk sembland made,      | <i>appearance</i>                    |
|     | That nonekin joye might my hert glade.  | <i>no kind of</i>                    |
|     | Now hase thou herd resoun whi —         |                                      |
|     | And lyfe ande lymes thee give I.”       |                                      |
|     | This litil tale I have you talde,       |                                      |
| 90  | To ger yow in youre hertes halde,       |                                      |
|     | That werldes welthe ay mengid es        | <i>always is mingled</i>             |
|     | With mornynge and with drerines,        |                                      |
|     | When a man thinkes how sone he sall     |                                      |
|     | Passe hethen fro his welthis all.       | <i>hence</i>                         |
| 95  | Forthi schewid Criste all bothe sammene | <i>together</i>                      |
|     | To his dissiples murnynge and gamene    | <i>joy</i>                           |
|     | In oure Gospell als I saide are;        | <i>before</i>                        |
|     | For gladdinge schewid he thaim thare,   | <i>rejoicing</i>                     |
|     | Thare he the Hali Gaste thaim hight     | <i>promised</i>                      |
| 100 | To comforte thaim in gasteli fight;     | <i>spiritual struggle</i>            |
|     | And murnynge als thaim schewid he,      | <i>also</i>                          |
|     | Thare he saide thai suld pyned be       | <i>tortured</i>                      |
|     | For his sake, and sithen be slayne —    | <i>then</i>                          |
|     | In this worde made he thaim unfayne.    | <i>With this word; unhappy</i>       |
| 105 | For kyndeli the dede men dredes,        | <i>by nature</i>                     |
|     | Be thai never so sikir of medes;        | <i>sure; reward</i>                  |
|     | For Criste was dredand dede to dreye,   | <i>fearful; suffer</i>               |
|     | When he for us on rode suld dye.        |                                      |
|     | Forthi the Hali Gaste gon he sende      |                                      |
| 110 | To his dissiples thaire chere to mende, | <i>spirits; amend</i>                |
|     | And ger thaim of him wittnes bere,      |                                      |
|     | And to be stythe in wandrethe and were. | <i>steadfast</i>                     |
|     | This es the gaste of rightwisnes        |                                      |
|     | That geres us of Criste bere wittnes    |                                      |
| 115 | When we before him thole werldes waas,  |                                      |
|     | And prayes that he amende oure faas.    | <i>correct</i>                       |
|     | If the Hali Gaste give us that grase,   |                                      |
|     | It geres us folowe Cristis trase;       | <i>path</i>                          |
|     | For he prayed for thaim on rode         |                                      |
| 120 | That him slewe and sched his blode.     |                                      |
|     | Lorde, sende us thi Hali Gaste,         |                                      |
|     | And make us in thi trouthe so stedfast, |                                      |
|     | That we drede noght wo ne wandrethe,    |                                      |

125      Bot give us tholemodenes and methe.      *patience and self-control*  
          And bringe us to thi blisseful belde      *happiness*  
          That tholemode men with thee sall welde.      *patient; possess*

### 33. PENTECOST

*In die pentecostes secundum Johannem. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Si quis diligit me sermonem meum et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

         This daie Wittsondaie es calde,  
          For witte and wisdom sevenefalde  
          Was given to the apoostils als todaie;  
          For wyse in all ledes ware thaie      *languages*  
 5      Thai spak withouten mannes lare      *human instruction*  
          Alkin langage in lande that ware.  
          Thai spak Latine, Franche, and Grewe,      *Greek*  
          Sarzenay, Danhsse, and Ebrewe,      *Saracen, Danish; Hebrew*  
          Inglihsse, Walhsse, and Pikardie,      *Welsh; Picard*  
 10      Gascoyne, Toskayne, and Lombardie.      *Gascon, Roman; Lombard*  
          And of all othir ware thai wise      *knowledgeable*  
          To lere the folk Goddes servyse.      *teach*  
          Withouten mannes lare thai prechid  
          Als the Hali Gaste thaim techid.  
 15      This Hali Gaste of waym I mene,      *whom*  
          Fell on the apostles all bedene      *together*  
          In liknes of tonges glowand,  
          For clene of synne it thaim all fand.      *without sin*  
          For thare synne es, may it noght be,<sup>3</sup>  
 20      And forthi rede I wele that we      *advise*  
          With schrift of mouthe clene us make      *confession*  
          If we this Hali Gaste will take;

<sup>1</sup> *The day of Pentecost according to John. In that time*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (John 14:23–31): *Jesus answered, and said to him: If any one love me, he will keep my word, [and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard, is not mine; but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not any thing. But that the world may know, that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I: Arise, let us go hence.]*

<sup>3</sup> *For where sin is, there it [the Holy Spirit] may not be*

- And if we clense us wele with schriftis  
 This Gaste will give us sevene giftis.  
 25 The first gift es wisdom callid  
 That kennes man him fra synne to halde.  
 The tother es callid undirstandinge  
 That gives us of right knowynge.  
 The thride gift es callid counsaile, *judgment*  
 30 That geres us have skylle in travayle *work*  
 The ferde gift es callid strenghe *fortitude*  
 That gives us in gode lastand lenghe. *good [deeds]; persistence*  
 The fift gift es conandschipe *knowledge*  
 To hald us fro ylle feleschipe, *evil*  
 35 That geres oft full gude men *makes*  
 Fouleli fall in gasteli fenne *spiritual ditch*  
 The sext gift es reuthe of hert, *compassion*  
 That geres with almhouse lethe poverté. *alleviate*  
 The sevente gift es Goddes doute *fear of God*  
 40 That stekes pride of hert oute. *banishes*  
 And geres man think how he sall drede  
 When he bese demed eftir his deede. *is judged according to*  
 The sevente gift als geres man be *also*  
 Thinkand on the charité  
 45 That Jhesu Criste schewid us when he  
 Dyed for us apon the rode tre. *cross*  
 Wele aght us to have lufe him till  
 That for oure lufe his blude walde spill, *was willing*  
 And his comaundmente fullfill  
 50 That swelt for us at his gude will; *died; free will*  
 For right lufe we have him till  
 When we his wordes with dede fullfill,  
 Als he himselfe todaie us schawes  
 In oure Gospell with semeli sawes. *appropriate words*  
 55 For Criste saise, "Whoso lufis me  
 That I bid, yeme sall he, *That [which] I command; take heed to*  
 And mi Fadir sall lufe him rathe *at once*  
 And with him sall we wone bathe.  
 And he that haves no lufe to me  
 60 To my Worde na yeme takes he; *heed*  
 And this worde that I speke to yow,  
 That ye herd before or now,  
 Es nocht myne bot his that me gon sende  
 (That es mi Fadir that all maye mende). *who may amend everything*  
 65 This saye I yow, with yow wonande, *while I am dwelling with you*  
 Bot mi Fadir sall sende yow sande *a gift*  
 That es the Hali Gaste that sall  
 Make yow wise of mi Wordes all;  
 In mi name sal mi Fadir it send,

70	And in yow sall his wisdom lende. I leve," he saide, "Mi pees yow withe; Mi pees I give you and mi grithe. I give you noght als this werld gives, Als so saye, thai that in werld lives	<i> dwell leave peace those who</i>
75	May noght find in this werld pees Lange lastinge, ne stedfastnes. For when a man wenes best to be In pees, in maste wandreth es he. Bot my pese so siker man mase	<i> thinks most wretchedness certain; makes</i>
80	That he ne dredes sight of faase. Forthi," he saise, "ne doute you noght, Ne be noght flicchand of youre thocht. Ye herd me saye what ye suld do; I go and comes agayne yow to."	<i> enemies fear wavering will come</i>
85	For fro thaim yede he first bodeli, And to thaim come he gasteli When he and his Fadir in haste Sent to thaim the Hali Gaste; And for the Hali Gaste and Criste	<i> spiritually because</i>
90	Es with the Fadir in a bewiste, Forthi es thaire dede anefalde, And in this trouthe sall we be balde For that ane duse duse all thre, Als anefalde God in Trinité	<i> one dwelling onefold confident what one does</i>
95	And for Criste spekes here in manhede That es wele lesse than his Godehede. Forthi he said, "If ye lufe me, Forsothe full blithe aght you to be That I go to mi Fadir in hye	<i> because; [his] human nature Divinity</i>
100	For my Fadir es more than I; Als so saie, so es my Godhede Mikel more than my manhede. This saye I yow, or it done be That ye it trowe when ye it se.	<i> greater As if to say before believe</i>
105	I speke," he saide, "with you noght mikil, For the prince of this world es fals and fikil That comes to fande me and to spye, And findes in me nanekin folye; Bot that this werld witte wele that I	<i> much tempt no know</i>
110	Lufis God, mi Fadir, inwardelye, And right als he bad, so I do To schewe the lufe I have him to." The wordes er talde of this Gospell, And some undoyng aie ymell.	<i> sincerely commanded explication; mixed</i>



- 115 In this gossell may we se  
That us behoves bowsome be *obedient*  
To Cristis wordes and his biddinge  
And it fullfill in all thinge.  
For first saise Criste, "Whoso lufis me  
120 Mi worde forsothe yeme sall he."  
And sithen acordes he thareto *heed*  
And sais, "Als mi Fadir biddis, I do." *conforms*  
Criste schewid in this worde that we  
Awe to oure ourmen bowsom be *Ought; superiors*  
125 Als he to his Fadir was  
When he dyed for oure trespasse. *sin*  
Forthi to his apostles saide he  
"Whosoever heris yow, heris me;  
And he that youre biddinges forsakes  
130 Agayne me sothlie he missetakes."  
Forthi if ye will folowe his trase *does wrong*  
And be uppe halden with his grase *path*  
Right als bowsome behoves us be *held by*  
Als he was for to dye on tre, *we ought*  
135 Thare he fullfillid his Fadir will *cross*  
And us it taght for to fullfill.  
Forthi in this Gossell saise he,  
"I do als mi Fadir bad me;  
And als ye lufe youre saule prowē,  
140 Duse that youre prelates biddes you. *well-being*  
If thai you bid do othir than right *religious superiors*  
Thai bere thaimself all the plight. *guilt*  
Forthi to thaim be we bowsome,  
For so to hevene may we best come.  
145 For bowsomnes es in oure spell *Because obedience; Gospel*  
A tale thareof I will you tell:
- Ane ermite woned in wildirnes  
That provid his dissipil bowsomnes. *tested*  
He bad him putte a drye tre *dead*  
150 In the erde, and so did he. *earth*  
He bad him watir it to ger it springe, *grow*  
And floure and fruyte forthe to bringe. *flower*  
This gude dissipile saide noght naie  
Bot wattrid it everilk a daie. *every single*  
155 Full ferre the watir focchid he, *fetched*  
And wattrid it yeres thre.  
When he had wattrid it thus lange  
God than lessid his travaile strange. *lessened*  
He gert this drye tre apples bere,  
160 In the werld was nane fayrere

	This mirakil walde his maystir kythe	<i>wished; to make known</i>
	And he broght of tho appils swithe	<i>[some] of; quickly</i>
	Into ane abbaie that was thare nere,	
	And schewid thare monkes on what manere	
165	A drye tre bare apples grete,	
	And bad thai suld of that fruyte ete,	
	“That obediens gerte springe	
	Of my dissipile obeyinge.	<i>Because of</i>
	Take ye ensaumpil of this dede	
170	And with bowsomnes gete hevene mede.”	
	Be this ilk tale may we wele se	
	That gude es bousome for to be.	
	Bot mannes hert es kyndeli,	<i>human</i>
	In all dedes self willie;	<i>self-willed</i>
175	For Adam synne made man redye	
	To helde fro wisdom to folye	<i>turn away</i>
	And to Goddes biddinge to be unbayne,	<i>disobedient</i>
	Tharefore was his ospringe slayne.	<i>offspring</i>
	Forthi to hevene if we will come,	
180	Thare he to God was unbousome,	<i>Where; disobedient</i>
	Us behoves leve his manere	<i>not to follow</i>
	And aye be bowsome with gude chere.	
	This forsothe may we noght do	
	Bot if God give us grace thareto:	<i>Unless</i>
185	The gift of grase a sande is	<i>gift</i>
	Of the Hali Gaste, iwise,	
	That gave the apostlis als todaie	<i>on this day</i>
	In preching all gude to saie.	
	Praie we forthi the Hali Gaste	
190	That he oure flehssli willis waste,	<i>destroy</i>
	And give us grace to be bowsome,	
	That we to hevene to him maye come. Amen.	

**[Homilies 34–45 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]**

## 46. ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

*Dominica undecima secundum Lucam. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Dixit Jhesu Criste ad quosdam qui. Duo homines ascendebant.*<sup>2</sup>

	He es begabbid laithelie,	<i>deluded dreadfully</i>
	That lates of other men hetheli,	<i>scorns other men</i>
	And wenes that he have swilk grace,	<i>believes; such</i>
	That none to him may be pigase;	<i>equal</i>
5	For to chasti wele swilk men,	<i>chastise</i>
	Criste with ensawmpil will us ken,	<i>teach</i>
	In oure Gospell of todaie;	
	I rede ye bere it wele awaie,	<i>advise; keep it in mind</i>
	And drawe oure hertes to mekenes,	
10	That es rute of all gudenens.	
	Pride and no meknes tho men schawes,	<i>those</i>
	That lates hetheli of thaire felawes,	
	Als in oure Gospell of todaie,	
	I rede ye here what I sall saie.	
15	Two men into the tempil yede,	
	To praie God for thaire missedede:	
	The to man was a Pharisene,	<i>The one man</i>
	The tother war a a publiene.	<i>publican</i>
	The Pharisene made his prayere	
20	To God of hevene on this manere:	
	“I thank thee, Lorde of Hevenerike,	<i>the Heavenly Kingdom</i>
	That I am noght other like,	
	That lives in synne and robbrye	
	In covetise and liccherye.	<i>covetousness</i>
25	Of swilk men,” he saide, “I mene	
	Als es this synfull publyene.	
	I fast two daies in a sevene night,	<i>week</i>
	I give mi tendes leelly and right.”	<i>tithes loyally</i>
	This publicane stude fer on dreye,	<i>far off</i>
30	And prayede mekeli withouten crye,	
	And saide, “Of me, God, have mercye,	
	For I am synfull and sarie.”	

<sup>1</sup> *Eleventh Sunday [after Trinity] according to Luke. In that time*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 18:9–14): *And to some who [trusted in themselves as just, and despised others,] Jesus spoke also this parable. Two men went up [into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week: I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.]*

- He durst noght lift his eye to hevene,  
 Ne Goddes name with tonge wele nevene, *name*  
 35 Bot stude and praied God mekeli,  
 And knockid his breste and askid mercie.  
 Forthi, saide Criste in that stede,  
 God herd his prayere and his bede *prayer; supplication*  
 Wele bettir than this Pharisene,  
 40 And rusid him with wordis kene. *praised*  
 For he that makis himself to hye, *Because; too high*  
 With thocht or worde or sight or eye,  
 And latis hetheli of his felawe, *scorns*  
 Forsothe he sall be made so lawe, *low*  
 45 That all may him to hethinge drive: *scorn*  
 For pride will thole no man to thrive. *suffer*  
 This er the wordes of oure Gospell.  
 Als man in Ynglihsse tonge may tell.
- This Pharisene, als saise Sainte Bede,  
 50 Betaknes man that duse gude dede, *Signifies*  
 And castes oute all that he dus; *nullifies*  
 With his pride and with his ruse, *boasting*  
 He mase him bettir than he es, *makes himself*  
 For in his hert es na mekenes,  
 55 Forthi in prayere may he noght spede, *succeed*  
 For proude wordes getes no mede;  
 Forthi thir halimen I rede, *these; counsel*  
 That thai in mekenes thaire life lede,  
 And wene noght that thaimself er slike, *such*  
 60 That nane other may be thaim like,  
 Als did ane ermete in alde sithe, *olden times*  
 That I will tell and ye will lithe. *listen*
- In Yngelande be alde dawes,  
 Was sevene kinges als gestis us schawes; *poems*  
 65 Att Bawmborghe in Northe Humberland,  
 Was one of tho kinges wonande *dwelling*  
 That hight Oswald that saynte es now,  
 Als all Hali Kirk and we trowe. *believe*  
 In his land bi a watir than, *stream*  
 70 Woned ane hermite that hight Godeman. *was named Godeman*  
 When he had dwellt thare thritti yere,  
 Him thocht that naman was his pere *no one; equal*  
 In halye life, and forthi,  
 Was he somewhat in herte jolye *pleased*  
 75 And thankid Criste that he was slike, *such*  
 That nane in lande might be him like.  
 Bot als he him thus hali held,

- On this maner his pride God felld:  
 He satte a daie be the watir brymme,  
 80 And sawe tharein twa fihssis swim.  
 The more fondid the lesse to gete,  
*bigger one; tried; smaller*  
 And folowid gapand it to ete;  
 And thare schewid God ferli rathe,  
*a miracle quickly*  
 For thir fihsses spak bathe.  
 85 The lesse saide unto the mare:  
 "I praye thee that thou will me spare,  
 For this hali ermite lufe,  
*love of this holy hermit*  
 That sittes on the bank here above."  
 The more answerd and saide full yare:  
*readily*  
 90 "For his lufe will I noght thee spare,  
 Bot to mi mete will I thee take."  
*food*  
 And than eftsones the lesse spake,  
*at once*  
 And saide to the tother, "I praye thee  
 For Oswalde kinge lufe, spare thou me."  
 96 And at that worde he left him qwite —  
*free*  
 And ferli thoght the hali ermite,  
 How kinge in welthe might bettir be,  
 Or of halier life than he.  
 And to Bawmborghe he than him plette,  
*Bamburgh; hurried*  
 100 And with kinge Oswald sone he mette;  
 And when the kinge saw this ermite,  
*he alighted quickly*  
 Doune of his palfraie light he tyte,  
*embraced; eagerly*  
 And haylsid him sone and yare,  
*blessing*  
 And askid him his benisoune thare;  
 105 And att him spired he what he walde,  
*inquired; wanted*  
 And privelie the ermete talde,  
*privately*  
 What he of this fihssis herd,  
 And spirid how it of his life ferd.  
 The kinge nitid his halines,  
*denied*  
 110 And saide, "In me es no godenes;  
 I lede my life in jolyté,  
 With thir knightis als thou mai se.  
 I live in werldes welthe and wyne  
*joy*  
 And in me es nathing bot synne."  
 115 This ermite saide, "That maie noght be  
 Bot for his lufe that died on tre  
*cross*  
 Lat me of thi hali life witte  
*learn*  
 That I mai take ensaumpil of it."  
 Oswald gave him a gold ringe  
 120 And saide, "To the quene bere this in takeninge  
 And bid hir do right so with thee  
 Als scho es wont to do with me."  
 The ermite come to the qwene and talde  
 His erande, and faire scho him callde,  
*greeted*

- 125 And in kinges wede sone was he cledde, *garments; clothed*  
 And into hall the qwene him ledde.  
 Knightis and squiers aboute him droghe, *drew*  
 Ladies and maydens fayre ynoghe.  
 He wehsse and was sette on hye dees, *washed; dais*  
 130 Whare he wende wele bene made atees. *at ease*  
 Plenté was broght of brede and wyne,  
 And riche meesis of the kicchine. *dishes*  
 He walde of mete and drink have taste, *wished*  
 Bot it to the almis was borne in haste. *as alms was taken away*  
 135 This ermite satte and was full wa,  
 That his mete was borne him fra.  
 The qwene sperid at him tithandes, *asked him for news*  
 Bot mete come thare none in his handes;  
 And thus with talkinge scho held him aie, *kept him occupied*  
 140 Till all was broght and borne awaie.  
 Bot attelast to the borde was broght *table*  
 A lofe that paied the ermite noght: *pleased*  
 Of roghe barli and yitt full small, *rough barley*  
 With awnes and clettis baken withall.<sup>1</sup>  
 145 Bot it was corven cortaiselie, *sliced*  
 And well watir sette tharebye.  
 And the qwene bad him ete gladlie,  
 And he satte still, evil paied forthi, *poorly pleased*  
 That he ne had eten or he come thare, *For not having eaten before he came there*  
 150 Sithen he thare might gete na mare. *Since*  
 At evene he was to chaumbir ledde, *night*  
 And broght with the qwene in bedde.  
 The qwene began him to hals and kisse,  
 And held him wakand mawgré hisse. *embrace*  
 155 This wafull ermite that was hongrie,  
 Felid the hete of hir bodie,  
 And made buskinge to lepe oloft, *made haste to leap up*  
 For he felid hir wombe soft.  
 Eftir helpe hoscid the qwene *called*  
 160 And thare come redi, als I wene.  
 Of bed than was he fouly drawene,  
 And in a fatte of watir thrawene. *Out of; thrust*  
 Lange was he halden in that watire, *tub; thrown*  
 Till all his tethe began to chatire.  
 165 Than was he taken and laide agayne  
 With the qwene, and scho was bayne *ready*  
 Him for to kisse, and make redie *incite*  
 His flehsse to lust of liccherie.

<sup>1</sup> Baked together with the beard from the grain and with burdock

- And sone in haste his flehsse rase, *arose*  
 170 And walde fayne have plaid in the plase —  
 All ye wote wele what I mene.  
 And eftsones hoscid the qwene, *called out*  
 And of bed was this ermite tane *taken*  
 And dippid eft in flom Jordane, *river Jordan*  
 175 And halden thare to he was calde,  
 That all he trembild, be ye balde. *you may be sure*  
 Yit bi the qwene eft was he laide:  
 “Allas, allas,” this ermite saide,  
 For him had lever at hame have bene, *would rather have been at home*  
 180 Than ligge in bed thare with the qwene.  
 For on that o nyght was he thrise *three times*  
 Servid with the kinge servise. *Treated in the same manner as the king*  
 Lust and likinge sare him lathid, *lechery; he despised*  
 For thrise that o night was he bathid.  
 185 The thrid tyme was he lappid in haire, *wrapped in haircloth*  
 And spredde ovre with coverletis faire.  
 Apon the morne the qwene him callde,  
 And askid him if he eft walde  
 Be gestind als he was that night; *entertained*  
 190 And he saide, “Naie, be Goddes might,  
 Bot haylewaite of thi gestinnge! *thank you for your hospitality*  
 For lange ynoghe have I bene kinge!”  
 Than the qwene saide, “Now hase thou sene  
 The kinges life all bedene. *entirely*  
 195 I trowe that thou lives more at aise,  
 Than mi lorde duse in his palaise.  
 Thus lange hase he mi lorde bene,  
 And yitt er we bothe maydens clene.  
 If thou have nede of ani thinge,  
 200 Come to me and to the kinge;  
 For bletheli we will thee give, *gladly*  
 Bothe mete and clothis whiles we may live.”  
 He thankid hir and yode his gate, *went his way*  
 And was full fayne he gatte the gate. *found the gate*  
 205 Be this ensaumpil may we se,  
 That no man aght to wene that he  
 Ware bettir and more halie,  
 Than an other fer or nye. *does wrong*  
 For he that so duse, duse amisse,  
 210 With privé pride begabbid he is. *deluded*
- For thrinnefalde pride, als saise Sainte Bede, *threefold*  
 Es schewid in trouthe in worde and dede.  
 The first pride es fals wenyng, *imagining*  
 That geres men wene that all thinge

- 215 Comes of his awne doghtines *strength*  
 (That right noght in himselven es), *nothing in themselves*  
 And noght of God that all thinge gives,  
 Wharewith bothe man and beste lives. *animal*  
 Thus Lucifer fro heven fell,
- 220 Thorghe swilk fals weninge into hell,  
 For he wende that all his fairnes,  
 Had commen of his awne doghtines, *strength*  
 And noght of God that him makid,  
 And forthi his pride God slakid, *diminished*
- 225 And made him Devil in hell full lawe,  
 For walde he noght himselvene knawe.  
 Forsothe whosoever wenes so,  
 To hell begin thai for to go:  
 For of oureself have we no winne,
- 230 Bot filthe and wafulté of synne, *joy*  
 Of his grace comes all oure gode, *misery*  
 That boght us apon the rode. *redeemed*  
 The tother pride es wickid langinge, *The second type of pride*  
 That geres a man have likinge, *makes a man wish*
- 235 To bere sembleand for doghti thewe, *To have the appearance of good habits*  
 All thof he be ane ebbir schrewe; *utter fool*  
 And mase him wyser than other men *makes himself out to be*  
 That can him wisdom lere and ken. *Who can teach and show him wisdom*  
 He wald be halden bettir man,
- 240 Than another that more gude can, *virtue knows*  
 To ger men wene that he es wise, *think*  
 With countenaunse of mikil prise. *great worth*  
 The thrid pride es ogert ruse, *arrogant boasting*  
 That man makes of that he duse,
- 245 Als did the proude Pharisene,  
 Wham in oure Gospell I gon mene. *pointed out*  
 In oure Gospell God us settis  
 Ensaumpil of pride that thrift lettise; *prudence hinders*  
 Bot bi the seli publiene, *blessed*
- 250 Meke men oure Gospell will mene, *The Gospel means to signify meek men*  
 That hase no pride of thaire dede,  
 Als saise the gude clerk, Saynte Bede.  
 Full litile of thaimselve thai give, *They give very little credit to themselves*  
 And mikil of God of wham thai live. *through whom*
- 255 Saynte Austine spekes of mekenes,  
 And tellis graytheli what it es: *readily*  
 He saise it is a willfull heldinge *bending*  
 Of mannes thoght, and behaldinge *reflection*  
 Of his sekenes and his unmight, *Upon*
- 260 That geres man oft leve syn and plight. *abandon; evil doing*  
 For when a man umthinkis him right, *considers*



- That he es bot a wricchid wight, *creature*  
 That of himself hase he no wynne, *joy*  
 Bot full of filthe and wafull synne,  
 265 Than gretis he for his synnes sakes, *weeps*  
 And of himselvene litil makes;  
 And mikil on God that hase him wroght,  
 And on the rodetre dere him boght. *cross dearly*  
 For he seis wele he may noght live,  
 270 Bot if oure Lorde grace him give.  
 He thinkis how he was geten in synne, *begotten*  
 And borne to bale that will noght blynne, *misery; cease*  
 In this life full of wandrethe, *wretchedness*  
 Of payne, of barette, and of lethe. *strife; misfortune*  
 275 Yitt he thinks that he sall dye,  
 And strenge pyne and sorow drye; *suffer*  
 For thare es na wa ne no wounde,  
 Als es the pyne of dede stounde. *Like the pain of the moment of death*  
 Forthi saise Salamon the wise,  
 280 That dede geres thaim growe and grise, *make them tremble; quake*  
 That hase thise welthis that thaim buse leve, *that they must leave*  
 When dede thaire saule sall fra thaim reve; *tear*  
 And tharwith all thaire catele, *possessions*  
 That in this werld thai lufe so wele.  
 285 Than sall the saule be full wa,  
 And mikil willare than the ra, *much wilder than the roe-deer*  
 For it wate never whider it sall wende, *knows*  
 Whether in hevene or hell to lende. *dwell*  
 Thare mou it find full redilie, *may*  
 290 How it haves livid here in folie;  
 Whether in pride or in mekenes,  
 Or in ogert or bowsomnes, *arrogance; obedience*  
 In liccheri and chastité, *or*  
 In este and nythe or charité, *hatred and envy*  
 295 In wisdom or in fule folie,  
 All sall the saule find thare redie.  
 That it hase wroght with the bodie, *What*  
 All mou the saule full dere aby, *may*  
 Bot man be here thareof schrivene, *Unless*  
 300 And it with penaunce be forgivene.  
 Swilk thinge aght to make us meke,  
 For this life es noght worthe a leke, *leek*  
 Agayne the life that lastis aie, *In comparison to*  
 Thare evermore es gammen and plaie.  
 305 Thir forbisnis er here sette, *examples*  
 The pride of mannes hert to lette, *prevent*  
 And ger him fle ogert ruse, *arrogant boasting*  
 Of the gude dede that he duse,

- That geres men schamesli tyne thaire mede,  
 310 Do thai never so almus dede. *lose; reward*  
 Swilk rusinge als I of mene, *so [many] charitable deeds*  
 Schewid the proude Pharisene, *boasting*  
 In oure Gospell thare he him rosid,  
 Wharethorghe he all his mede losid.  
 315 Bot God wote the publiene,  
 Be whaim Criste will meke men mene, *signify*  
 And methe of mete or gluttrie. *restraint; gluttony*  
 Me think he wroght full wiselie,  
 For mekeli askid he mercie,  
 320 Als man bowsome to mende folie.  
 He saide he was with sin begane, *begotten*  
 And gudeness of himself had nane;  
 For he wist wele that all gudeness,  
 Come of him that all mighti es.  
 325 He made his praier mekeli,  
 And God him herd full wele forthi;  
 For mekeness es the best thewe, *quality*  
 That ani man in dede mai schewe;  
 For this mekeness whareof I mene,  
 330 Gert Mari be bothe modir and qwene;  
 Forthi full blissefull es scho to nevene, *name*  
 Goddes modire and quene of hevene,  
 Als scho herself saise in hir sange,  
 Full wele es thaim hir lufe mai fange; *for those who may receive her love*  
 335 And in mekeness folow hir trase, *path*  
 For God gives to meke men his grase,  
 And geres thaim come unto that blisse,  
 That to all mekemen graithid is. *made ready*  
 Oure Lorde of hevene us thidir bringe  
 340 To joye, that es withouten endinge,  
 And give us grace oure life to lede,  
 That we that joye take to oure mede. Amen.

[Homilies 47–48 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

## 49. FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

*Dominica xiiii. Evangelium secundum Lucam. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Dum iret Jhesus in Jerusalem transiebat per mediam etc.*<sup>2</sup>

	Saynte Luke the Gospellere gan saie, In oure Gospell of todaie, That when Criste welk in his manhede,	<i>went about in human form</i>
5	Towarde Jerusalem he yede; And he come thorghe Samarye, And Galilé that was tharebye. Toward a castell gon he mete With ten mesel men in the strete.	<i>leper</i>
10	Thir mesel men on Criste gon crie, And bad him on thaim have mercie, And Criste bad thaim thai suld thaim schawe, To a preste of the law.	<i>show themselves</i>
	And als thai yode frawarde Criste, Of thaire sekenes thai ware wariht;	<i>went away from cured</i>
15	And ane of thaim tornid agayne, And thankid Criste and was full fayne. This ilk man was of Samarie, And Criste answerd and askid whie,	<i>glad same</i>
20	That nane wald torne agayne bot he, To loue God in Trinité. “Es nane,” he saide, “of all tha ten, That was langare unhale men, That comes to thank God allmichti, For helinge of thaire mesellrye,	<i>praise Who earlier were ill leprosy</i>
25	Bot this a man that es comlinge, That thankis God of his helinge? Gange,” he saide, “and wele thee be, For thi trouthe hase savid thee.”	<i>one; a foreigner healing</i>
30	This es the Gospell of todaie, Als man in Ynglihsse tonge mai saye.	<i>Go; may you be well</i>

<sup>1</sup> Fourteenth Sunday [after Trinity]. The Gospel according to Luke. In that time

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 17:11–19): *And it came to pass, as he was going to Jerusalem, [he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off. And lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. Whom when he saw, he said: Go, shew yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean. And one of them when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said, Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.]*

	The maistir that spekis of this Gospel	
	Saise thus, als I sall yow tell:	
	He saise that thir meselles ten,	
	Betaknes all thir sinful men,	<i>Signify</i>
35	That synne makes full unhale,	<i>Whom; unwell</i>
	And bringes thaim to sekemen tale.	<i>be accounted sick men</i>
	For hale men with meselles wlates,	<i>are disgusted by lepers</i>
	And gode men that all synne hates	<i>who</i>
	Wlates with thaim that liggis in synne,	<i>Despise; lie</i>
40	And will nowise thaire foli blynne.	<i>cease</i>
	Forthi behoves swilk meselles	
	Come to Criste that sekmen helis	
	And on him fast call and crie	
	And praie on thaim he have mercie;	
45	And als swithe als thai do so,	<i>quickly</i>
	Oure Lorde biddes that thai sall go	<i>asks</i>
	To prestis, for to schewe thaire synne	<i>reveal</i>
	That makes man unhale within;	
	For thof a man have repentaunce,	<i>even though</i>
50	And do never so grete penaunce,	
	All his dede es noght worthe a hawe,	<i>the fruit of the hawthorn (i.e., a trifle)</i>
	Bot in schrift his synne he schawe.	<i>Unless; confession</i>
	That mai ye here wele be a tale,	
	That I to you now tell schale,	
55	Of a preste that thorghe his folie,	
	Fell in the synne of licherie.	
	A hali man was parihsse preste,	
	And lufid a frende that wonid him neste.	<i>lived next to him</i>
	Mikil lufe was thaim bitwene,	
60	And that was on thaire dedis sene.	
	This man that was the prestis frende,	
	Was almous-gern, cortaise and hende.	<i>charitable; gracious</i>
	He had a gude wommane to wife,	
	And in lewté thai led thaire life.	<i>loyalty</i>
65	Betwix thaim two oure Lorde gon send	
	A maiden childe or thai leste wend;	<i>when they least expected it</i>
	And this preste I spake of are,	
	Hoove this childe with mikil fare.	<i>Baptized; great ceremony</i>
	The fadir and modir died bathe,	
70	And left it nouthir mete no clathe.	<i>food nor clothing</i>
	All the kin it than forsoke,	
	And than the preste it to him toke,	
	And norihst it with mikil belde,	<i>support</i>
	To it was commen on full elde.	
75	So lange wonid scho with him thare,	<i>dwelled</i>
	That scho the prestis keyes bare.	<i>had charge of</i>

- He fand hir lele in dede and wise,  
 For to do all his servise.  
 Bot forsothe it es folye,  
 80 To preste or clerk to have him bye  
 Womman, outhur sibbe or fremmid — *relative; stranger*  
 For chaunce mai fal that no man wend. *expects*  
 This preste was a full hali man,  
 For all to God he had him tane; *dedicated himself*  
 85 Bot the fende at him had envye,  
 And fandid him in liccherie. *tempted*  
 He made all his halines full thin,  
 And gert him with this mayden synne; *made*  
 Bot when he had his synne done,  
 90 He repentid him full sone.  
 Sorowful he was and sorie,  
 And that forsothe was na ferli, *wonder*  
 For he hir hove atte fonte stane, *baptismal font*  
 And sone he had hir saule slane. *slain*  
 95 This womman did he sone him fro, *put away from him*  
 And wald himself for sorowe slo; *wanted*  
 Bot God comfortid him sone in hye,  
 And gert him have hope of mercie.  
 He thocht to live in sorowe and care,  
 100 For schrive him thocht he never mare; *confess*  
 For him ware levere to dye sone, *he would rather*  
 Than ani wist what he had done. *know*  
 For he had bene so hali a man,  
 Mikil schame thocht him than,  
 105 That ani suld witte swilk thinge him to, *such a thing about him*  
 Forthi he thocht penaunce to do.  
 “I will,” he saide, “my life lede  
 In pyne to bete mi sinfull dede. *make amends for*  
 Bot nevermore I will me schrive  
 110 To preste ne clerk that es on lyve;  
 For schame it ware that ani mane,  
 Suld witte how I have missegane. *gone astray*  
 For saghtil with God how that I maie, *For however it may be settled with God*  
 Mi synne will I to na man saie.”  
 115 Thus the fende putte him in will, *persuaded him*  
 For so he wold to hell him till. *thus; draw*  
 This preste began to fast and wake,  
 And mikil penaunce to him to take.  
 Messe for to singe durst he right nane, *Mass*  
 120 For he thocht him curst begane. *that he was cursed*  
 A twelf monethe lived he swa,  
 In mikil penaunce and in wa.  
 When this twelf monetwe was comen to ende,

- This preste than full witrli wende, *certainly thought*  
 125 That God his synne him had forgiven,  
 Thof he thareof ware noght schriuen.  
 Than to the awtere gon he gange, *altar*  
 And full baldeli his messe he sange;  
 And when the sakeringe was done, *consecration*  
 130 Goddes flehsse and his blude full sone  
 Was oute of his sight so nommene *taken*  
 That he ne wist whare it was becommen.  
 And than was this preste full sarie,  
 And full wele he wist tharebie,  
 135 That his penaunce was noght worthi  
 To bete his synne and his folie. *atone for*  
 He thoght to doubil his travaile, *effort*  
 To loke if it moght oght auaile. *be worth something*  
 Than more penaunce the tother yere, *next*  
 140 He did in fastinge and prayere,  
 Than he had done ever yete,  
 For so he wende his sin to bete.  
 Sone eftir the tother yere,  
 He yode to singe at ane awtere,  
 145 And swilk aventere fell him thare, *event*  
 Als did before, als I saide are. *earlier*  
 For Goddes flehsse and his blode bathe  
 Wente oute of his sight rathe, *immediately*  
 When he it suld ressaive and take; *receive*  
 150 Tharebi wist he that his sake, *sin*  
 Might nevermore him be forgiven,  
 Bot he of his sin ware schriuen. *Unless*  
 Than he schrave him till a preste,  
 And putte the fende oute of his breste.  
 155 When he was schriuen his messe he sange,  
 And when he suld Goddis bodi fange, *receive*  
 He wend to take bot ane obl  , *thought; one sacramental wafer*  
 And than before him fand he thre,  
 That he had sacrid before at messe, *consecrated*  
 160 Als I you talde are, mare and lesse.  
 This preste sawe this mirakle swete,  
 And all thre the ostis he ete. *hosts*  
 He thankid God that taght him than  
 What schrift duse to sinfull man.  
 165 Herebi may we all se,  
 That synne mai noght forgiven be,  
 Bot if he it in schrift saye,  
 For than at first it es awaie.  
 Forthi saise Luke the Evangeliste  
 170 In oure Gospell, that Jesu Criste

- Bad the sekemen all o rawe *together*  
 That thai to prestis suld thaim schawe;  
 For penaunce es noght worthe a hawe,  
 Bot if the preste oure synnes knawe.
- 175 Forthi es almous for to kenne *helpful; teach*  
 Lawed brether and werldes men, *Lay*  
 How sinfull man suld schewe his plight, *acknowledge; guilt*  
 And how that he suld schrive him right. *correctly*  
 Forthi I will yow schewe belive *now*
- 180 How sinfull man sall him schrive,  
 For he that will him schrive right  
 And stande agayne the fende in fight, *against*  
 He sall noght do als folis duse, *fools*  
 That gase to schrift als kowe to buse. *cows to the stall*
- 185 Bot whoso will him schrive wele,  
 And do the foule fende mikil unsele, *cause; regret*  
 He sall wele his synne porvaie, *reflect on*  
 Or he it to the preste saie; *Before*  
 And offir to oure Lorde gift
- 190 Of praiere or he ga to schrift,  
 That in his schrift God give him grace,  
 That he mai breke the fendes lase;  
 And schame oute of his hert cast *fetter*  
 That bindes mannes hert so fast,
- 195 That it geres him leewe his moste plight, *omit; greatest sin*  
 When that he suld schrive him right,  
 And saise the preste smale synnes oute,  
 Whareof he hase leste doute. *fear*
- 200 That lewes for schame his synne to schawe, *Whoever fails*  
 Thare es his schrift noght worthe a hawe. *hawthorn berry (i.e., worthless)*  
 Bot wha so thinkes on Domisdaie, *reflects on the Day of Judgment*  
 In schrift he puttis schame awaie;  
 For all the synne that ever es hidde,  
 Sall than to all folk be kidde *made known*
- 205 To ma aungelles than tonge mai telle, *more*  
 And to all the fendes of hell.  
 All thinge sall oure synnes thare se,  
 Bot we therof schreven be. *Unless*  
 Than sall thai bere full sorowful blame,
- 210 That lewes to schrive thaim here for schame. *fails*  
 Than es gude we schrive us right,  
 And saie oute all oure saules plight;  
 Than er we of the fendes qwite, *free*  
 And oure synnes oute of his scrite. *written account*
- 215 Oure synnes forsothe all will he taye, *add up*  
 His roll es more than all Cornewaile. *scroll; bigger than*  
 Bot schrift of mouthe and hert sare, *a sorrowful heart*

	Makes his mikil roll full bare;	<i>empty</i>
	And who so will amende his lyve,	
220	To schrift behoves him be hastive.	<i>he must be quick</i>
	For es na man so wise no sley,	<i>clever</i>
	That wote the daie that he sall dye.	
	Forthi me think that foles er thai,	
	That drawes thaire schrift fro daie to daie;	<i>put off</i>
225	For so longe in synne mai thai duell,	
	That thai go stoupeand even to hell.	<i>shrinking</i>
	In hell forsothe es no man schrivene,	
	Ne no synne es thare forgivene.	
	Forthi es gude we schrive us sone,	
230	Of all the synne that we have done;	
	For than God wote es to late,	
	When the wayne es atte gate:	<i>wagon</i>
	Than es ovre late for to saie:	<i>too late</i>
	I walde me schrive, bot I ne maie.	
235	Yit awe thi schrift for to be	<i>ought</i>
	Willfull when thou schrives thee;	<i>Voluntary</i>
	For wha swa schrives him mawgré his,	<i>in spite of himself</i>
	God connes him litil thank iwisse.	<i>owes him little thanks</i>
	He es ataynte of his missedede,	<i>convicted</i>
240	Forthi he tynes all his mede.	<i>loses; reward</i>
	Noghtforthi the mikil schame	<i>Nevertheless</i>
	That he thare tholis, and the blame,	<i>suffers</i>
	Sall stande for penaunce of his synne,	<i>take the place of</i>
	If he fra that tyme will it blynne.	<i>cease</i>
245	Bot if thi schrift right sall fare,	<i>is to proceed correctly</i>
	Thee awe to make thi sin all bare,	<i>ought</i>
	And saie how oft with hert sare,	
	Thou hase done synne and when and whare.	
	Cover noght thi sin with fals sawes;	<i>words</i>
250	For God that all mennes thoghtes knawes	
	Thou ne mai begile be na gate,	<i>deceive; in no way</i>
	For all thi synnes wele he wate.	<i>knows</i>
	Yit sall thou noght in schrift be fikil,	<i>superficial</i>
	Bot trowe that mercie es so mikil,	
255	That thof thou have done all the synne,	
	That ever yitt did all mankin,	<i>mankind</i>
	Yit es oure Lorde more redie,	
	Of thee to have gode mercie.	
	Forthi sall thou noght in wanhope,	<i>[[fall]] into despair</i>
260	That geres man fall in the develes rope,	
	Als did Cayn and Judas,	
	And Abyron and Golyas.	
	Thir men fell fra Goddes grase,	
	And festnid thaim in the fendes lase.	<i>binding</i>



- 265 Yit awe in thi schrift to nevene, *[you] ought; name*  
 All the dedeli synnes sevene:  
 That is Pride, Yre and Envy,  
 Covetise and Glotonie,  
 Forworthinnes and Liccherie. *Sloth*
- 270 And sithen thir othir synnes trye; *sift out*  
 Than ripis thou thi gasteli wounde,  
 And makes thi saule bathe safe and sounde. *bring to fruition; spiritual*  
 And if thou in thi schrift be slye, *wise*  
 Thow awe thiself for to wrye, *accuse*
- 275 And nouthen thi felawe ne thi frende,  
 For if thou do thou ert unhende. *ungracious*  
 For if thou thi schrift make,  
 Of other mennes synne and sake, *guilt*  
 To him thou hase no charité,
- 280 Of whaim thow wald vengid be.  
 Forsothe if thou thee schrive swa,  
 Thi schrift es noght worthe a stra. *straw*  
 Of wryinge couthe I mikil speke,  
 Bot will I noght mi matere breke, *Concerning accusations could*  
 For I will saie you more of schrift, *interrupt my discourse*  
 How man to God his hert sall lift;  
 For I have talde thinges sevene *counted*  
 Of schrift, that bringes mannes saule to hevene.  
 Yit will I other sevene nevene, *another*
- 290 And than es thare fourtene evene.  
 Thi schrift behoves be all hale, *complete*  
 If thou will bete thi saule bale: *amend; harm*  
 Make hale thi schrift and saie all oute,  
 Whareof thou felis thi saule in doute.
- 295 If thou the preste one parti tell,  
 And lates another in thee dwell,  
 And schewes another preste thi synne,  
 That thou hase halden thee within, *kept inside yourself*  
 And will noght late a preste witt all *know*
- 300 Thi synnes, bathe grete and small,  
 Swilk schrift es forkid and noght hale, *crooked*  
 For twifald makes thou thi tale. *duplicious*  
 Thi schrift behoves be anefalde, *honest*
- 305 Forthi if thou will schrive thee right  
 To mani prestis of thi plight,  
 To ilkone of thaim sall tow schewe,  
 All thi synne and thin unthewe. *vices*  
 To all sall tow tell a tale, *one*
- 310 For than mase thou thi schrift hale,  
 For hale and anefalde es thi schrift,  
 When thare es nouthen ni rim ne rift *no crack; rift*

	For all men sall yelde acounte,	<i>give an account</i>
	What all thaire synnes sall amounte,	<i>amount to</i>
315	For God that knawes all mannes thoght,	
	He forgives outhir all or noght.	<i>either</i>
	Yit awe thi schrift to be so sikir,	
	That thou tharein nothinge flikir,	<i>waver</i>
	Bot als ferforthe als thou maie,	<i>as far as</i>
320	In thi schrift sall thou the sothe saie:	<i>truth</i>
	How oft thou hase done thi synne	
	And therof will forever blynne;	
	For if thou sinne eftir thi schrift,	
	Thou bringes thi saule to mikil unthrift,	<i>worthlessness</i>
325	And drawes it to hell grounde;	
	For thou duse right als duse the hounde,	
	That castis oute of his bodie,	<i>vomits</i>
	That he gulpis in glotonye,	<i>What</i>
	And sithin that at he oute keste,	<i>that which</i>
330	He likkis it uppe als swyn duse yest.	<i>He licks it up as pigs do swill</i>
	For so duse all thise caytives,	<i>wretches</i>
	That first of dedeli synne thaim schrives,	
	And eftirward fallis in that ilk,	<i>same [sin]</i>
	Als flies falles in swete milk.	
335	And forthi he that schrives him right,	
	His hert suld be sikir and wight,	<i>brave</i>
	That for all this werldes wyne,	<i>pleasure</i>
	Ne wolde he fall eftsones tharein,	<i>again</i>
	Him suld think levere to be slayne,	<i>he would rather</i>
340	Than for to fall in synne agayne.	
	Yit solde a man in schrift schawe,	
	All his synne with sothe sawe,	
	And saie noght of himself leese,	<i>lies</i>
	For God prayses noght swilk mekenes.	
345	Bot saye how thi synnes was done,	
	And God forgives thaim thee full sone.	
	And if thou be in schrift schomiande,	<i>full of shame</i>
	Thi schame for penaunce sal thee stande.	<i>stand in the place of penance</i>
	For schame in schrift and repentaunce	
350	Standes in stede of grete penaunce.	
	And if thou will right schrive thee,	
	Skilfull awe thi schrift to be: <sup>1</sup>	
	That thou schrive thee to swilk a man	
	That thou trowes thee wele lere can,	<i>teach</i>
355	And can laie on thee penaunce right,	

<sup>1</sup> Your confession should be appropriately made [i.e., to a priest who knows his job]

- That may clens thee of all thi plight.  
 For if a blind man be ledde,  
 And his ledare be so stedde, *positioned*  
 That thai be bothe blind ilike,  
 360 Thai bothe than fallis in the dike. *ditch*  
 So faris it of thir lerid men,  
 That lawde folk suld lede and ken,  
 If thai na bettir skill canne  
 Of Hali Writte than lawde man;  
 365 Than er thai bothe ilike blinde,  
 For thai can nouthur the gate finde, *way*  
 That suld thaim lede to hevene rike,  
 Forthi thai er bothe blind ylike.  
 Of this matere coude I saie mare,  
 370 Bot God wote I ne dare — *knows*  
 For bettir es pese to halde, *peace*  
 Than for to be in speche ovre balde. *overly bold*  
 Forthi tell I forthe mi tale,  
 How sinful man him schrive sale,  
 375 For whoso will lede hali live,  
 Oft him buse of synne him schrive, *Often he needs*  
 And bide noght to the twelfmonethe ende,  
 For he may di or ever he wende. *expects*  
 Of mani folk me think ferlie, *I am amazed*  
 380 That makes na forse in synne to lye *think it no matter*  
 All the twelf monethe ovre and ovre,  
 And will noght oute of thair synne covere *be delivered from*  
 Or Lentine thaim to schrift dryve; *Before Lent*  
 For Lentine geres man thaim schrive,  
 385 That never thoght thaire synne to saie,  
 Ne war ne schame ware of Pasche daye. *Were it not for the shame of Easter*  
 For werldes schame and Cristen lawe,  
 Geres mani man his synne schawe;  
 For Cristen man will he be talde, *accounted*  
 390 And Cristen custome will he halde;  
 Bot when the Paske daie es done,  
 Agayne in synne he fallis als sone.  
 This man es lyke unto the tike, *dog*  
 To whaim langare I made him like: *earlier*  
 395 For right als hounde wlatis with metes, *is sickened by his food*  
 And castis and his castinge etes,  
 So duse the man that wlates with sakes, *is disgusted by [his] sins*  
 And castis thaim oute and sithen thaim takes;  
 When he in synnes fallis eft,  
 400 Forsothe he takes that he are left. *earlier*  
 For grete mistir have we all, *need*  
 To schrive us als oft als we sall,

For God oure Lorde es aye redie,  
 Us to forgive all oure folye;  
 405 And when we us of synne schrive,  
 If we have will to mende oure lyve,  
 Yit sall man in schrift have care,  
 And grete for his synne full sare, *weep*  
 For als mikil lust and likinge  
 410 Als man hase in his synne doynge, *the doing of his sin*  
 Als sorie suld he be within,  
 When he him schrives of his synne.  
 Than may his sorowe answere right, *rightly compensate*  
 Unto the likinge of his plight. *For the pleasure of his sin*  
 415 Now have ye herd somethinge of schrift.  
 How man to God his hert suld lift.  
 Forthi es gude that we us schrive,  
 And with penaunce amende oure lyve;  
 Than maye we at oure endinge daie,  
 420 Come to the joye that lastis aie.  
 Oure Lorde Jesu Criste us spede *make us hasten*  
 To do penaunce and thider us lede. Amen.

**[Homilies 50–51 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]**

## 52. SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

*Dominica xvii secundum Lucam.*<sup>1</sup>

*Cum intraret Jesus in domum cuiusdam principis Phariseorum et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

It was apon a Halidaie, *Holy Day*  
 Als Luke in oure Gospel gon saie,

<sup>1</sup> *Seventeenth Sunday [after Trinity] according to Luke*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Luke 14:1–11): *And it came to pass, when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, [on the sabbath day, to eat bread, that they watched him. And behold, there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day. But they held their peace. But he taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out, on the sabbath day? And they could not answer him to these things. And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him: And he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place: and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place; that when he who invited thee, cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.]*

- That a riche man praied Jesus  
 To ete with him in his house;  
 5 And Jesus grauntid him his will,  
 And redi at none come him till.  
 And mani Jewes toke tent thareto,  
 And lukid gerne what he wald do. *paid attention*  
 Before him thare than sawe he lye *looked eagerly*  
 10 A seke man in ydropisye; *dropsy*  
 And Criste began for to saie  
 And askid als it ware in plaie *in jest*  
 If he might leevfulli on Halidaie *permissibly*  
 Give thaim hele that seke laie. *healing*  
 15 And all than stode still and saide noght,  
 For that againe thaire lawe thaim thocht  
 That any man of all thaire lede, *country*  
 On Halidaie suld do ani dede.  
 Bot Jesu Criste full openlie,  
 20 Schewide his might to that ydropie, *man with dropsy*  
 For he him helid sone onane, *at once*  
 Thare before thaim everilkane. *every one of them*  
 When he was made bothe hale and fere, *whole and strong*  
 Criste saide to thaim that stode him nere:  
 25 "Whilk es here of yow all,  
 That sawe youre beste in myre fall, *animal fall in the mud*  
 And in perile on the Halidaie,  
 Wald lat it ligge and gange awaie?" *lie; go*  
 Bot nane of thaim might answeare thare,  
 30 For of witte ware thai full bare. *empty of sense*  
 Criste wald this forbisin schawe, *example*  
 To ger the fals Jewes knawe *make*  
 That bettir and more almouse ware, *charitable*  
 To louse a seke man oute of care, *free*  
 35 Than for to helpe on Halidaie  
 A beste, that fast in the myre laie.  
 The Jewes thocht of him hetheli, *were scornful of him*  
 For to him thai had envye,  
 That he suld hele any man  
 40 On Halidaie, als he did than.  
 For God comaundid in thaire laie, *faith*  
 That nane suld wirk on Halidaie,  
 Forthi thaim thocht that Criste had gilt,  
 For thaire lawe thaim thocht he spilt, *transgressed*  
 45 For he on Halidaie helid men — *Because*  
 Full blynde me think the Jewes ware then.  
 Bot Criste walde thaire pride schende *wished; destroy*  
 With faire ensaumpil and wordes hende. *gracious*  
 He gert thaim be ensaumpil knawe, *made them understand by example*

- 50 That thaire thoghtes ware noght worthe a hawe. *not worth a hawthorn berry*  
 Another ensawnpile he saide thare,  
 To thaim that thidir boden ware, *called*  
 For he toke hede to thaim that chese *heed; chose*  
 To sitte heyest at the dese. *dais*
- 55 He saide, "Men, if ye be callde  
 To feste, be ye noght so balde *bold*  
 To take youreself the heyest sete,  
 Att the borde whare ye sall ete. *table*  
 For chaunce mai fall that thare mai come
- 60 A riccher man, or bettir gome *man*  
 Than thou ert and than may he  
 That callid to mete bothe him and thee,  
 Bid thee rise and sett him thare;  
 That ware to thee a schame full sare.
- 65 Bot if thou be att any bridale, *wedding*  
 In the uttirmast sete sitt thou sale. *lowest; shall*  
 Than will sone the bridegome  
 Uppermor bidde thee come. *higher; ask*  
 Than hase thou mensk before thaim all, *honor*
- 70 That er gadird in that hall.  
 For he that makes himselvene lawe,  
 To hyer mensk men sall him drawe;  
 And he that makes himselfe to hye,  
 Schame in lawnes sall he drye. *low*  
*honor*  
*too high*  
*humility; suffer*
- 75 Criste kenned us here full myldeli,  
 Bothe mekenes and cortaisie.  
 This is the text of oure Gospell,  
 Als man in Ynglihsse tonge may tell. *taught*
- 80 On this Gospel a maistir spekes *says*  
 That Criste walde the Jewes teche;  
 Forthi on him thai lete hetheli, *scorned*  
 For that he kythid his maistrie *showed; power*  
 Als wele on the Halidaye,  
 Als he did on the werkdaie.
- 85 Thai spak ylle behind his bak,  
 For thaim thoght thaire lawe he brak,  
 When thai sawe him, als I saide are, *earlier*  
 On the Halidaie hele seke and sare. *heal the sick*  
 Thaim aght, if that thai wise ware, *They ought*
- 90 The Halidaie noght for to spare *[On] the Holy Day not fail*  
 To do dedes of mercye,  
 That suld no man think hetheli. *Which; scornfully*  
 For wele may man do almous dede:  
 The nakid clethe, the hongri fede,
- 95 And hele the seke on Halidaie,

- For was it never forbed in laie. *forbidden by doctrine*  
 Forthi mai we now all se,  
 That Criste did mikil charité,  
 When he helid this seke man  
 100 Of the dropisi that he had than.  
 For be ensawmpil than schewid he,  
 That man may wele do charité,  
 To hele man on Halidaie,  
 For charité duse synne awaie. *banishes sin*  
 105 Forthirmare now will we se,  
 What be this man mai taknid be, *signified*  
 That laie seke sorowfullye,  
 And combird in ydropesye. *afflicted with dropsy*  
 Ydropesi es a sekenes,  
 110 That es growand in mannes flehsse.  
 Thir fisicyens sayse forthi, *physicians*  
 It makes mannes flehsse wete and heveye,  
 And his mouthe so drye it makes  
 That no drink his thirst slakes. *assuages*  
 115 It geres a man thirst swa sare,  
 That aye him thristis mare and mare.  
 Forthi betaknes ydropesye, *signifies*  
 Covetyse and glotonye;  
 And the thrid synne tharebye,  
 120 That men callis lyccherie.  
 For none of thir thre mai fill *satisfy*  
 Mannes likinge, ne lustis ylle. *desire; wicked lusts*  
 For aye the more that thai have,  
 The more forsothe will tai crave;  
 125 For gold ne silver may noght fill  
 A covetouse mannes will.  
 Als gude he es with fyve schillinge, *careful*  
 Als with a hondrethe ponde in bing. *buying*  
 Aboute catele he sytes and spares; *possessions; worries; hesitates*  
 130 Ymange the men he droupes and dares.  
 The more he hase the wers he fares,  
 So gerne his gude he prinnes and spares.<sup>1</sup>  
 He sweres his name for o penye, *perjures his name*  
 And umwhile for a halve penye. *sometimes*  
 135 And ilk tyme that he duse so,  
 He sellis God of Hevene him fro. *barter away*  
 Forsothe me think he es unwise,  
 That makes swilk marchandise,  
 For more he lates of o penye, *pays more attention to*

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<sup>1</sup> So eagerly he acquires and holds onto his goods

- 140 Than of God that es Allmightie.  
 He loues and sellis his catele, *praises*  
 And lufis it so wondir wele, *loves*  
 That God of Hevene he forsakes,  
 And werldes aght his God he makes. *worldly possession*
- 145 He servis him on alkin wise — *him [the devil] in every way*  
 That sall yelde him his servise *[He] who will reward him for his service*  
 In hell, that es the fendes rike, *kingdom*  
 For thareto es his hert made like. *For his heart is made similar thereto [i.e., to hell]*  
 For right als hell es ylle to fill, *difficult to fill up*
- 150 So es the covetouse mannes will;  
 For aye the more that he weldes, *more*  
 To more and more his herte aie heldes. *inclines*  
 Forthi his langynge gastelie *spiritual malaise*  
 Es likknid to the ydropesie. *likened*
- 155 For the droppsi, als I saide are,  
 Geres man thrist aie mare and mare. *Makes*  
 Now have I talde you openli  
 Of a gasteli ydropesye.  
 And of anothir I will you tell
- 160 If ye will listen unto my spell.  
 The tother gastely yderopesie, *second*  
 Es callid on Ynglihsse glotonye,  
 That maste than uses thir burgese, *That townsmen experience in the greatest number*  
 That lives all in thaire awne ese, *comfort*
- 165 That geres seke all the lande thorghe, *cause to be sought out*  
 Bathe in bye and in borghe, *village; town*  
 Ryche metes for to bye, *food*  
 For to bake and for to frye.  
 Thaire foulers sittis in slakkes and sykes, *Their bird-catchers sit in hollows and ditches*
- 170 To take wodecokkes and pertrikes, *woodcocks and partridges*  
 Snypes, mawlards and thir telis, *Snipe; mallard; teal*  
 Wip alkin ginne that man of melis, *With all kinds of trap that men speak of*  
 To make thir burgese wele at ese  
 With swilk dayntese and fatt mese. *rich food*
- 175 In lardere have thai redi at hame  
 Grete flehsse bathe wylde and tame;  
 And when thir dayntes everilkane,  
 Er broght forthe before the riche mane,  
 Unnethis may thai all fullfill *Scarcely*
- 180 His langinge and his hert will.  
 On the pureman thinkes he noght,  
 Ne on Jhesu that him boght. *redeemed*  
 Many mese before him standes, *dishes*  
 And of all somewhat he fandis *tries*
- 185 Of venysoune, gose, and grise, *venison, goose, and fat*  
 Blamanger, dariols, tartes, and rise. *Pudding, pastries, tarts; rice*



	The riche sewes, the gude browete, In silvir dihsse before thaim sette. Unnethis may his eyene be fullfilld,	<i>rich sauces; stew</i>
190	Outher of tame or of wylde. Of everilkane somethinge he tastis, And so forsothe his kynde he wastis. For sere dayntees and many mees Geres mani men fall in sekenes.	<i>Scarcely; eyes; satisfied</i> <i>Either</i>  <i>nature</i> <i>different</i>
195	Bot and ilk man wald think, Ymange all this mete and drink, That his flehsse suld rote in molde, Than ware it noght to him so holde. Nowe have I tolde you a partye,	<i>But if</i>  <i>will rot; earth</i> <i>would not seem so trustworthy</i> <i>one part</i>
200	Of the lust of glotonye, That hase the kinde of the droppsie, Als I are schewid yowe openlie. Now will I schew yow liccherie, That es the thrid ydropesye.	    <i>nature</i>
205	For flehssli lust es so gredie, That evermore it es redye For to ger man fall in synne. And if the flehsse the maistrie wyne, Will it noght the saule spare,	    <i>wins the upper hand</i>
210	It for to bringe to pyne sare. It es so lustfull and so froghe, That nevermore haves it ynogyhe Of the filthe of liccheri, Bot ever more therto es redie.	    <i>weak</i>
215	Now se ye wele on whatkin wise Glotonie and covetise, And the foule lust of liccherie, Er likknid unto the droppsie. Now will we se how Criste thaim helis,	    <i>what manner</i>
220	That with thir wickid droppsi delis; For langare ye herd me tell, How Saynte Luke saise in oure Gospell, That Criste helid on Halidaie, A man that in the droppsi laie.	    <i>Who; treats</i> <i>earlier</i>
225	Now will I schew yow als I can, How Jhesu helis Cristen man. To man he duse full tendirle, When he helis him gastelie, And gives him grace him for to knawe,	    <i>acts</i>
230	And his synnes in schrift schawe; And geris him for his synnes have care, And willen to fall in thaim nemare. Thus helid Criste Marie Mawdelayne,	    <i>makes</i> <i>wish</i>

- That of his helinge was full fayne,  
 235 And so he did Saynte Pelagie, *Pelagia*  
 That lived in lust of hir bodie.  
 Bot God of Hevene noghtforthi, *nevertheless*  
 Had of hir full gode mercye.  
 Of this womman I will yow tell,  
 240 And ye will listen to my spell.
- In Antyoche beyonde the se,  
 A womman wonede in a cité. *lived*  
 Dame Pelagie was scho calde,  
 Of hir bodi was scho balde. *With; bold*  
 245 Fayre wommane scho was ynoghe,  
 And mani man to synne scho droghe. *drew*  
 Full comone made scho hir bodie *She made a whore of herself*  
 In foule lust of lyccherye.  
 Dokes, erles, and barounes,  
 250 Come to hir from many tounes;  
 And othir men of ilk a lede, *every land*  
 To fullfill thaire flehssli dede.  
 Scho thaim full fayre to innes calld, *inns*  
 And hir bodi gude chepe salde. *sold at a bargain rate*  
 255 Scho was night and daie redie,  
 To synne with thaim in liccherie.  
 Of this servis servid Pelagie, *In this manner behaved*  
 To Criste wald hele hir ydropesye. *Until*  
 Bot I will tell on what manere,  
 260 He made hir saule hale and fere *healthy*  
 When he gert hir have repentaunce,  
 And for hir synne do penaunce.  
 The ersbisschope of that cité, *archbishop*  
 Thare scho lived in hir jolité, *pleasure*  
 265 Gert make a grete assemblé *meeting*  
 Of all the bisschopes of that contré.  
 And when thai all gadird ware,  
 For thinge that thai had to do thare,  
 Fell aventere that thai gon mete *It happened*  
 270 At a plase in the hie strete. *high*  
 And thai spak all of saule nede: *soul's need*  
 How Cristen men thaire life suld lede.  
 And als thai satte togider spekeand,  
 So come Dame Pelagie rydand, *riding*  
 275 To schewe the folk hir fayrehede, *beauty*  
 Hir dubbinge and hir ryche wede. *finery; clothing*  
 Cled scho was in riche pall, *robes*  
 With riche stanes in gold frette all. *all adorned with gold*  
 Mani a man bathe yonge and alde,

- 280 Folowid hir full thikfalde, *in a crowd*  
 To have sight of hir bewté,  
 That thare rade with all manir of gle. *joy*  
 Scho was fayrer of coloure, *complexion*  
 Than rose that es kinge of floure.
- 285 Thir bisschopes when thai sawe hir ryde,  
 With thair hodes thair eyen gon hyde, *hoods*  
 For thai wald noght behald na pride,  
 That walkis in this werld so wyde. *so openly*  
 Bot one of thaim noghtforthi,
- 290 Beheld this womman inwardelie. *intently*  
 And all his felowes thocht ferlie, *were amazed*  
 For he was halden full hali. *considered*  
 Nomnus was this bisschope name —  
 Full lathe him was to come in blame. *reluctant*
- 295 When he this womman had lange sene,  
 Pelagie of whaim I mene, *I am speaking*  
 Sare began he for to grete, *weep*  
 And saide to thaim be him gon sete: *who were sitting by him*  
 “We may here gode ensawmpil take *take a lesson*
- 300 This werldes honoure to forsake,  
 And for to graithe us to tha blisse,  
 That to gode men ordained es. *prepare*  
 For this womman that ye sawe ryde, *To which good men are destined*  
 In mikil werldes welthe and pride,
- 305 With mikil bisines and stodie *effort*  
 Has tuffid and dight hir bodie, *dressed up; adorned*  
 To make it faire on all wyse,  
 For to plees to hir luttebies. *lovers*  
 Bot us aght mikil more to graythe
- 310 Oure sawles, that synne hase made full laythe, *loathsome*  
 For to paie God Allmightie, *please*  
 The whilk es the saule leve luttebie. *the soul's dear lover*  
 And for to make it faire and clene,  
 That na filthe ware tharein sene,
- 315 To paie Criste oure dere lemmane, *satisfy; lover*  
 That suffird payne for synfull man.”  
 When he had saide all this and mare,  
 He went hamward greteand full sare,  
 Forthi that he so lange had sene *looked upon*
- 320 That ilk womman that was so schene. *same; beautiful*  
 “Lorde,” he saide, “Thou forgive me,  
 That I have synnid agayne thee,  
 For the fayrnes of yone womane *On account of*  
 That had well nere mi saule slane. *killed*
- 325 Scho hase hight the folk to paie, *promised; please*  
 And so scho did full wele todaie.

- And I to paie God have hight, *please*  
 Bot oft I breke forward with plight. *agreement; sin*  
 Lorde I praye thee forthi,  
 330 That thou of me have mercie.”  
 When this bihsschope had saide this,  
 And grauntid that he had done misse, *acknowledged; wrong*  
 To rest he yede, and als he laie, *went*  
 A selcouthe dreme he dremid or daie. *marvelous; before*  
 335 Him thoght that he atte messe stode, *mass*  
 And als he lokid to the rode,  
 A fewhle blak als ani crowe, *bird*  
 Fast aboute his hevede flawe.  
 Blak it was, heved and schank, *head and leg*  
 340 And foule him thoght that it stank.  
 Him thoght that it wald ger him dye,  
 If he that stink suld lange drye. *suffer*  
 Him thoght that it flowe thare full lange, *flew*  
 Bot noghtforthi his messe he sange.  
 345 When this messe was done to ende,  
 Him thoght that hamward gon he wende;  
 And als he yode him thoght he sawe  
 That this fewhle to him flawe.  
 Blak it was and foule stinkand,  
 350 And he toke it in his hand,  
 And kest it in a watir stane, *threw; baptismal font*  
 And uppe it rase him thoght onane, *at once*  
 Als wyte als ever was ani snawe.  
 And na blak on it might he knawe;  
 355 And toward heven it flow him fro, *away from him*  
 And he stert of his slepe right so. *awoke*  
 Sononday was on the morne; *the next morning*  
 He callid the clergie him beforne  
 And talde thaim all his dreme full rathe. *quickly*  
 360 Sithen thai and he yode to the kirk bathe, *went; church bath*  
 And the bisschope at the hye messe,  
 Prechid als the custome es,  
 And gert the folc with wordes swete,  
 For thaire synnes full sare grete. *weep*  
 365 And als the bisschope prechid thare,  
 And all the folc grette swa sare,  
 This woman come, Dame Pelagie,  
 To the kirk with grete melodie,  
 More to schewe hir fairehede,  
 370 Than for to do thare hir saule mede. *Than to do what was required for her soul's reward*  
 Bot when scho herd the bisschope speke,  
 For sorow hir thoght hir hert wald breke.  
 So sore rewid hir hir folye, *she regretted*

- That scho had done in liccherie,  
 375 That sore began scho for to grete,  
 That all hir breste scho made full wete.  
 Than all the folk that ware thare,  
 Thoght ferli that scho grette sa sare —  
 And yit scho was a hethen womman,  
 380 That never come to the kirk or than. *before then*  
 When the bisschope had all prechid,  
 And Cristen lawe the folk techid,  
 This woman had spies sette,  
 When he to his palaise plette; *turned*  
 385 And when scho wist whare he wald lende, *enter*  
 Swilk a lettir to him gon scho sende:  
 “The fendes doghtir, Pelagie,  
 That ever haves lived in liccherie,  
 Grete thee wele, sir bihsschope, *Greets*  
 390 For in thee es all my hope.  
 Fadir,” scho saide, “I prairie thee,  
 That thou have mercie now of me,  
 And for his lufe that died on tre, *the cross*  
 Cristen womman thou ger me be.  
 395 For Cristen men have I herd saie,  
 (And so herd I thee todaie),  
 That Criste wald all this paynes drie *desired (could); suffer*  
 For sinfull man and sythen dye; *For the sake of*  
 And that he es aie redie  
 400 To have of sinfull mercie,  
 Als oft als man on him will call  
 And schrive him wele of his synnes all.  
 Forthi, lorde, thof it be swa,  
 That I have lange bene Cristis fa, *enemy*  
 405 Cristen womane wald I be,  
 And live forward in chastité, *from now on*  
 Therfore have mercie now on me,  
 And lat me come and speke with thee.”  
 This lettir made this bihsschope fayne,  
 410 And he sent hir bodworde agayne, *reply*  
 And saide, “Thou spekes of Goddes nedes,  
 And witt thou wele Criste wate thi dedes. *be well aware; knows*  
 And als so witt thou witirlie, *certainly*  
 That a sinfull man am I.  
 415 Forthi if thou will with me speke,  
 And the fendes bandes breke,  
 Before mi felowes come to me,  
 And than will I speke with thee.  
 For will I noght bi me all ane, *alone*  
 420 Forsothe speke with na wommane.”

- When Pelagie had herd this,  
 Hir thought that scho had mikil blisse.  
 Scho did hir to the bisschope gate, *made her way*  
 And callid and cried to have inlate. *entrance*
- 425 And when this bisschope herd hir call,  
 He gert feche the bisschopes all,  
 And before thaim everilkane,  
 He gert call this ilk woman.
- And sone scho fell to the erde platte, *earth flat*
- 430 And full sore began to grate.  
 So oft scho kissid the bisschope fete,  
 That with hir teres scho made thaim wete.  
 The bisschope toke hir be the hande,  
 And unnethis might he ger hir stande *scarcely*
- 435 And saide, "Womman, I saie to thee,  
 That wismen forbedes me  
 To cristen comone womane, bot if scho finde  
 Gode borowes that may hir binde, *baptize [a] prostitute, unless*  
 And take on hande that scho sall blynne *guarantors; secure*  
 Of synne, and fall nomore tharein." *make assurance; cease*
- 440 When this was saide scho was sorie,  
 And fell unto the erthe rewoffullie,  
 And saide, "Thou sall all my synne bere, *take charge of*  
 And for mi saule give answeere.
- 445 Bot if thou baptise me in haste, *Unless*  
 And fill me with the Hali Gaste,  
 I swere be God in Trinyté,  
 That for fals sall I chalange thee *accuse*  
 Before Jhesu Cristis fase, *face*
- 450 Bot if thou ger me have his grase,  
 And me sone make Cristen wommane,  
 For I have servid to lange Sathane."  
 When scho had saide all this and mare,  
 Than all the bihsschopes that thare ware
- 455 Grette for joye of hir penaunce,  
 And of hir rewoffull repentaunce.  
 Than to the bisschope of that cité,  
 That gert thaim come to that semlé, *assembly*  
 Thai sent worde of that womane,
- 460 How scho to Jhesu had hir tane.  
 The bisschope sent thaim than agayne,  
 A priores that hight Romaine,  
 To be at hir cristnyng thare,  
 And for to lere hir gasteli lare. *teach; spiritual lore*
- 465 When Pelagie sawe Dame Romaine,  
 Of hir comynge scho was full fayne.  
 Sainte Nomnus askid hir what scho hight, *was called*

- And scho saide, "Pelagie, full right —  
 Bot here, forsothe, men callis me  
 470 Margarite in this cytee.  
 For thaim thoght mi face so white,  
 Thai callid me Dame Margarite.  
 Bot my first name, noghtforthi, *nevertheless*  
 Was callid mayden Pelagye."
- 475 Saynte Nomnus bad scho suld hir schrive  
 Clennly thareof all hir lyve;  
 And scho answerd and said than:  
 "I am so sinful womane,  
 That if I suld ripe wele *examine well*  
 480 The thrid parte, or the halvendele *half*  
 The synnes of mi foule bodie,  
 That I have done in liccherie,  
 I suld se thaim so mikil amounte,  
 That I ne might thaim never acounte; *count*  
 485 For all the watir in the se,  
 To my synnes might noght evene be. *equal*  
 Bot schorteli to yow all at saie *to speak of*  
 Mi synnes and mi sorowful plaie, *carrying on*  
 So lange I have bene in this toune,  
 490 In the fendes bandes and his baundoune, *control*  
 That I have done more synne myne ane, *on my own*  
 Than evir did yit any womane.  
 Bot gode hope have I, noghtforthi, *notwithstanding*  
 That God of me will have mercye."
- 495 Than Nomnus Pelagie baptyste  
 In the name of Jesu Criste,  
 And callid hir thare Pelagie,  
 And howsild hir full joyefullye. *administered the Eucharist*  
 And sithen betaght hir eftir messe *entrusted*
- 500 To Dame Romaine, the prioresse.  
 And that daie ete thai all samen *together*  
 With mikil ioye and gasteli gammen. *spiritual delight*  
 And als thai att the mete gone sete,  
 Thai herd an uggli grane and grete *loathsome [creature] groan; lament*
- 505 So lowde that thai all might it here,  
 A fendes yamerynge and his bere. *wailing; clamor*  
 Full loude he gon yell and crie,  
 And spak and said thus apertelie: *openly*  
 "Nomnus, Nomnus, woo thee be, *woe be to you*
- 510 For mikil schame thou hase done me.  
 Of hethin men thritti thousand,  
 Hase thou lowsid oute of mi band, *freed*  
 And gert thaim all cristnid be —  
 Full sore tharefore may I ban thee. *curse*

- 515 For all the mikil folk, iwisse, *indeed*  
 That wones in Elyopolis,  
 Oute of my servise has thou nommen, *taken*  
 For Cristen men er thai all becommen.  
 Wo worthe the modir that thee bare, *May misery befall*  
 520 For thou enpayres all my fare. *hinder; business*  
 Tharefore mi sange es walewaie, *alas*  
 And ban I mai that ilk daie *same*  
 That thou was of thi modir borne,  
 For thou drives me aie to scorn.  
 525 Fro me thou revees all my menyne — *deprive; servants*  
 Thou olde cauenard, wo thee be! *scoundrel*  
 And now thou duse me moste spite:  
 Thou hase me reft Dame Margarite, *deprived me of*  
 That was the best of all my ploghe. *work animals*  
 530 Agaynes me thou hase done woghe,  
 For in hir was mi moste hope —  
 To me thou ert ane evyle bisschope.  
 Maie I na langer suffir thee,  
 For on thee sall I vengid be. *avenged*  
 535 And thou, my dere Margarite,  
 Whi haves thou left me so tyte? *quickly*  
 With mikil wrange and no resoune  
 Hase thou done me this grete tresoune.  
 Sorowfull and sarie maie I be,  
 540 When I thee misse in this citee.  
 Me think thou braides on Judase *spring from*  
 That traytoure to his Lorde wasse.  
 For he was to his Lorde so dere,  
 That he made him his tresorere.  
 545 Bot als Judas noghtforthyne  
 Left his Lorde auerlye, *wickedly*  
 And did evyle agaynes gode, *evil in return for good*  
 When he gert hange him on the rode,  
 So duse thou, Margarite, to me,  
 550 For to my foo thou takes thee.  
 Thou wote that I have lange bene *know*  
 Thi lorde, and gert thee trayle in grene, *sweep along in a green (gown)*  
 In riche purple and in scarlette,  
 In blewe of Ypire and in bornette *Ypres; brown*  
 555 Bot I se now thou art unkynde,  
 For fals and fikil I thee fynde;  
 For thou duse evyle agaynes gode;  
 Of thee I fedde ane evyle fode.” *From thee I have partaken of an evil food*  
 This was the fendes playnte with crie,  
 560 On Saynte Nomnus and Pelagie.  
 Bot Pelagie sayned hir full wele, *crossed*



- And gert him fle, that foule unsele. *foul wretched [creature]*  
 The thrid night, forthi noght, *nevertheless*  
 He come eftsones to Pelagi, *again*  
 565 And pleynid him full rewwulli, *complained; sorrowfully*  
 And askid hyr wharefore and whi,  
 Scho had him left so auerlie, *in such a cowardly manner*  
 And bad hir have of him mercye.  
 “Mi dere,” he saide, “thou rewe on me, *have pity*  
 570 And torne againe to jolité.  
 If thou will of welthe have mare  
 Of gold, of silvire, of riche fare, *apparel*  
 I am redi to ger thee have,  
 All that evere thou will crave.  
 575 Forthi, mi ladie Margarite,  
 Torne and leve me noght so tite, *quickly*  
 For Cristen men that wote thi live, *life*  
 Maye me to hethinge fouli drive, *have contempt for me*  
 When that thai evere speke of thee,  
 580 For thou hase thus begilid me. *deceived*  
 Forthi, my ladi, torne agayne,  
 To do thi will I sall be bayne.” *ready*  
 Than answerd Saynte Pelagie,  
 And saide, “Jesu, thorghe his mircie  
 585 Hase tane me oute of thi pousté — *power*  
 Blissid als Lorde mote he be.  
 Forthi to him now I me take, *dedicate myself*  
 And thee, Sathanas, I forsake.  
 Hatid be thou ever fro me, *by*  
 590 And all that evere servis thee.  
 And for to do thee the more schame,  
 I comaunde thee in Goddes name,  
 That thou never so hardie be *bold*  
 More for to fande me.” *tempt*  
 595 Scho saynid hir and he went awaie, *crossed*  
 Fast cryand, “Waylewaye.”  
 Saynte Pelagie on the morne  
 Callid hir servaundes hir beforne,  
 And gert bringe all hir catele, *possessions*  
 600 And betechid it ilk a dele *bestowed*  
 To Saynte Nomnus, that hali man  
 That hir had made Cristen womane;  
 And bad him that he suld it dele *distribute*  
 In almouse for hir saule hele.  
 605 Bot first ymange hir awne servaundes  
 Scho delt a thousand gold besaundes, *coins*  
 And sone eftir the same daie,  
 Hir gude clothis scho delt awaie.

- And on a nyght full privelye,  
 610 With haire scho cled hir awne bodie.  
 And did hir forthe that no man wist  
 Bot scho allone and Jesu Criste,  
 To the Mounte of Olivete,  
 Thare hir bones ligges yete;  
 615 Thare Jhesu Criste made his praiere,  
 Als saise Saynte Jone the Gospellere.  
 Jerusalem es it full nere,  
 Als saise bothe pilgrime and palmere.  
 Thare scho made a litil howse,  
 620 And saide scho hight Pelagius.  
 Scho gert thaim all that woned thare  
 Trow that scho a careman ware.  
 And thare scho ledde so hali lyve,  
 That wydewhare hir name was rive  
 625 For hali ermite was scho talde,  
 And Pelagius men hir callde.  
 Now es dame Pelagie hermite,  
 That was before so faire and white,  
 That hir to se was grete delite,  
 630 Forthi men callid hir Margarite.  
 Now will I tell yow als I can,  
 How men first wist scho was womman.  
 The bihsschope of whaim I spake are,  
 Had a clerk that hight Johannes thare;  
 635 And sevene wyntir eftir that daie,  
 That Pelagie was went awaie,  
 This clerk askid leve to ga  
 To Jerusalem, for to ma  
 His pilgrimage into that stede  
 640 Thare Jhesus was bothe qwik and dede.  
 Saynte Nomnus gave him leve in haste,  
 That wist thorghe the Hali Gaste  
 That Pelagie somwhidir was gane  
 To live in penaunce be hir ane.  
 645 And than his thoght was on hir,  
 And bad his clerk that he suld spir  
 Ymange ermetes that servid Jesus  
 Eftir Dan Pelagius.  
 "For hali man," he saide, "es he,  
 650 And he can wele counsaile thee."  
 This clerk wist nocht of whaim he ment,  
 Bot on the morne his waie he went.  
 To Jerusalem he come in hye,  
 And to that stede thare Jesu gone drie,  
 655 And sone than herd he wordes drive,

*secretly*  
*a hair shirt*

*man*

*wherever; known*  
*accounted*

*permission*  
*make*  
*place*  
*living*

*by herself*

*ask*

*in haste*  
*suffered*  
*spoken*

- Of Pelagius hali lyve.  
 And yerne he spirid and sone he fand *eagerly; asked*  
 Whare Pelagius was wonand. *dwelling*  
 And at hir dure he bad undo; *he asked that her door be opened*  
 660 And Saynte Pelagie come him to,  
 In liknes of ane alde ermite,  
 That he had sene so faire and white.  
 Saynte Pelagie knewe him full wele,  
 Bot he knewe hir never a dele, *not at all*  
 665 For travele, fastinge and wakinge, *suffering, keeping vigil*  
 Had broght hir oute of all knawinge. *recognition*  
 Forthi wende he scho carman ware,  
 And so wende all that woned thare.  
 Than sone scho askid what he walde,  
 670 And what he was, and he hir talde:  
 "I am," he saide, "with Saynte Nomnus.  
 That gretes thee wele, Pelagius."  
 And scho answerd, and saide than:  
 "Saynte Nomnus es a hali man:  
 675 Wele mote him evermore be; *May he ever be well*  
 Saie him that he praie for me." *Ask*  
 Wold scho nomore ask how he ferde,  
 Bot fast on hir the dore scho sperde. *closed*  
 And sone he herd hir singe and saye  
 680 The servise that fell for the daie.  
 This clerk made thare his orisoune, *prayer*  
 And sithen he yede unto the toune,  
 And dwellid in that hali stede *place*  
 Twa daies in prayere and in bede, *prayer*  
 685 And come upon the thrid daie,  
 To loke what Pelagie wald saie.  
 He lithid yerne undir the wawe, *listened; wall*  
 If he might oght hir spekinge knawe. *discern*  
 And lange he stode and herd right noght,  
 690 And grete ferli thareof him thoght.  
 And att the dure he callid fast,  
 And putt it up atte last, *opened*  
 And come him in and sone he fand  
 Saynte Pelagie, calde dede liggand.  
 695 This clerk fra stede to stede ranne,  
 And tald thir ermetes ever ilkane,  
 That Pelagius forsothe was dede,  
 And thai come rynnand to that stede,  
 And fand sothe all that he saide;  
 700 And wortheli the corse thai laide, *body*  
 For to wehsse it on a stane,  
 And sone thai fand scho was wommane.

	Than wist that clerk witrlye	<i>for certain</i>
	That it was Dame Pelagye.	
705	And loude began he for to crie,	
	And loud oure Lorde God Almightye,	<i>praised</i>
	That he might sikir tithandes tell,	<i>certain</i>
	What of Saynte Pelagye befell.	
	This hali corse thai grove right thare,	<i>buried</i>
710	And sithen home than gon thai fare.	
	Thaire sekemen had thaire bote	<i>healing</i>
	Of sekenes, bothe in hand and fote.	
	Thare hase all men bote of bale,	<i>illness</i>
	For lufe of hir, God mase thaim hale.	
715	Lorde, mikil es thi mercye,	
	To thaim that will leve thaire folye.	<i>abandon</i>
	That was wele sene on Pelagie,	
	That laie in gasteli droppsy:	
	That es to saye in lyccherye,	
720	That mase a mannes sawle full hevye.	
	In wannehope thar no man synk,	<i>despair, need</i>
	That on Pelagie will thinke.	
	Jesu, blissid mote thou be,	
	For first thou boght us on the rode tre,	
725	And helid sithen of the droppsy	
	Of synne and sororow we in gon lye.	<i>did lie</i>
	And if we eftsones fall in scathe,	<i>once again; harm</i>
	Thow give us grace to ryse rathe,	
	And so to live that we all maye	
730	Come to thi joye that lastis aye.	
	Lorde, lene us grace that it so be.	<i>grant</i>
	Amen amen par charité.	<i>for the sake of charity</i>

[Homily 53 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

#### 54. NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

*Dominica xix. Evangelium secundam Matheum. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Ascendens Jhesus in naviculam transfretavit etc.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nineteenth Sunday (after Trinity). The Gospel according to Matthew. In that time

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (Matthew 9:1–8): *And entering into a boat, he passed over the water [and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts?*

- In oure Gospell of Saynte Mathewe,  
 That Cristes dedes will us schewe,  
 He saise that Criste schippid over a se,  
 And come into his awne cité.  
 5 And men broght before him a man,  
 That in parlsy was taken than, *paralysis*  
 And sone when Criste thaire trouthe sawe *faith*  
 To thaim he wald his might knawe. *make known*  
 And sone he spak full myldelie,  
 10 To him that laye in the parelsy:  
 “Mi sonne,” he saide, “thou trowe on me — *believe in me*  
 All thi synnes er forgiven thee.”  
 The wickid Jewes that stude thareby,  
 Thoght of his wordis hetheli, *scornfully*  
 15 Thare he saide to that seke mane:  
 “Thi synnes er forgiven ilkane.” *every one*  
 Forthi he saide to ger yow se, *make*  
 That mannes sonne hase pousté *power*  
 In erthe, for to forgive clenlie  
 20 All mannes synne thorghe his mercie.  
 Than saide Criste to that seke man,  
 Before the Jewes everilkane: *each one of*  
 “Ryse uppe thou seke, all hale and strange;  
 Bere forthe thi bed and hame thou gange.” *Carry; go home*  
 25 And this sekeman rase uppe all hale,  
 And felid him botid of all his bale. *healed; ailment*  
 He toke his bedde and forthe he yede,  
 And Criste was loued for his gode dede;  
 For all the folk that stode aboute, *praised*  
 30 That sawe this ferli had grete doute *miracle; awe*  
 And saide, “God blissid mote thou be  
 That hase given man so grete pousté.”  
 This es the Gospell of todaie.  
 Als man in Ynglihsse tonge mai saye.
- 35 Apon this Gospell spekes a clerk,  
 That mikil couthe of Goddes werk: *knew*  
 That be the se will he undirstand  
 This werld with sorow flowande,  
 And be the schippe that Criste in rade, *rode in*  
 40 Hali Kirk that Criste hase made,

---

*Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said he to the man sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men.]*

	To ger man passe this werldes se,	<i>pass over</i>
	Flowand with pride and wafulté.	<i>misery</i>
	For als a schippe fletes on the flode,	<i>floats; ocean</i>
	So Hali Kirk with costis gude,	<i>qualities</i>
45	Fletes aboven this werld that flowes	<i>floats</i>
	All ovre thaim that tharein rowes,	<i>over</i>
	With flehssli lust and covetise,	
	With okiryng and fals merchandise,	<i>usury</i>
	With glotonye and synnes ma,	
50	Bot Hali Kirk flees all this wa.	
	And passis qwite withouten synne,	<i>freely</i>
	To that blisse that may noght blynne.	<i>cease</i>
	I call thaim lymes of Hali Kirk,	<i>limbs</i>
	That hase gude will gode werkes to wirk.	
55	In this schippe passit Criste the se,	
	And come into his awne cité,	
	When he thorghe hali mannes prayere,	
	Makes sinfull mannes saule hale and fere;	<i>strong</i>
	For mannes saule es his cyté,	
60	For thare thinkis him gode to be,	
	Evermore wones he tharein,	<i>dwells</i>
	Whyles man es oute of dedeli synne.	
	Bot dedeli synne drivis him thare fra,	<i>away from there</i>
	And takes in Sathanas his fa.	<i>foe</i>
65	He hase full unceli rest,	<i>miserable</i>
	That gestnes swilk a foule gest.	<i>entertains</i>
	Bot als sone als man him schrives,	
	The foule fende fro him he drives.	
	Bot maye no sinfull so do,	
70	Bot if Criste gasteli come him to,	<i>Unless; spiritually</i>
	And ger him schrive him openlie,	
	And hele his saule of parelsye.	<i>paralysis</i>
	For als thou seis, that maladi	
	Combirs the lymes of mannes bodye;	<i>afflicts</i>
75	So combirs dedeli synne oure gastis,	<i>souls</i>
	For all oure sawlis strenghe it wastis,	<i>destroys</i>
	And geris oure gaste so combird be,	
	That it maye nouthir here ne se.	
	For prechoure lare may it noght lere,	<i>teaching; learn [from]</i>
80	Bot Criste make it hale and fere,	<i>healthy and strong</i>
	And drawe mannes hert to repentaunce,	
	And sithen eftir to penaunce.	
	This es the helinge of parlsye,	<i>palsy</i>
	That es dedeli synne gastelye.	
85	Yit will we se wharefore and whi,	
	That this man fell in the parlsye,	
	And whi that God tholis many ane,	<i>permits</i>

- For to be with sekenes tane. *overtaken*  
 For fyve enchesones es man seke: *reasons*
- 90 The first es for to make him meke;  
 Bot if that man umstont seke ware, *sometimes*  
 Ovre proudeli wald he fare, *Too*  
 And lat hetheli of febil and waïke, *be scornful*  
 And give his hert to sinful layke. *pleasures*
- 95 Forthi es God full gode and wyse,  
 That man with sekenes will chastise.  
 Saynte Paule forsothe was thus chastiste,  
 That es full wele with Jesu Criste;  
 For he saise a worde in his sermoune,
- 100 That mikel comfortes oure resoune. *greatly*  
 Forthi he sayse that "Dedes slye *clever*  
 Suld noght ger me bere me to hye;  
 My pride full wele chastisid es, *bear myself too proudly*  
 With prickinge of myne awne flehsse."  
 105 Als who saie, lust makes me full seke, *tormenting*  
 And geres my hert be full meke. *In other words*  
 The tothir resoune whi sinfull mane, *second*  
 Es oft with sekenes greteli tane,  
 That es to warne him of his synne, *admonish him against*
- 110 And ger him have will thareof to blynne. *cease*  
 For if man umstonte seke ne ware, *sometimes*  
 He walde do synne aye mare and mare,  
 And forget God Allmightie,  
 And of his awne saule late hetheli. *be scornful*
- 115 Forthi hase God of him mercye,  
 And sendes sekenes in his bodie,  
 And punihsses him with hard thrawes, *suffering*  
 Wharethorghe his synnes he wele knawes, *recognizes*  
 And amendes wele his lyve,
- 120 For sekenes geres him his synne schrive.  
 Moyses sistir thorghe this resoune,  
 Was made unhale fro the fote to the croune,  
 For scho grucchid agayne Moyses, *complained*  
 Als in the Bibile writen es.
- 125 For God himself all tho men hates, *those*  
 That grucchis agayne thaire prelates. *religious leaders*  
 That was on Moyses sistir sene, *demonstrated through Moses' sister*  
 That spak of Moyses wordes kene, *about; sharp*  
 And demid him behind his bak. *judged*
- 130 Forthi oure Lorde hir pride brak,  
 And gert hir fall in leprousnes,  
 For hir grucchinge agayne Moyses.  
 The thrid resoune whi that man es  
 Umstont chastisid wth sekenes,

- 135 Than es to ger him have more mede *reward*  
 In hevene for his awne dede.  
 Apon this wise tholid God Sathanase *allowed*  
 To fande Jobe that rightwise wase. *tempt; who was righteous*  
 The fende him fandid with seknes,
- 140 For to prove his tholemodenes; *try; patience*  
 And for he tholid his fandinge wele, *because he endured; temptations*  
 Oure Lorde doubild his catelle, *possessions*  
 And gave him more werldes blisse,  
 And hevenerike thare he now is. *Kingdom of Heaven*
- 145 And Saynte Thobie on this manere *Tobit*  
 Was fandid fulli fyvetene yere,  
 That was with swallow filthe made blynde, *swallow droppings*  
 Als we in the Bybile fynde.  
 And his wife with wefeynge him fedde, *supported him by her weaving*
- 150 Five wyntir liggand in bedde; *lying*  
 And noghtforthi oure Lorde of Hevene,  
 Sende him eftir swilk godes sevene, *seven times as much*  
 Als ever yitte he sent him are, *before*  
 And mikil bettir gert him fare,
- 155 And gave him at his endinge daie,  
 The joye that lastis evermore and aie.  
 Forthi when the fende us fandes,  
 Or when we lye in Goddes bandes, *fetters*  
 We awe to thank God Allmightie, *ought*
- 160 That will with sekenes us chastie.  
 For God that man lufis allthir best, *For God loves best of all that man*  
 That sekenes here suffirs strangest. *Who*  
 Bettir it is God chasti us here,  
 Than ever in hell the fendes fere, *fear*
- 165 For in hell es no mercye,  
 Bot waa and sorowe aie redie. *ever present*  
 The ferthe resoune wharefore and whi,  
 That man es seke in his bodie,  
 Than es to ger man loue in lede *praise among the people*
- 170 Goddes might and his Godhede.  
 For we looue God als gude right es,  
 When we er helid of oure sekenes.  
 So did the Jewes for Saynte Lazere, *Lazarus*  
 Als saynte Jone saise, the Gospellere; *John*
- 175 For Criste him raisid on the thrid daie  
 Fro dede, in the tounge thare he laie.  
 Oure Lorde tholid him for to drye *suffer*  
 Hard sekenes, and sithen dye,  
 For to ger the Jewes se,
- 180 Cristis might and his pousté,  
 For to looue God for his qwiknynge, *praise; bringing to life*



- For his might es ovre all thinge.  
 When Criste had raisid him fra the dede,  
 Full yerne the folk than in that stede *eagerly; place*
- 185 Loooud God with full loude crie,  
 For that thai sawe he was mightie.  
 In many other stede we finde,  
 That deeve men, dounge, and blinde *deaf; mute*
- 190 Ware helid, and for thaire helinge,  
 Men loouid God als Mighti Kinge.  
 The fift resoun wharefore and whi,  
 That man es pyned in his bodie, *tormented*  
 Than es us all for to kenne, *show*  
 That thai er full unceli men, *wretched*
- 195 That es so rutid in thair synne, *rooted*  
 And gose so forthirli tharein, *deeply*  
 That God tholis rightfullie,  
 The fende to have of thaim maistrie; *power*  
 That he in wanhope geres thaim fall, *So that; despair*
- 200 That es the werst synne of all.  
 And when that thai er thider lopen , *leapt*  
 Than hase the fende thaire saules dropen, *slain*  
 With wannehope so wrichidlie,  
 That thai maye never fynde mercie.
- 205 For aye the more synne that thai do,  
 The frehsser er thai aye thareto; *more eager*  
 Thus er thai redie to do ylle,  
 And to fullfill the fendes wille.  
 Bot swilk men full reevelie, *commonly*
- 210 Er pyned here in thaire bodie,  
 And sithen in hell with the fende, *by*  
 Thare thai sall dwell withouten ende.  
 Als was Erode that corsid kinge, *Herod*  
 That yode to hell at his endinge. *went*
- 215 And here he tholid noghtforthi  
 So strange sekenes in his bodie,  
 That wormes and mawkes in him grewe, *maggots*  
 When he toward his dede drewe.  
 He was so roten and so stinkand
- 220 That might no man wele be him stand. *next to*  
 Of foule wormes full was his bouke *belly*  
 And more pyne might no man brouke. *endure*  
 His hoghyle bones gon brist oute, *hip; burst*  
 And mawkis crewlid him aboute,
- 225 For he soght Jhesu Criste to qwell, *kill*  
 And in his dedes was he so fell, *evil*  
 That he his awne childir slewe,  
 Als he toward his dede drewe. *death approached*

- And he did other wickid dedes  
 230 That geres him now brin in hell gledes; *burn; coals*  
 An thus toke God on him vengeance,  
 For he had never repentaunce,  
 Forthi his pyne and his sekenes,  
 Come all of Goddes rightwisnes;  
 235 For to the fende he was betaht, *given over*  
 When he agayne Jhesu faght,  
 For all the childir blude he spilt,  
 In Bethleem withouten gilt;<sup>1</sup>  
 And sowght ymange thaim Criste to sla,  
 240 And forthi wellis he now in wa. *seethes*  
 His pyne began in his lyve,  
 And now in hell with mikil strive, *discord*  
 Thare he sall dwell withouten ende,  
 In lastand pyne with the fende.  
 245 "Allas," maye he saie, that he was borne,  
 For ever and aie he es forlorne. *lost*  
 Now have ye herd thir resounes fife,  
 Whi men er seke here in this live:  
 The first es mannes pride for to breke,  
 250 The tother es sinne for to wreke, *avenge*  
 The thrid to ger man have more mede,  
 The ferthe to looue God in lede,  
 The fift thaire pyne here to beginne,  
 That of thaire synnes will nowyse blynne, *in no manner*  
 255 And sithen eftir withouten ende,  
 To wone in hell with the foule fende.  
 Bot that man that in parlesi fell,  
 Of whaim spekes oure Gospell,  
 Was chastisid for his awne folye,  
 260 When he fell in parlesye.  
 And when he was ynoghe chastyste,  
 Oure Lorde Jhesu him wariste, *healed*  
 Als ye herd me langare saye, *earlier*  
 In oure Gospell of todaie.  
 265 Bot we will now loke forthirmare, *look further [into]*  
 What may be undirstanden thare,  
 Thare oure Gospell will us schawe,  
 How that Criste gon thaire trouthe knawe, *faith*  
 That broght this seke man him to,  
 270 This ilk o worde will I undo: *very same one; explicate*  
 Oure Gospell saise that Jhesu Criste  
 This sekeman of parlesy wariste,

<sup>1</sup> Lines 237–38: *For he spilt the blood of all the children / in Bethlehem, who were without guilt*

- When he sawe thaire will and thocht,  
That this seke man before him broght.  
275 Be this a worde may we se right, *one*  
That trouthe es of so mikil might,  
That if a man ask a bone tharein, *make a request*  
And he be oute of dedeli syn,  
He maye be siker to have that bone, *certain*  
280 If resoune will that it be done.  
And if he ask unskilfullie, *unreasonably*  
Yitte God of him will have mercie,  
And ger him witte on whatkin wise,  
That his askinge es unrightwise.  
285 That may I schew yow be a tale,  
That I to yow now tell sale. *shall*
- Ane empoure was wonand in Rome, *dwelling*  
That was rightwise in his dome. *judgment*  
He was callid Sir Trajane —  
290 Allas, he dyed a hethen mane.  
He was full of debonerté, *humility*  
And full of mercye and pité,  
Bot for he dyed sarezyne, *because; pagan*  
His saule yode unto hell pyne. *went*  
295 Allas, allas, that swilk a kinge  
Suld go to hell for missetrowynge. *misbelieving*  
Many wyntir thareeftir come  
Saynte Gregore, the pape of Rome, *pope*  
And passid before the emperoure gate,  
300 And thare full sare gon he grate, *weep*  
For he herd speke of his godenes,  
Of his rewthe and rightwisnes;  
Forthi he had so grete pité,  
That swilk a kinge suld dampnid be, *damned*  
305 That he prayed for him and saide, “Jesus —  
Thow have mercie of Trajanus,  
And bringe his saule oute of hell,  
And late it noght tharein lange dwell.”  
He knelid before the hali awtere, *altar*  
310 And als he made his prayere,  
He fell on slepe and als he laie,  
He herd ane aungel to him saie:  
“Thi Lorde Criste hase grauntid thee,  
That Trajane may borowid be, *released*  
315 Bot luke thou praye namare for nane, *see that you; no one*  
That to the pyne of hell es gane;  
For unskilwise es swilk prayere, *unjustified*  
It es noght right that God it here.” *hear*

- Here may ye here what trouthe may do,  
 320 To man that gives him all thareto: *gives himself altogether*  
 Forsothe he getes his boone in haste,  
 That in right trouthe es stedefaste.  
 And if he praie unskilfulli, *although*  
 Als did the Pape, Saynte Gregorie,  
 325 Aye sall his prayere and his bede  
 Stande him in full mikil stede. *Be of advantage to him*
- Yit will I more of trouthe yow tell,  
 If ye will listene and here mi spell. *account*  
 God of Hevene a folk him chese,  
 330 Als in the Bybile writen es.  
 In thaire lede thai ware Jewes callid, *country*  
 And for Goddes folk ware thai talde. *accounted*  
 Of twelf brethir had thai kynde, *They were descended from twelve brothers*  
 Bot thaire insight was aye so blynde, *lacking*  
 335 That Goddes might wald thai noght knawe, *recognize*  
 For all the wondirs that thai sawe. *Despite; miracles*  
 God thorghe a se thaim drie fote ledde;  
 And sithen in wildirnes thaim stedde, *sea; dry shod*  
 And fourty wyntir with manna fedde, *placed*  
 340 And aie in newe clothis thaim cledde, *clothed*  
 And made thaim balde in all thaire mode, *brave at heart*  
 Yit did thai evyle agaynes Gode.  
 For fals goddes honourid thaie,  
 And tenid God and did him traie, *angered; betrayed him*  
 345 And other synnes did thai mo,  
 Wharethorghe thai tholid mikil wo. *Because of which*  
 Now ware full lange all for to speke, *it would be*  
 What schame thai tholid, what wo and wreke; *vengeance*  
 For als oft als thai God forsoke,  
 350 Als oft he vengeaunce on thaim toke.  
 Forthi of thaim I will tell here,  
 Thinge that touchis oure matere. *is germane to our subject*  
 The kinge of Babyloines toune,  
 Had mani Jewe in his baundoue, *power*  
 355 And flemid thaim into wyldirnes *banished*  
 For thair synne and wickidnes. *Because of*  
 And sithen he gert comaunde and crie,  
 That none of thaim ware so hardie,  
 To passe oute of that wildirnes,  
 360 That fer beyonde the paynim es. *heathen lands*  
 That wildirnes als the boke us telles,  
 Es loken aboute with hye felles. *surrounded by hills*  
 Many wyntir eftir this fare, *these events*  
 The Kinge Alisaundir come thare,

- 365 When he had all this werld conquerde,  
And all folk ware for him ferde. *afraid of him*  
Thir forsaide Jewis that wonid thare,  
Praiede the kinge with swete sware, *speech*  
That he wald give thaim leve to gange *permission*  
370 Oute of that wildirnes so strange. *rugged*  
He askid thaim, als the boke us telles,  
Whi thai ware pyndide in tha felles. *imprisoned*  
A man answerd unto the kinge,  
All the matere of thaire speringe: *enclosure*  
375 Forthi that thai oft God forsoke,  
And to mawmetrie thaim toke. *idolatry*  
He saide, "Thai have unkynde ay bene,  
And that on thaim oft hase bene sene. *ungrateful*  
Thaire God hase done for thaim wele mare  
380 Than he did for ani folk are, *before*  
And thai have done ylle agayne, *in return*  
And to thaire Lorde bene unbayne." *disobedient*  
When Alexandir this worde herd,  
Unto the Jewes he thus answerde:  
385 "Sithen ye have youre God forsaken,  
And to fals mawmetes hase you taken,  
I sall fande to spere yow mare, *attempt; enclose*  
Or ever that I hethen fare." *Before; hence go*  
He gert full sone do call werkmen,  
390 And ger thaim wrik in claye and fen, *clayey soil; marshland*  
And masones wroght thare many ane,  
For to make walles of lyme and stane,  
For to hald thir Jewes tharein,  
And that thai suld nevir mare oute wyne. *So that; escape*  
395 All that thai made on daie with might,  
Fell doune agayne apon the night.  
Forthi the kinge was wondir wrathe, *angry*  
That he might nanegate halde his athe; *in no way keep his promise*  
And when he sawe that swilk travayle,  
400 Ne na mannes laboure might avayle *carry out; desire*  
To do his langinge and his will,  
Na that werk for to fullfill,  
He knelid doune on his knees thare,  
And prayed God with mylde fare: *speech*  
405 He suld fullfill his langinge  
And ilk fell to othir bringe. *each hill*  
And als swith als he had praied,  
The huge hye fellis that wyde ware strayed, *separated*  
Ware so fast togider fest, *connected*  
410 That northe ne southe, este ne west,  
May noght passe oute of that lande, *nothing*

	Bot if it be the foule flyande.	<i>flying birds</i>
	And yitt thaire kynde dwellis thare	<i>still; descendants</i>
	And so thai sall do evermare	
415	Till agaynes Domesdaie;	
	Than sall taie all theine straye,	<i>away from there, wander</i>
	In many landes than sall tay wende,	<i>shall they wander</i>
	The Cristen folk for to schende.	<i>destroy</i>
	For ovre all where thai ga,	<i>everywhere</i>
420	Cristen folk sall thai sla.	
	Thai sall ressaive Antecriste,	
	And trow that he es verraie Criste;	<i>believe; true</i>
	And sone eftir comes Domesdaie,	
	Als we in prophecie here saie.	<i>hear spoken</i>
425	All this tale I have you talde,	
	To ger yow in youre hertes halde,	<i>remember</i>
	That all that Cristen men will crave,	
	In stedfast trouthe thai sall it have.	
	That may ye se wele be this kinge,	
430	That for his trouthe had his askinge,	
	And yit was he a hethen man.	
	And thareby may ye se wele than,	
	That Cristen men aght mikil mare,	
	His askinge have if it right ware.	
435	For thir sarzynes trowes noght,	<i>pagans</i>
	That Jhesu Criste on rode thaim boght.	<i>redeemed</i>
	Forthi behoves ilk Cristen man,	<i>[it] behooves</i>
	That Goddes mark hase on him tane,	
	Wanhope oute of his hert cast,	<i>[to] cast</i>
440	And in right trouthe be aye stedfast;	
	For God maye he noght elles paie,	<i>satisfy</i>
	Ne no gude praiere make he maye.	
	Oure Lorde lene us grace to trowe,	<i>grant</i>
	So that it may be for oure prowte.	<i>reward</i>
445	Amen, amen, saye we all sammen,	<i>together</i>
	That we may come to joye and gammen. Amen.	<i>delight</i>

[Homily 55 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

## 56. TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

*Dominica vicesima prima post festum Sancte Trinitatis. Evangelium secundum Johannem.*<sup>1</sup>

*Erat quidem regulus cuius filius infirmabatur Capharnaum et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	Seynt John the good Gospellere <sup>3</sup>	
	Seyth thus in oure Gospel here:	
	A town was callid Capharnaum	
	To whilk Crist was wont to com;	which
5	A kingis sone ful sike ther lay,	
	And whan his fader the king herd say	
	That Crist was comen to that cuntré	
	That than was callid Galilé,	
	He com and preyd Crist as his frend	
10	That he wolde to his hous wend,	go
	And help his sone that ther sike lay;	
	And than Crist to him gan say:	did say
	“But if ye wonderful tokins se,	Unless; miraculous signs
	Ellis trowe ye not in me.”	believe
15	The king seyde, “Lord, come in hi	in haste
	And help my sone or than he di.”	before he dies
	Than answerid Crist and bad him gange,	go
	And seyde, “Thi sone is hol and strange.”	whole
	He trowid Crist and was ful fayn,	believed; glad
20	And turnid him fast homward agayn;	
	And as he wente be the strete,	
	His owne servauntis gan he mete,	
	That told him in that ilke stound	very moment
	That his sone was hol and sound.	well
25	The king hem askid what tyme and whan	
	That he was hol, and thei seyde than:	
	“Yesterday as we yow say	
	The fyvere him lefte about mydday.”	fever
	The king him umbethought than right,	reflected

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty-first Sunday after the feast of Holy Trinity. The Gospel according to John*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (John 4:46–53): *And there was a certain ruler, whose son was sick at Capharnaum. [He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him; and they brought word, saying, that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him. The father therefore knew, that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house.]*

<sup>3</sup> Marginal notation: *John 4:46*. MS D has numerous marginal annotations of this type, in a later hand (probably sixteenth century). See the textual notes for a listing of them.

- 30        It was the same tyme that Crist him hight *promised*  
           That his sone schuld helid be  
           Therfor in Crist ful wel trowid he. *believed*  
           This is the strengthe of oure Gospelle,  
           But herof I wile sumthing telle.
- 35        How this king trowid not stedefastli  
           In oure Lord God Almyghti;  
           For this king bad him com *Because*  
           Bodili unto Capharnaum,  
           For he wende that his manhed *thought; physical presence*  
 40        Myght mor do than his Godhed  
           That his sone hol were wrought,  
           For his Godhed knew he nought. *To make his son whole*  
           Therfor wold Crist lete him se *Divinity*  
           That overal was his pousté, *power*  
 45        And bad him gon with mylde chere, *countenance*  
           And seyde his sone was hol and fere;  
           As who say, “Thu may wite therbi *healthy and strong*  
           That thouh I come not bodili *As if to say; know*  
           Mi Godhed is myghti nevertheles  
 50        To hele thi sone of his syknes.”  
           For Goddis myght and his maystri *mastery*  
           In alle stedis is ay so redi, *places*  
           That nouht so privé may be done *secretly*  
           That he ne knowith it als sone; *immediately*  
 55        And that not thorw his manhede  
           But thorw the myght of his Godhede.  
           And therfor we may understande  
           That this king was mystrowande *mistrustful*  
           Whan he preyd Crist to come  
 60        Bodili unto Capharnaum;  
           For if he had ben stedefast  
           In trouthe he schuld have seyde in hast: *faith; at once*  
           “Lord, thi wil thu schew to me  
           For ther ageyn may no thing be. *against it*  
 65        Comaunde, Lord, for thi mercy,  
           That my sone be hol in hy, *whole*  
           For I trowe Lord stedefastli *believe*  
           That thu art God Almyghti.”  
           But for he wende that his manhed  
 70        Was mor of myght than his Godhed, *greater in power*  
           Therfor he bad Crist come in haste  
           To hele his sone or he yald the gaste;  
           And therfor seyde Crist him to:  
           “But if ye se me wondres do,



75 Ellis trowe ye not that I  
Be Goddis Sone Almyghty."

	Here may we seen that the Godhede	
	Is more to love than his manhede,	<i>more to be loved</i>
	And mannes soule withouten les	<i>lies</i>
80	Of the Godhed hath the liknes.	
	Therfor schuld we mekil more	<i>much</i>
	Loke that oure soule wel wore	<i>See that our soul be upright</i>
	Than oure foule wrecchid bodi,	
	And ellis oure lyf is al foli;	<i>otherwise</i>
85	For the bodi schal rote in clay,	<i>rot</i>
	But the soule schal laste for ay.	<i>forever</i>
	But in this world is many a man	
	That mekil werldli wisdom can,	<i>Who much; knows</i>
	And to the bodi thei take good yeme	<i>great care</i>
90	In lust and liking it to queme.	<i>desire; please</i>
	But of the soule thei rekke no del	<i>care not at all</i>
	Whether that it farith ille or wel.	
	With worldli welthe the flesch thei fede	<i>nourish</i>
	And not the soule with no good dede;	
95	Forsothe me thinkith that alle swiche	<i>everyone</i>
	Unto this king may wel ben liche,	<i>like</i>
	That mor worschipid Cristis manhed	
	Than he dide his heye Godhede.	
	For who so do his soule nedis,	<i>attends to</i>
100	He worschipith God in his dedis;	
	For mannes soule as we rede here	
	Is Goddis owne ymage clere.	
	Therfor if we oure lawe wile yeme,	<i>take heed of</i>
	God himself make we ful queme,	<i>pleased</i>
105	For everi holi soule is Goddis spouse	
	That he schal bringe to blisful house.	
	But here arn many men to wite	<i>blame</i>
	That love these fayre men and white	
	Mor for fayrhed of hire bodi	<i>beauty</i>
110	Than for the vertu of the soule gostli.	
	But forsothe if thei myght se	<i>truly</i>
	The liknes of the Trenyté	
	That in mannes soule is wrought,	<i>created</i>
	And how dere that it was bought,	<i>dearly; purchased</i>
115	Thei wold more love therto kithe	<i>show</i>
	Than to the bodi a thousand sithe.	<i>times</i>
	But with the bodi wold thei wlate,	<i>be disgusted</i>
	And honoure the soule for the grete state.	<i>its good spiritual condition</i>
	We schuld love men for hire goodnesse	
120	Mor than for bodily fayrnesse.	

	And that may we seen be a tale here That acordith to this matere.	<i>is appropriate</i>
	Seynt Basil tellith sothfastli, That in a lond was a nonneri	
125	Wherin nonnes dwellid good won; And among hem was on That caste hire love so inwardli Upon oure Lord God Almyghti, That of hireself nothing sche rought,	<i>according to good custom</i> <i>one</i> <i>directed</i> <i>cared</i>
130	But on Jhesu was hire thought. Hire chere was ay semand sori. Hire felawis held hire wod forthi, And made of hire ful gret skornyng, And callid hire oule and outcasting;	<i>expression; in appearance sorrowful</i> <i>considered her to be crazy</i> <i>were scornful of her</i> <i>owl and outcast</i>
135	For alle the nonnes that were thore Wend wel that sche fonned wore, And summe on hire foul water keste, And sumtyme draf and sumtyme yeste; And summe rubbid hire withoute	<i>Thought; insane</i> <i>threw</i> <i>chaff; pig swill</i>
140	With ground mustard al aboute. But sche made no grucching For al hire evyl skornyng, But all sche suffrid ful mekeli, And to hire servise was ay redi.	<i>complaint</i> <i>their; scorn</i>
145	For oftetyms sche greid hire schos, And wisch hire vessel as a quystroun dos. And whatsoevere thei put hire to Wit a good wil al dide scho. Hire hed was wounden al aboute	<i>polished their shoes</i> <i>And washed their dishes as a scullion does</i> <i>bound</i>
150	With a foul lynen cloute; And for sche was so unlikli Alle thei letin of hire skornrfulli. But yet sche was ful derworthi Beforn oure Lord God Almyghti.	<i>cloth</i> <i>because; ugly</i> <i>mistreated her scornfully</i> <i>precious</i>
155	Thus led sche longe ful holy lyf, But sche made nevere hire goodnes ryf, For evere hire holynes sche hid But atte laste oure Lord it kid.	<i>public</i> <i>made known</i> <i>hermit dwelled</i>
160	For an ermyte wonid ther beside, That in that lond was knowen ful wide. Protormes the ermyte hyght; To him God sente an aungil bright, That swiche wordis unto him seyde Ther he was in his preyeris leyde:	<i>was called</i>
165	“Thu wenist,” he seyde, “that thou here art An hali man and clene of hert.	<i>Where; positioned</i> <i>think; [you] are</i> <i>pure</i>

- Ther is a woman I wot wel whore,  
 That of holynes hath mekil more  
 Than evere thu yet had in thee;  
 170 And if thu wilt, thu may hire se.  
 Wit a good tokne I schal thee bynde  
 How thu schalt that mayden fynde:  
 Unto that nonneri thu go to morn,  
 And calle the nonnes alle thee beforn,  
 175 And sche that hath hire hed wounden  
 And al with cloutis aboute bounden,  
 That is sche that holy may  
 That servith God bothe nyght and day.  
 Hire felawis don hire tene and tray,  
 180 And al sche takith it in play.  
 Sche preyth for alle that don hire mys,  
 Forthi with God ful dere sche is.  
 And thu sittist here al alone,  
 And anger and tene sufferist thu none,  
 185 And wenist thiself be ful holi,  
 And beforn God ful derworthi.  
 Thu latist thin herte ful wide stray,  
 And thinkist on worldli game and play.  
 Therfor I sey thee full witterli,  
 190 Thu art not half so holi  
 As is that blisful and holy may  
 That suffrith so gladli tene and tray."  
 Upon the morn this ermyte aros,  
 And to the nonneri faste he gos;  
 195 And als sone as he com there,  
 The nonnes made him good chere.  
 So holi man and good was he,  
 That alle were fayn him for to se.  
 Thei askid sone what was his wille,  
 200 And of his comyng to wite sum skille.  
 He answerid and seyde to hem than:  
 "Among yow is a good woman  
 That I am come for to se,  
 For of hire wile I blissid be."  
 205 He lokid about him ful wide whore,  
 And askid if thei alle were thore.  
 "Me thinkith," he seyde, "that I hire mysse  
 For whom I come heder iwise."  
 To this ermyte than answerid thei,  
 210 And seyde ther was not on away  
 But a caytif, a fonnyd wight  
 That schuld come in no mannes sight.  
 "Sche is so foul and so fulsome
- know; where*  
*sign; give*  
*tomorrow*  
*head wound about*  
*cloths*  
*maiden*  
*companions; annoyance and mischief*  
*do her wrong*  
*Therefore to*  
*precious*  
*allow; wander*  
*certainly*  
*maiden*  
*Such a*  
*glad*  
*at once*  
*know; reason*  
*all about him*  
*do not see*  
*here*  
*one missing*  
*Except a wretch; deranged creature*  
*ought to*  
*disgusting*

- That sche afor men may not come." *before*  
 215 Than answerid this holi man  
 And seyde, "I wile seen that woman." *wish to see*  
 Than yede a nonne hire for to calle, *went*  
 And brouht hire forth befor hem alle.  
 Whan this ermyte of hire had sight,  
 220 To hire fete he fil down right.  
 Sche was affrayd that he dide so, *frightened*  
 Hire schamyd sore and was ful wo. *She was ashamed*  
 To the ground plat fil sche thore, *flat*  
 And wepte ful tenderli and sore.  
 225 Whan the nonnes saw hem don thus  
 Thei seyde unto Protamus:  
 "Rise up, Fader," thei seyde in hi, *hastily*  
 "Thu dost thiself gret vileny; *wrong*  
 Thu liggist befor a foul sage *You lie; idiot*  
 230 That lyvith in wodnes and in rage." *madness*  
 "Ye gabbe," he seyde, "alle witterli;  
 In this woman is non foli, *deceive yourselves; certainly*  
 But ye arn folis and have ben longe *madness*  
 That have dispisid hire with wronge  
 235 For wite ye wel without les, *wrongly*  
 Sche is of wel mor worthines *know; without lies*  
 Beforn Jhesu Cristes face  
 Than alle that stande in this place.  
 An aungil told me al hire state *condition*  
 240 Forthi hire goodnes al I wate." *know*  
 Than made the nonnes ful mekil mone, *great moaning*  
 And on hire knes thei fille ilkone, *each one*  
 And askid hire forgifnes sone  
 Of al that thei had hire mysdone; *done wrong*  
 245 And seyde, "We arn worthi to blame  
 For we han don hire mekil schame."  
 This blissid mayden ful myldeli  
 Forgaf hem alle ful inwardli, *earnestly*  
 And seyde, "My Lord God Almyghty  
 250 On yow and me he have mercy." *[may] he have*  
 But whan sche saw that mor and les *everyone*  
 Knew hire lyf and hire goodnes,  
 Al worldly loos sche thouhte to fle, *fame*  
 For in worschipe sche wold not be. *to be worshipped*  
 255 Sche fled away upon a nyght,  
 And com no mor in mannes sight.  
 Mighte no man seththe in no land *since*  
 Of this mayden here mor tidand. *news*  
 But we trowe that God hire tok *believe*  
 260 To Paradys, for sche forsok

	Al this wrecchid worldis blis, That nothing but fantam is.	<i>phantom</i>
265	Be this tale may we seen wel That God is be the hundrid del Bettere payd of that fayrnes That in a mannes soule is, Whan he is out of dedli synne, Than of al this worldis wyne. For this woman was in hire bodi	<i>a hundred times satisfied pleasure</i>
270	Foul of syghte and unlykly, But hire soule notforthi Was to God ful derworthi. Therfor be we not to bolde Of oure flesche that schal rote in molde;	<i>unattractive nevertheless precious confident earth</i>
275	But be we tendere of that drury That Crist so dere on rode wolde by: That is oure soule that I of mene God geve us grace to hold it clene For als often as we it file	<i>treasure wished to buy pure defile</i>
280	Goddis ymage make we vile. If we this ymage so despite, And he be wroth, who may him wite? God graunte us grace it clene to bringe To hevene blisse at oure endinge. Amen.	<i>scorn blame</i>

[Homilies 57–58 not included in this edition. See Explanatory Notes.]

## 59. TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

*Dominica xxiiii secundum Johannem. In illo tempore:*<sup>1</sup>

*Cum sublevasset oculos Jhesu et vidisset quia multitudo maxima venit etc.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty-fourth Sunday [after Trinity] according to John. In that time*

<sup>2</sup> Latin rubric (John 6: 5–15): *When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh [to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to try him; for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said: Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Now*

Saynte Jone the gode Gospellere,  
 Tellis als I sall saie you here  
 In the Gospell of todaie;  
 I rede ye bere it wele awaie.  
 5 He saise how that it befell ones,  
 Criste lokid aboute for the nones, *then*  
 And sone he saide when he sawe  
 That mikil folk to him gon drawe. *many*  
 He askid Sainte Philipe in hyc, *quickly*  
 10 “Whare maie we mete to this folk bye?” *food*  
 et cetera.  
  
 The remnande of this Gospell thou maye  
 Finde on the ferde Lentene Sonondaie. *fourth*

---

*those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet, that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore, when he knew that they would come to take him by force, and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone.]*





## EXPLANATORY NOTES

**ABBREVIATIONS:** **AS:** *Acta Sanctorum*, ed. Bolland et al.; **AT:** *Alphabet of Tales*, ed. Banks; **CA:** *Catena Aurea*, ed. Newman; **CT:** Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; **DOST:** *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*; **McIntosh:** McIntosh, “Some Words in the Northern Homily Collection”; **MED:** *Middle English Dictionary*; **NEHC:** Gerould, *North English Homily Collection*; **Nevanlinna:** Nevanlinna, *The Northern Homily Cycle*; **NHC:** *Northern Homily Cycle*; **NIMEV:** *The New Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. Boffey and Edwards; **OE:** Old English; **OED:** *Oxford English Dictionary*; **OF:** Old French; **OI:** Old Irish; **ON:** Old Norse; **PL:** *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Migne; **Small:** *English Metrical Homilies*, ed. Small; **Tubach:** *Index Exemplorum*, ed. Tubach; **Whiting:** Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly Before 1500*. For manuscript abbreviations (ED, A, D, G, L, V), see the Introduction, pp. 14–15.

## PROLOGUE

The Prologue opens with a hymn of praise to God, accompanied by the exhortation that all humankind in return praise God for his creative and salvific power. Clerks, especially, have a duty to help the laity with this task through their teaching; from this follows the need for the laity to have the words of the Gospel, which is preached in church every Sunday, “undone” in English so that they can understand the meaning of what they hear. Only if clerks take seriously their responsibility to teach what they know, will layfolk be helped to live righteously and so attain the Kingdom of Heaven. The early unexpanded *NHC* is the only version of the cycle to contain this prologue: both of the later expanded versions omit it, presumably because there was no longer a need to make a special case for preaching in English.

*NIMEV* 777. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 16r–16v; A: fols. 1r–2v; G: fols. 5v–7v; D: (not included); L: fol. 1r.

- 4        *A God, a miht, in persons thre.* The doctrine of the Trinity asserts that one indivisible Godhead exists and is known in three eternally distinct forms: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Church’s Trinitarian faith developed its present form largely under the influence of Athanasius in the fourth century.
- 7        *That mad of riht noht alle thing.* The traditional belief is that God created the world “ex nihilo,” solely through the activity of his sovereign will.
- 14       *Of erthe and lam thou made manne.* “And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth . . .” (Genesis 2:7).



- 30      *on rode him boht*. The *NHC*-poet frequently uses metaphors (common to many medieval texts) of buying and selling to express the idea of the Redemption, whereby the life, suffering, and above all the death of Christ are seen as a kind of “ransom price” that frees humans from sin.
- 63      *On Ingelis tong*. The importance of using English for the benefit of the laity is expressed in other contemporary works (e.g., *Handlyng Synne* and *Cursor Mundi*). Compare the following passage from the latter: “This ilk bok is es translate / In to Inglis tong to rede, / For the loue of Inglis lede, / Inglis lede of Ingland, / For the commun at understand” (Cotton version, ed. Morris, lines 232–36).
- 67–68      *Than klerkes that thair mirour lokes, / And sees hou thai sal lif on bokes*. The clergy are able to monitor their own behavior through their ability to read God’s word for themselves. See the Introduction (p. 10) for Gerould’s suggestion with regard to this line.
- 89–90      *Al four a talle*. The *NHC*-poet here articulates a medieval belief, greatly influenced by Augustine, in the single truth or meaning underlying Scripture. In his *De Consensu Evangelistarum* Augustine explains that despite individual differences all four Gospels are teaching the same truth of Christ’s life and work. In Book 3 of *On Christian Doctrine* he writes further that “when . . . from a single passage in the Scripture not one but two or more meanings are elicited, even if what he who wrote the passage intended remains hidden, there is no danger if any of the meanings may be seen to be congruous with the truth taught in other passages of the Holy Scriptures” (3.27.38, pp. 101–02). Chaucer memorably expresses the same concept in the prologue to his Tale of Melibee:
- . . . ye woot that every Evaungelist,  
That telleth us the peyne of Jhesu Crist,  
Ne seith nat alle thyng as his felawe dooth;  
But nathelees hir sentence is al sooth,  
And alle acorden as in hire sentence,  
Al be ther in hir tellyng difference.  
For somme of hem seyn moore, and somme seyn lesse,  
Whan they his pitous passioun expresse —  
I meene of Mark, Mathew, Luc, and John —  
But doutelees hir sentence is al oon. (*CT* VII[B<sup>2</sup>]943–52)
- 96      *Er red in kirc*. Of the three Sunday services open to the laity, mass, held fairly early in the morning, was the one best attended. The Gospels were almost certainly read in Latin at this time, hence the *NHC*-poet’s concern to paraphrase and explicate the text for his audience. This passage seemingly assumes a prior hearing of the Gospels, as part of the Sunday church service, leaving open the question of the time and venue during which the present text would have been heard or read.
- 128      *Pater noster etc.* These words, following the end of the verse line, are a reminder that these prayers are now to be spoken. The laity were expected to know, at a minimum, the *Creed*, the *Pater Noster*, or “Lord’s Prayer,” taken from the words spoken by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9–13), and the *Ave*

*Maria*, or “Hail Mary,” a prayer loosely based on Gabriel’s Annunciation to Mary in Luke 1:28 and 42. They were encouraged to recite these and other prayers at identified points in the church service (Swanson, *Church and Society*, pp. 276–77).

## RATIO

The Ratio offers a brief explanation as to why the liturgical year begins with Advent: a month before the birth of Christ, Holy Church welcomes him with honor and mirth, and thanks God for sending him to free mankind from eternal damnation. The poet expresses here the Christian view of time which understands the birth of Christ as an eternally recurring event and one that is therefore celebrated every year.

*NIMEV* 323. Manuscripts: ED: fol. 16v; A: fol. 2v–3r; G: fols. 7v–8r; D: fols. 39v–40r; L: fol. 1v.

- 2        *Satenas*. After the fall of Adam and Eve, mankind was in the power of the devil, held prisoner in hell until released by Christ. The imagery of the world as a battleground with Christ as the ultimate victor in a war against Satan is vividly portrayed, *inter alia*, in the influential writings of the sixth-century Gregory the Great: “Daily we stand in the battle line, taking the blows of his temptations” (*Moralia* 2.18.32, quoted in Russell, *Lucifer*, p. 100; see *PL* 70.571). Not surprisingly, the *NHC*-poet elides the question which perplexed theologians before and after Gregory, regarding the fate of the just who died before the Incarnation.
- 6        *Of mankind hafð sa gret píté*. Cp. John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.”
- 10       *Moht Crist noht by apon the rode*. See note to Prol.30.
- 16       *Gabbid*. *MED*: ON; compare OI *gabba*, “to lie.” This of course is an allusion to the serpent’s deception of Adam and Eve as recounted in Genesis.
- 28       *aller*. A survival of the Old English genitive plural *eallra*. Old English adjectives were fully inflected, agreeing with nouns in case, number, and gender. These inflections disappeared rapidly from Middle English, but *aller* in various forms survived until the sixteenth century.

## 1. FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The liturgical year begins with the four Sundays of the Advent season, which culminate in the Nativity. The celebration of Advent was instituted towards the end of the fifth century, and the Latin word *adventus* (“coming”), which gives its name to the season, was first understood as referring specifically to the birth of Christ but later taken in the wider sense of the coming of Christ in general. The texts for the First, Third, and Fourth Sundays appropriately center on the life and preaching of John the Baptist, who prophesied Jesus’ coming,

and who also baptized him in the river Jordan. In the preceding Ratio, the poet has identified the season as one of joyful anticipation, as Christians prepare to welcome Jesus with “honor and mirth”; for the medieval church, however, the Advent season was also a time of fasting and repentance, hence the further appropriateness of John the Baptist as a preacher of repentance. Despite the ostensible cheer, all four of the Advent texts introduce a considerable element of darkness, especially that for the Second Sunday, which looks ahead to Judgment Day at the end of time. The First Sunday in Advent is that which is closest in date to the Feast of Saint Andrew (November 30).

*NIMEV* 2996, 4226. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 17r–18v; A: fols. 3r–7r; G: fols. 8r–11v; D: fols. 40r–42v; L: fols. 1v–3r.

- 1        *Sayn Mark*. The Gospel passage from Mark was not widely used for the First Sunday in Advent during this period. The missals for both Sarum and York, for instance, employ Matthew 21:1–9, which chronicles Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, and later versions of *NHC* itself substitute the Matthew text for that of Mark. This lends support to the idea that *NHC* was originally composed by Augustinian canons who generally show more flexibility than other clergy in their choice of Gospel pericopes (see Heffernan, “Authorship,” p. 304, and Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 23).
- 14        *Malachye*. An allusion to Malachias 3:1: “Behold I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face.”
- 45–46    *This es the strenthe of our Godspel, / That man with Englis tung mai telle*. The poet regularly indicates the conclusion of the Gospel paraphrase with this formula or another very similar.
- 65        *Cristes messagers*. The importance and worthiness of the office of preacher is a frequent theme. Nonetheless, as will be seen, the poet also speaks often and colorfully of preachers who do not behave in a manner that is consonant with their office. See, for example, the sermons for Septuagesima and the Third Sunday in Lent (Homilies 14 and 20). The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 was responsible for placing a heightened emphasis on the duties of priests with regard to their parishioners, and the consequent necessity for priests to be sufficiently well educated to carry out these duties (Boyle, “Fourth Lateran,” pp. 30–31).
- 79        *lyhted down*. The poem appropriates a favorite pun often used by writers on the Annunciation, where the Holy Spirit “alighted” in Mary, thus making her luminous with his light, and at the same time making her light (less encumbered, less heavy of heart). Compare Chaucer’s wordplay where, in the Prologue to The Prioress’ Tale, we read of “the Goost that in th’alighte, / Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte” (*CT* VII[B<sup>2</sup>]470–71).
- 80        *maiden*. The two primary meanings of the term are surely in force here, as Mary is both a young woman and a virgin (*MED*).
- 81        *And schop him bodi*. A reference to the central Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, the belief that Jesus, who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, was born from the Virgin Mary, was both God and a human being.

- 84 *al an.* This phrase expresses the idea that Christ, in his holiness (sinlessness) remains all one with God, though separate in accordance with Trinitarian hypostatic theory (different but one in the same). Sin “is moder of divisioun,” Gower writes (*Confessio Amantis*, Prol.1030; see also Prol.849–53 and 1009–10), a principle at work here by contrast as the fiend, who is separated from God, tries to trick Jesus the man into sin (division) and thereby hurl him into his prison (line 104).
- 92 *Als fisce is tan wit bait and hoc.* Proverbial. See Whiting F230, which lists, among others, occurrences in Aelfric, *Cursor Mundi*, and Lydgate. This was a very popular image in sermons. Though the idea can be traced back to Origen, it was given its most famous form by Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth century, who described how “the Deity was hidden under the veil of our nature, that so, as with ravenous fish, the hook of the Deity might be gulped down along with the bait of flesh, and thus, life being introduced into the house of death, and light shining in darkness, that which is diametrically opposed to light and life might vanish” (*Great Catechism* 24, in *Select Library*, p. 494). John of Damascus (in *De Fid.* 3.27) uses the same simile in the eighth century, and Henry notes that the familiar image is portrayed “in Herrad of Landsburg’s drawing of Leviathan swallowing the hook of the Cross concealed by the bait of Christ’s body” (Henry, “Pater Noster,” p. 111).
- 103 *ithenlye.* *MED*: from ON *iðinn*, “diligent.” The only citations in *MED* come from *NHC* and *Cursor Mundi*. Small notes several Scottish dialect variants of this word: “ithand, ythen, eident,” which further signal its Northern origin (p. 176).
- 122 *He herid hel.* The Harrowing of Hell was the medieval English term for Christ’s descent into hell following his death, understood as the moment when he triumphed over Satan and led forth a victorious procession of those who had lived justly but had died before they could be redeemed by Christ. This popular belief, to which the mystery plays often devoted an entire episode, was developed in post-biblical times from images scattered throughout the New Testament (see, for example, Matthew 12:40 and 27:52–53).
- 128 *ro.* Small notes the derivation of *ro* from ON *ró*, “peace” (p. 176).
- 159 *Werldes welthe.* Although most of the *NHC* exempla have been taken from collections like the *Vitae Patrum*, this is one of several whose source is actually biblical:

And one of the Pharisees desired him to eat with him. And he went into the house of the Pharisee, and sat down to meat. And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment; And standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet, with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And the Pharisee, who had invited him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This man, if he were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. And Jesus, answering, said to him: Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. But he said: Master, say it. A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not

wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most? Simon answering, said; I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said to him: Thou hast judged rightly. And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon: Dost thou see this woman: I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she with tears hath washd my feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed my feet. Wherefor I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And he said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee. (Luke 7:36–48, with synoptic parallels at Mark 14:3–9 and Matthew 26:6–13)

Luke's account does not name the penitential sinner as Mary Magdalene, but Gregory the Great preached a homily in 591 fusing together three Marys taken from different elements of scriptural tradition as found in the Gospels: Mary Magdalene (the woman healed of demonic possession by Christ who became his disciple and bore witness to his resurrection), Mary of Bethany (the sister of Martha and Lazarus), and the unnamed sinner who anointed Christ's feet at the house of Simon the Pharisee. The composite figure thus created became one of the most popular saints of the later Middle Ages: Bede's *Martyrology* (c. 720) provides the first evidence for the cult of Mary Magdalene in the West, and by the eleventh century the signs of devotion to her were everywhere (see Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, p. 35). Mary Magdalene was especially significant as a figure for repentance, as seen, for example, in the illustration of her found in the *Biblia Pauperum* (Henry, "Pater Noster," pp. 101–11).

- 189      *Simonde was mesel*. Luke does not say that Simon was a leper, but he is so identified in Matthew 26:6 and Mark 14:3.
- 205      *blotned*. Small notes: "From blote, to dry, hence the well known word 'bloater,' a herring dried in smoke" (p. 176).
- 207–10      The idea that Mary's ointment is the same as that which she used in her earlier sinful life is (to the best of my knowledge) original to *NHC*. The ointment has an extended legendary history after the anointing of Christ: King Bademagu offers to heal Lancelot's wounds by applying the ointment of the Three Marys in Chrétien de Troyes' *Knight of the Cart* (p. 211). The ointment also makes an appearance in *Le Mort Ayneri de Narbonne*, a chanson de geste that is part of the William of Orange Cycle.
- 275–80      *blast of bem . . . he sal thaim flem*. The extended rhyme over these six lines on the eschaton helps to hold the apocalyptic imagery apart from the text, emphasizing the innate power of the last things. These images, of course, have their scriptural basis in Apocalypse, particularly 20:11–15.
- 281–84      Here the poet alludes to his next homily, on the signs that will precede Judgment Day as foretold by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. See Second Sunday in Advent for this text.

## 2. SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Unlike the text for the First Sunday in Advent, this apocalyptic Lucan text was found in virtually all of the liturgical Gospel texts used in the Middle Ages. The grimly detailed and very popular account of the fifteen days preceding the end of the world was traditionally ascribed to Saint Jerome, though nowhere traceable to him. As noted earlier, despite the joyful anticipation of the Advent season, reminders of the need for repentance were also an important aspect of this time; hearing about the cataclysmic events in which the sea will burn, trees will sweat blood, bones will rise up from the graves in which dead men lie, and the stars will fall, must have strongly encouraged a mood of penitence. In reminding his audience of the wars to come in these last days, the poet also makes a point to which he will return many times, and about which he seems to care deeply: war and suffering always affect the poor more than the rich, who can protect themselves behind the high walls of their castles, and who never lack for food or drink. The *exemplum*, building on the theme of the homily, underscores the need for confession and penance through its tale of a monk who was thought by his fellows to be a most holy man but who returns after his death to report to his friend on how narrowly he had escaped hell.

*NIMEV* 3790, 26. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 18v–20v; A: fols. 7r–10v; G: fols. 11v–15r; D: fols. 42v–45v; L: fols. 3r–4v.

- 1        *Today Sain Louk telles us.* Unlike the First Sunday in Advent, Gregory, Robert of Gretham, and *NHC* all use the same Gospel pericope as the basis for the homily that follows. There is a slight similarity between Gregory and Robert insofar as both remain close to the Gospel text itself, emphasizing the ever worsening state of the world and the need to focus on the life to come. The *NHC*-poet, however, after reflecting briefly on this theme, moves into a detailed and completely independent representation of the Fifteen Signs, first in English and then in Latin (see the Introduction, pp. 10–11, for a discussion of the general relationship between these three texts).
- 8        *wandreth.* Small notes the derivation from ON *vandraedi*, “sorrow” (p. 176).
- 10       *baret.* Small notes derivation from ON *baratta*, “fighting” (p. 176).
- 51       *bernes.* This word can mean either “children” or “men” when spelled with an *e*. When spelled with an *a*, it can only mean “children.” Since A and G both have *barnes* I have opted for “children” as the most likely meaning.
- 56       *derf.* Small notes derivation from ON *diarfr*, “strongly” (p. 177).
- 60       *bers.* Northern form, from *bire(n)*. See textual note.
- 63       *This baret prinnes pouer pride.* This is a difficult line to construe; see textual note.
- 66       *stures.* Small traces this word to ON *styr*, “tumult” (p. 177).
- 78       *Joel.* An allusion to Joel 2:31: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood: before the great and dreadful day of the Lord doth come.”
- 103      As early as the tenth century Jerome was credited with discovery of a short eschatological work entitled “The Fifteen Signs before Doomsday.” This medieval leg-

- end, which was certainly not by Jerome but which took its inspiration from the New Testament Apocalypse, was extremely popular in its many versions in both Latin (including the *Legenda Aurea*) and the vernaculars (Rice, *Saint Jerome*, p. 161).
- 141 *at a schift*. This uncommon expression is cited by *MED*, with the meaning derived from the context of the *NHC* passage. A substitutes a different rhyming couplet, perhaps owing to unfamiliarity with the expression: *þe fourtend daie sall vraymente / All þe erd brenne & þe firmamente*.
- 180a *Isti versus*. Neither the Latin verses of “Jerome” nor the comment following are to be found in any other manuscript of *NHC*. This is a most valuable indication of the author’s intention that the text was to be read aloud in church, though it cannot be taken as proof that the intention was carried out.
- 218 *A blak munk of an abbaye*. Tubach 3373: Monk, black, saved by Virgin. There are multiple versions of this tale, none of which accords exactly with the *NHC* narrative. Gerould speculates that the *NHC*-poet probably took his version from a collection of Mary legends and adapted it to suit his needs (*NEHC*, pp. 30–31). Representatives of the general tale type are found in Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum Historiale*, Nicolas Bozon’s *Contes Moralises*, and Cesarius von Heisterbach’s *Dialogus Miraculorum*, among others (Gerould, *NEHC*, pp. 27–31). Small notes further a version by Roger of Wendover, very similar to those of Vincent and Bozon, but earlier than either (p. 180). Roger’s narrative includes a humorous expression of gratitude by Satan to the “whole assembly of the priests, because they not only would not give up their own pleasures, but also, by their neglect of preaching, they permitted such a great number of souls committed to their charge to descend to hell as had never been seen in times past” (Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History*, p. 341). Gerould also fails to note the *Dicta Anselmi*, which is earlier than any of the analogues named by him and whose Marian legends formed the basis for most later collections in England. The *Dicta* contains an *exemplum* about two brothers with some similarity to our story, as well as the much more famous “Pilgrim to Saint James” (see line 253n).
- blak munk*. A name given in medieval England to the Benedictine monks, as they were distinguished by wearing black habits.
- 219 *enfermer*. In a monastery or religious house, the person in charge of the sick-quarters.
- 253 *Thoru the help of our Lefdi*. The increasing emphasis during the High Middle Ages on the humanity of Christ was accompanied by a similar emphasis and greatly increased popularity of his mother, the Virgin Mary, as an object of devotion and source of help. Accounts of her many miracles and apparitions are found in collections in Latin and the vernaculars beginning in the eleventh century. According to Southern, the first such collection assembled in England, probably in the early twelfth century, was the work of Anselm, the nephew of Archbishop Anselm (“English Origins,” p. 199). The *NHC* selections found in this edition include four additional *exempla* in which Mary makes a miraculous appearance: “The Pilgrim to Saint James,” (4.159–274), “The Widow’s Candle,” “The Abbess Miraculously Delivered” (13.173–248), and “The Knight Saved by Mary” (19.171–286).

- 272 *Reuel of Sain Benet*. The Benedictine Rule for monks was compiled at Monte Casino by Saint Benedict in the second quarter of the sixth century, and by the ninth century had become the model for western monasticism. The chief task of the community, according to this rule, is the performance of the Divine Office, accompanied by prayer, spiritual reading, and work.
- 290 *purgatorie*. The place or state intermediate between heaven and hell where after death and prior to final judgment certain souls are purged of their remaining sins through penal suffering and so attain salvation. Although elements have been taken from earlier Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, the idea of Purgatory in its full and characteristic form first appears as part of the formal doctrine of the western Catholic Church in 1274.
- 308 *Than sal we bye the sines dere*. Mary does not appear in all versions of this story, and the clerk/monk is not always saved. That the *NHC*-poet has opted for a “happy ending” is less important than the emphasis placed at the end, for the benefit of the general audience, on the need to make a full confession during this life, in order to avoid the pains of hell after death. The cloister monk was thought by himself and his fellows to have led a good life, yet when the time came for him to make a reckoning, it appeared that he had failed on many counts. So it is likely to be with us, suggests the poet, for God, who sees everything, will tally against us even those least “idle thoughts” of which we may be unaware.
- 314 *schrift of mouthe*. The requirement established at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, that all Christians confess their sins to a parish priest at least once a year, led to a greatly increased emphasis on the devotional practice of private confession. The importance of this practice is a theme to which the *NHC*-poet frequently alludes.

### 3. THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The poet returns to John the Baptist for his text and homily, explaining the different aspects of the Baptist’s character as illuminated by Christ’s threefold posing of a question in Matthew: “And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet” (Matthew 11:7–9). He departs from his usual structure, whereby the Gospel paraphrase, homily, and *exemplum* follow one another in neat order. Instead he pauses after his explication of Jesus’ first posing of the question, in order to tell the story of Herod’s murder of the Baptist, which offers a perfect illustration of John’s steadfastness, the first of the three qualities brought out by Jesus’ question. Following this narrative he returns to the passage in Matthew, picking up on the further implications of Jesus’ question, but then he circles back to the opening of the Gospel text where John the Baptist has his disciples ask Christ whether he is indeed the one who has come to be the redemption of mankind. To answer this question he turns to Gregory the Great, his favorite commentator, to whom he refers three times in the course of this homily.



*NIMEV* 3018, 3399. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 20v–22v; A: fols. 10v–15r; G: fols. 15r–19r; D: fols. 45v–48v; L: fols. 4v–6r.

- 19        “*I gif the blind,*” *he said, “thair siht.*” The *NHC*-poet follows Gregory here in passing quickly from the listing of miracles to the response they evoke. In contrast, Robert of Gretham in his *Miroir* develops a lengthy allegorical reading of the blind, the deaf, and the lepers (Duncan, *Middle English Mirror*, pp. 38–47). As will be seen in the *NHC* homily for Septuagesima (Homily 14), there are occasional correspondences that suggest our poet’s familiarity, at least, with the *Miroir*; by and large, however, as noted in the Introduction, the two texts have little in common.
- 24        *And pouer men mas me ful rife.* Morey suggests that this verse represents a significant rewriting of Matthew 11:5 (“The poor have the gospel preached to them”), which indicates that the poor “are not being preached to but themselves are preaching, either literally or by emulating Christ through their conduct. Here is subtle but significant evidence of how the homilist recognized the transforming and empowering effect of vernacular texts” (Morey, *Book and Verse*, p. 68).
- 25–26    *And ful bliced . . . es he / That es noht sclaunderd in me.* The *NHC* gloss of these lines makes explicit what is only implicit in Matthew: that it is Jewish unbelievers who will be “scandalized” by Jesus. Gregory explains that Jesus’ words are a kind of foreshadowing of his death and his understanding that “unbelievers took serious offence at him when after so many miracles they saw him dying” (*Forty*, Homily 5, p. 29). A modern commentator notes, along similar lines, “the career of Jesus was not Messianic in any sense that would correspond to Jewish expectations of the Messiah. The cross proved to be the ultimate ‘stumbling block’ to Jews; a crucified Messiah was unthinkable” (Beare, *Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 258).
- 27        *eft and nithe.* Small: “*heftand*, in Scot., signifies abiding, lasting” (p. 181). I have not been able to confirm this reading, which is nowhere to be found in *DOST*. A close perusal of the manuscript, however, persuades me that *eft* and *and* are two separate words, a reading supported by at least two other occurrences in ED (First and Second Sundays after the Octave of the Epiphany), where both also form part of the expression *eft and nithe*. A replaces what is evidently an unfamiliar word with *hate and nythe*, an expression frequently found elsewhere in Middle English, and G has *nyght*, meaning “envy,” on its own. The *MED* cites two of the three *NHC* quotations under the listing *evest*, with the meaning “envy or malice” which makes good sense given the word’s evident derivation from OE *aefst* (“envy”). *MED* implies that *eft* is a scribal error for *efst*, but the scribe’s persistence in spelling the word *eft* suggests, at the least, intention. Further indications of the obscurity of the phrase can be seen in the following couplet from D: *as who seyth iewis come ful blipe / to me for wunderis þat I now kipe*, which, in suggesting that the Jews come gladly to Jesus because of his miracles, gives a quite different meaning.
- 48        *A red that waives wit the winde.* These words introduce a lengthy series of comparisons of the bending reed to human behavior, loosely based on Gregory but much

- expanded. As so often, the poet glosses Jesus' words in such a way as to introduce a favorite theme: the evil influence of wealth, and the wicked ways of the wealthy.
- 77–79     *That es at say, thir glotherers . . . thai.* Proverbial. See Whiting F198. The *NHC*'s is the earliest occurrence listed, with others, including Lydgate, Caxton, and Skelton, all much later.
- 81–83     *Thai kindel baret wit bacbiting, / And slokenes it wit thair glothering, / Thai heeld in tuin, als dos the red.* Compare Gregory: "As soon as [the reed] is touched by approbation or slander, it turns in every direction" (*Forty*, Homily 5, p. 30).
- 99         *The king Herode.* As indicated by the poet in lines 97–98, what follows here is not an *exemplum*, strictly speaking, but a narrative based primarily on the account of John the Baptist's imprisonment at the hands of Herod Antipas, as found in the synoptic Gospels. The *NHC*-poet could also have read further (and more unified) accounts in various medieval commentaries and glosses on the Bible, such as the *Enarrationes* attributed to Anselm or the *Glossa Ordinaria*, which draw on Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.5.2, for this particular story.
- 125        *tumbeled.* Apparently she was an acrobatic dancer.
- 198        *gren and gra.* Here the *NHC* glosses expand Jesus' comment on the soft garments worn by kings with a specific allusion to color, clearly intending its signification at this time as a marker of the rich and royal. Although Gregory criticizes changing fashions in clothing, and "the desire of women for costly clothes," he says nothing about color (*Forty*, Homily 5, p. 31). Whereas the medieval poor dressed in drab or brownish garments for the most part, "colored woolen cloth was the princely fabric *par excellence*." Colored garments, especially blue, became more widespread in the later Middle Ages, but the sumptuary laws, with their attempts to regulate color according to social groups, give further evidence of the ways in which color continued to be symbolically read (Piponnier, *Dress*, p. 60).
- 287–88   *Bot her mai sum man thinc ferly, / Als sais the clerk, Sain Gregorie.* Here our poet draws explicitly on Gregory to deal with what many commentators evidently considered a problem: why should John have to ask something to which he supposedly already knew the answer? Modern commentators have acknowledged the likelihood that John, in prison, had begun to have doubts in that the ministry of Jesus did not "correspond to the picture that John had drawn of the mightier one to follow him" (Beare, *Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 256). Patristic commentators shied away from attributing any loss of faith to John and instead read a variety of implications into his words. According to Gregory: "He did not ask because he doubted that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world, but to know if he who had come into the world in person would also go down in person to the courts of hell . . . 'Just as you deigned to be born on behalf of human beings, make manifest whether you will also deign to die on our behalf'" (*Forty*, Homily 5, p. 29). To this idea the *NHC*-poet adds the typically medieval image of Christ going down to "heri [harrow] helle als king mihtye" (line 308).

#### 4. FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Once again the Gospel text, this time taken from John, focuses on John the Baptist, whose humility in denying that he is the Messiah is the first of two important themes emphasized in the homily. The second theme expands on the Baptist's command to "make straight the way" by drawing on Jesus' comparison of the narrow gate that leads to life, and the broad way that leads to destruction. Always, we are told, Satan is waiting like "a thief in the pass" to waylay us, as we struggle to keep to the paths of righteousness; this image brings the poet to his *exemplum*, the very widespread legend of the pilgrim who, having sinned with a woman, falls into despair and accedes to the devil's counsel first to castrate himself and then to commit suicide. Sin and despair are set against repentance and the ever-present possibility of God's forgiveness as the devil vies with Saint James and the Virgin Mary for the man's soul.

*NIMEV* 3789, 1642. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 22v–24r; A: fols. 15r–19r; G: fols. 19r–23r; D: fols. 48v–52r; L: fols. 6r–7v.

- 15        *Elye*. The Old Testament prophet, Elias (Elijah in modern versions of the Bible). It is said by the angel who comes to Elisabeth, to foretell the birth of her son, John the Baptist, that he "shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17). Elias is also prophesied by Malachius to be a forerunner of the Messiah at his second coming. Malachius 4:5: "Behold I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."
- 19–21    *criand stevin . . . Ysaye*. Isaías 40:3: "The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God."
- 107       *Davy*. David's last utterance, in 2 Kings 23, was traditionally understood as prophetic.
- 109–10   *Lauerd, thou scheu me / The wai that ledes man to thee*. David's quoted words doubtless come from the Psalms, which were all attributed to him, and where this idea is frequently expressed, as, for instance, in Vulgate Psalm 24:4–5: "Shew, O Lord, thy ways to me, and teach me thy paths. Direct me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art God my Saviour . . . ."
- 116–22   *Als Crist us schawes in our Godspel*. Compare Matthew 7:13: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat."
- 133       *He bes ful redi, als outlawe*. According to Morey, the idea expressed in this passage has secular as well as religious overtones ("Legal and Spiritual," pp. 326–35). The homilist, Morey believes, was familiar with a native legal tradition that the highway provided sanctuary for anyone remaining on it, whereas those who strayed were in danger of being taken for outlaws.
- 135       *nais*. According to *MED*, this word is found only in the expressions *naked and nais*, and *nais and naked*. *NHC* is cited, and the meanings "ashamed" and "destitute" are provided, the latter of which is preceeded by a question mark. The only other citation comes from *Cursor Mundi*. A, G, and D all read quite differently.

- 136 *Gregorie*. Although Gregory bases his Fourth Homily on the same Gospel pericope as does the *NHC*-poet, and though he too discusses the need for humility, the two homilies are not otherwise very similar and there is nothing comparable to this passage in the Fourth Homily. However, Gregory writes frequently about Satan, and the *NHC*-poet could have taken this image directly from his *Moralia*, where he says, for example, “[M]an, whom he once led astray to consent, he now drags away, even while man resists, and through violence, he nearly kills the one who has been conquered by the pleasures of his corruption” (*Moralia* 15.15.19, quoted by Straw, *Gregory the Great*, p. 121). Equally likely, the image could have been taken from one of the *distinctiones*, or collections of sayings which the *NHC*-poet doubtless used for much of his homiletic material.
- 157 *I wille you tel of a pilgrim*. Tubach 3788: Pilgrim, limbs of amputated. The *exemplum* of the pilgrim to Saint James was enormously popular during the Middle Ages and is found widely in Latin, French, and English: *Legenda Aurea* (chapter 99, vol. 2, pp. 7–8), *AT* (375–76), and many collections of Miracles of the Virgin all have versions. The story in all known forms can be traced back to Cluny, and many versions claim the authority of Abbot Hugh of Cluny himself, who told the story to Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury during a visit by the latter c. 1100. It was another Anselm, the nephew of the archbishop of Canterbury, who was responsible for the earliest collection of Miracles of the Virgin, which formed the basis for so many later versions and which includes the tale of the pilgrim to Saint James (Southern, “English Origins,” pp. 188–89, 198–200).
- 159–60 *It was a man als ic herd say, / That til Sain Jamis hit the way*. According to late tradition James, one of the original twelve apostles, led a preaching mission to Spain following the Crucifixion. After his relics were found at Compostela in the ninth century, the site became a pilgrimage center, ranking with Jerusalem and Rome in importance. Its popularity is witnessed through many references in medieval writings, including those by Chaucer in his General Prologue (*CT* I[A]465–66): “At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, / In Galice at Seint-Jame, and at Coloigne,” and Langland (*Piers Plowman*, C.Prol.47–48): “Pilgrymes and palmers plighen hem togyderes / To seke seynt Iame and seyntes of Rome.”
- 180 *worthe a leke*. Proverbial. See Whiting M739, where, however, the only illustration comes from Chaucer’s Prologue to the Wife of Bath’s Tale: “I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek / That hath but oon hole for to sterte to” (*CT* III[D] 572–73). While the many additional citations for the phrase listed in *MED* are perhaps not indicative of full proverbial status, a leek was evidently a very frequent indicator of value, more often negative, as in Lydgate, Capgrave, the Towneley Plays, e.g., but sometimes almost positive, as in Chaucer’s Merchant’s Tale: “That every man that halt hym worth a leek, / Upon his bare knees oughte al his lyf / Thanken his God that hym hath sent a wyf” (*CT* IV[E]1350–52).
- 193 *And quen thou havis thiselvin slan*. Suicide was forbidden by the Church from an early date: Augustine set out the classic arguments against it in *City of God* (1.1.17–27, ed. McCracken, pp. 77–117), and in the sixth century it was ruled that funeral rites were to be denied those who killed themselves.

- 197–98 *And he schar al awai ful rathe, / His members and his penndanz bathe.* Self-mutilation was condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325, but the Church's attitude towards sexuality and sexual temptation generated an often complex response to this act. The third-century theologian Origen, for example, was said to have interpreted literally the words of Jesus ("For there are eunuchs, who were born so from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, who were made so by men: and there are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it" [Matthew 19:12]), and to have castrated himself in order to avoid temptation. The prevailing opinion of the Church Fathers from the fourth century on was that Jesus had not called for self-castration but for self-imposed continence (Bullough, "Introduction," pp. 1–2). Nonetheless, "despite the extremity, illegality and moral condemnation of castration, it continued to have an inescapable lure, both metaphorically and literally, perhaps because it provided certainty in the face of unreliable and weak flesh" (J. Murray, "Mystical Castration," p. 75). A further illustration can be seen in Gregory the Great's admiring description of a young man who, after praying fervently for help in controlling his sexual desire, was castrated through the miraculous intervention of an angel (J. Murray, "Mystical Castration" p. 75). How, then, might the *NHC*-poet's lay audience have responded to the pilgrim's acts? At the simplest level perhaps, acceptance of the Church's teaching: self-mutilation and suicide are forbidden, and the pilgrim's ignorance is both stupid and culpable. More simply still, medieval audiences loved to hear about the miracles of the Virgin. Insofar as one might argue for a broader psychological dimension, then might the fact that the pilgrim is saved in the end have provoked the audience to react with sympathy as well as disapproval — both for the initial weakness of the flesh, and the self-revulsion that follows? Might the audience have grasped the further lesson that while one can repent for sinning with a woman, there is no way back from self-mutilation and suicide? At the very least, the poet may have wished to encourage his audience to be thoughtful in weighing their sins, with the understanding that they can best be dealt with by confessing to a priest and not by taking the remedy into one's own hands.
- 213 *Wit riht and resoun he es mine.* "With reason right" is a common phrase in alliterative verse. "It was the general consensus of early medieval writers, following the fathers, that as a result of original sin humanity was in the power of the Devil . . . The question was whether this power of the Devil was merely a description of the state into which we had entered as a result of original sin or whether it represented a real, legal right. On this the tradition was ambivalent" (Russell, *Lucifer*, p. 104). Satan uses legal language here and elsewhere in this *exemplum* to press his claim, but his insistence will have unexpected consequences later in the tale. Although questions about the "devil's rights" provoked a good deal of theological speculation and disagreement in the later Middle Ages, the *NHC*-poet is less interested in doctrinal arguments (and probably less knowledgeable) than in dramatizing the devil's continuing interactions with humanity. See Marx, *Devil's Rights*, for a full discussion of late medieval theology of the devil.
- 238 *Gon we til dom of our Leuedye.* The medieval tradition of the Virgin Mary as the special enemy of the devil (and therefore especially efficacious against him) de-

- rives from Jerome's mistranslation of Genesis 3:15–16 ("she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel"), which was interpreted as a prefiguration of Mary's defeat of evil, and by association, the devil (Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, pp. 245–46).
- 259 *Havid reft him wit riht jogement*. Satan's insistence on his legal rights has led to this satisfyingly ironic reversal: through the appeal of James and Peter to the "dom" of Mary, justice, the legal validity of which even Satan must acknowledge, has been achieved.
- 293 *wanhop*. Despair, in its theological meaning, represents a serious sin against God, who wills salvation for man: hence the poet's claim that despair is a prison which leads ultimately to hell.

## 5. THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Luke 2:1–14 (The Birth of Christ)

*NIMEV* 3289 (Sts. Martin, Antony, Machary). Manuscripts: ED: fol. 24v (first 80 lines only); A: fols. 19r–23v; G: fols. 23r–27v (ending lost); D: fols. 52r–55v; L: fols. 7v–9r.

## 6. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

This day's Gospel text recounts the prophetic words of Simeon when Mary and Joseph, according to Jewish custom, took the child Jesus to be presented at the Temple. Simeon's prediction of the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, and the sign that will be contradicted, is understood as an allusion to those Jews whose refusal to acknowledge Christ dooms them to hell. The *NHC*-poet goes on to develop the idea of rising and falling in a universal moral sense, which leads to the tale of an archbishop who "falls" through his seduction of a nun, but "rises" through his acts of repentance to become even better than he was before.

*NIMEV* 3393, 284. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 25r–26v (begins with line 241); A: fols. 23v–30r; G: fols. 30r–32r (2 folios missing, begins at line 306); D: fols. 55v–60v; L: fols. 9r–11v.

- Before 1 *Dominica infra Octavam Nativitatis*. When a Sunday comes after a movable feast (e.g., Easter) or after a feast celebrated on a particular date (here December 25), that Sunday is said to fall "within the octave" (eight-day period) of the feast in question.
- 1–3 *The Jewes made ilka yere / Seven festes on thair manere. / Bot till thre come yonge and alde*. The seven feasts of Israel, as named in the Old Testament, are: Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Trumpets, and Atonement; Deuteronomy 16:16 specifies further that three times in the year all males shall take part in the first three. The *NHC*-poet erroneously includes females, perhaps because the occasion here described is not in fact one of the three to which all men were summoned. Rather, it is the requirement that a Jewish wo-

man giving birth to a son undergo ritual purification forty days after the birth of a son that brings Mary and Joseph to the Temple in Jerusalem. Jews were further required to have a firstborn son acknowledged as belonging to the Lord in a special way, hence the presentation to Simeon (Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 124). Elsewhere the narration of these events is often placed at Epiphany, or at the feast of Purification (Candlemas), which occurs forty days after Christmas; *NHC* does in fact include an additional account attached to the later date, using earlier verses from the same chapter of Luke. Neither Gregory nor Robert's *Miroir* includes a text for this day or for Purification. Bede, however, does have a homily on Purification which takes in the Presentation, though the similarities are too general to prove influence in this case.

- 36 *For Jewis wald noght his risinge knawe.* In its paraphrase of Luke's Gospel, *NHC* represents Mary and Joseph, along with the larger community, as virtuous law-abiding Jews, perceiving no disparity between this portrayal and the typically medieval condemnation articulated here. The tradition transmitted through the *Adversus Judaeos* writings of the Church Fathers (e.g., Tertullian, Justin Martyr, John Chrysostom) describes the Jews' obstinate rejection of God's action in Christ, and the just punishment inflicted upon them by an angry God (Ruether, "*Adversus Judaeos*," pp. 27–28). In particular, the *NHC*-poet would certainly have been familiar with Gregory the Great's frequent castigation of the Jews, as seen in these words from his Eighth Homily: "we must note the great hardness of heart of some of the Jewish people. They failed to recognize him either by the gift of prophecy or by his miracles. In truth all the elements bore witness that their creator had come . . . and yet the hearts of the Jews remained full of unbelief. . . . Harder than stones, they were unwilling to be broken for repentance" (*Forty*, Homily 8, pp. 55–56).
- 79–82 *For the Jewes fell all fra gode, / When thai slowe Criste on the rode, / And hethen men fra synne rase, / That before was Criste faase.* Bede is more careful in his treatment of this idea, and also closer to the Gospel text itself, when he says: "Many of the Jews and many of the gentiles have often contradicted the sign of the Lord's cross externally, and, what is more serious, many false brothers [do so] internally" (*Homilies*, 1.18, p. 184).
- 87–88 *For when we of oure synnes us schryve, / We rise gastely fra dede to lyve.* Here the *NHC*-poet somewhat resembles Bede, who also points to the individual moral sense that can be read into Symeon's words: "One who falls after having acknowledged the glory of the resurrection is unhappy enough, but worse is one who, having seen the light of truth, is blinded by the oppressive clouds of his sins . . . They follow it superficially in what they profess, but they trample upon it by the reality of their depraved actions, saying that they know God, but denying him in their deeds. Hence we must take the utmost care always to remember to carry out in our works the virtuous good we have recognized" (*Homilies*, 1.18, p. 183–84).
- 97 *Ane ersbisschope beyonde the se.* Tubach 4073: Repentance of archbishop. Gerould could find no source or analogue for this exemplum, and Tubach lists only those versions found in *NHC*. Though there are many *exempla* of sinning clergy among the lower orders, this one is unique in its portrayal of a lustful archbishop.

Robert Grosseteste, writing in the thirteenth century, brought a new level of rigor to the pastoral requirements of bishops: "When I became a bishop, I believed it to be necessary to be a shepherd of the souls committed to me . . . So I began to perambulate my bishopric . . . requiring the clergy . . . to bring their people . . . together at a fixed place and time in order to . . . hear the Word of God, and to make their confessions" (Southern, *Robert Grosseteste*, p. 258). Although the *NHC*-poet advises his audience to obey bishops as a general rule, he expresses outrage with regard to those prelates who do not adequately fulfil their responsibilities. Given the apparent rarity of the *exemplum* itself, and the strength of feeling it expresses, it is hard not to wonder whether the *NHC*-poet had particular members of the clergy in mind who might have provided the immediate impulse for this tale. Though an archbishop is perhaps unlikely, and this one is safely located "beyond the sea," at least one historical instance is recorded from the mid-fifteenth century, when John Stafford, archbishop of Canterbury, was accused of having had sons and daughters by a nun at a time when he was bishop of Bath and Wells (Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, p. 447n6).

- 126–28    *That right him thought that he suld dye, / Bot he had of hir his will, / And might with hir his lust fullfill.* Though outdated in many respects, Power's *Medieval English Nunneries* still rings true in its assessment of the difficulty posed by vows of chastity: "For many saints it was the first and necessary condition of their salvation; but for the average man it has always been an unnatural state and the monastic orders and the priesthood were full of average men" (p. 436). As Brundage further notes, "the clergy, as well as the laity, commonly fell short, often far short, of observing the rules binding them, rules that theoretically obliged everyone in major orders to renounce marriage . . . [and] to abstain from any and every sort of overt genital sexual activity" ("Playing by the Rules," p. 24). Despite new laws of evidence elaborated at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, designed in large part to cope with sexual misconduct among both clergy and laity, the problem never entirely went away, though evidence suggests that archdeacons (like the one in Chaucer's *Friar's Tale*), were assiduous in their pursuit of lay offenders at least, and were accordingly despised (Brundage, "Playing by the Rules," pp. 24–30).
- 190        *That he hir gert be abbess thare.* The abbess was elected by the members of her convent, but that election had to be licensed by a bishop (Oliva, *Convent and the Community*, p. 76).
- 191–92    *And forthi thought hir lathe / In anythinge, to make him wrathe.* Although the feelings expressed by the abbess suggest to some degree a relationship between friendly equals, also noted are the archbishop's threat to withdraw his favor, and the abbess' fear. In historical terms, the abbess' shocking readiness to comply with the archbishop's request should be seen in the context of the relative poverty of women's houses, as well as the episcopal authority exercised over them: "While nuns exercised some authority over their spiritual properties, the women themselves answered to higher ecclesiastical powers" (Oliva, *Convent and the Community*, p. 32). "Bishops and other ecclesiastical officials intervened in nuns' business practices and financial affairs in ways that were much less common in male communities" (Warren, *Spiritual Economies*, pp. 63–64).



- 201–02 *This ilk yonge nonne was unmightie / To stand agayne this foule folye.* The poet does not seek to excuse the nun's transgression in any way, and the single word *unmightie* is the only insight we are offered into her character. In the eyes of patristic writers, the allure of women's bodies was responsible for creating desire in men, and women were also thought to be weak in intellect and emotionally unstable (Minnis, "*De impedimento*," pp. 123–25).
- 206 *And of herself scho made a hore.* Although a modern reader is unlikely to forget the chain of mitigating circumstances which have propelled the young nun into the archbishop's arms, the strong condemnation voiced here and in the following lines draws on powerful medieval traditions regarding virginity. The Bible, and particularly Paul, provided the spiritual and theological basis for defining chastity: "And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit" (1 Corinthians 7:34). The treatise on virginity, as developed by patristic writers such as Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, praised it as the state most favorable to spiritual perfection, and Aldhelm (d. 709) continued the tradition in the West with his *De Virginitate*: "O excellent grace of virginity, which like a rose grown from thorny shoots blushes with a crimson flower and never withers with the defect of dread mortality" (qtd. Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives*, p. 20). There is of course a specifically gendered aspect to this valuation of female virginity: "while the Church identified monks as producers of valuable spiritual resources whose labors should be facilitated, the value of women religious did not stem so much from their contemplative and intellectual labors as from an imagined essential purity," which it was the Church's responsibility to contain and regulate (Warren, *Spiritual Economies*, pp. 17–18).
- 215 *Had tane hir als his leeve spouse.* Christian commentators early on interpreted both Vulgate Psalm 44 and the Canticle of Canticles as allegorical accounts of the love between Christ and the Church. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa further developed the idea of Christ as bridegroom not only of the Church but of its individual members, an image which, while it could be applied to both men and women, was seen as particularly appropriate to female virgins (Millett, *Hali Meidhad*, pp. xl–xli).
- 292 *Thaim I suld bathe lere and kenne.* The words of remorse, spoken here by the archbishop in this tale, express the poet's own convictions regarding the duty of the clergy (priests as well as bishops) both to teach and act as a moral example to the laity. Their failure to live up to this responsibility provokes angry outbursts in *NHC* on numerous occasions.
- 321–22 *He gert graithe him a privé sted, / Thar he moht lif wit water and brede.* Penance, properly understood, consists of three necessarily linked concepts: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. The archbishop's acts of self-punishment, as described in these and the following lines, evidently stem from a deeply felt contrition. However, although in earlier times open confession had been voluntary, in the later Middle Ages it became a necessity when the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 ordered all adult Christians to confess their mortal sins to a priest once a year; as future events will show, the archbishop's failure to confess renders his behavior problematic, however sincerely motivated.

- 387–88     *That he suld an hey fest day / Sing thaim a messe, gern prayed thai.* It is difficult to know whether the people's eagerness to have the archbishop sing the mass is based on historical reality or the poet's own urgent conviction that the laity *ought* to desire this. Contemporary evidence suggests that church services were not filled with seriously attentive audiences. Sleeping, talking, playing chess, and gambling with dice were all frequent occurrences, especially during the preaching of a sermon (Owst, *Preaching*, p. 178). The elevation of the Host, as indicated in the Introduction (p. 1), was often the only part of the service to which the laity paid attention, or even attended. Nonetheless, even if these lines indicate no more than wishful thinking on the poet's part, they are expressive of the same pastoral concern that motivates the entire collection.
- 390–91     *That sing mes moht he noht, / Ar he war scrifen of his sinne.* The archbishop here indicates his awareness that he must be shriven (a word which includes the idea of confession) before he can actually sing the mass. The public acknowledgment of his sins which follows his preaching should be taken as an acceptable, if slightly irregular, form of confession.
- 467–68     *And an angel bi wai he mette, / In mannes fourm, that him grette.* It is perhaps not without significance that a (male) angel succeeds here where first the laity, and then a miraculous child held in the arms of a woman have failed to persuade the archbishop that he is truly forgiven.
- 502         *He gif us graz to rise rathe.* One of the effects of Fourth Lateran was an increased emphasis on the objective aspects of the confessional process, resulting in the thirteenth-century outpouring of manuals of instruction, with their elaborate systematization of the theology of confession, which actually made it easier for the penitent who had confessed fully to receive absolution. At the same time the importance of the penitent's state of mind — inner contrition, so to speak — was gaining ground (A. Murray, "Counselling in Medieval," p. 65). One of the problems faced by the archbishop is that even after he has confessed, turning to a priest for absolution does not seem to be an option, perhaps because of his own rank. The result is an inner uncertainty as to whether he is truly forgiven, which nothing can allay until the angel, God's official agent, appears (and even then, he has to be forcibly dragged back to the altar to sing Mass). Without wishing to overemphasize its significance, we are presented here with what seems, on the surface at least, to articulate a rather modern psychological dilemma (and one which ought to have made the pilgrim to Saint James more wary!): how can we trust the truth of what we see, and how can we ever be truly certain that our repentance is adequate to redeem us from our sins? However we wish to read these events, the most important consequence of this final section for the medieval audience is not to propel them forward into Calvinistic uncertainty, but to lead them gently back to the grace available to them, through confession, in Christ.

**7. EPIPHANY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 2:1–13 (Herod and the Wise Men).

*NIMEV*: 2243 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: ED: fols. 26v–28r; A: fols. 30r–34r; G: fols. 32r–34v; D: fols. 60v–63v (fol. 61 lost); L: fols. 11v–13r.

**8. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 2:41–52 (Young Jesus at the Temple).

*NIMEV*: 2184, 2532 (Saint John and the Boy). Manuscripts: ED: fols. 28r–30r; A: fols. 34r–38r; G: fols. 34v–37r; D: fols. 63v–65v (fol. 66 lost); L: fols. 13r–14v.

**9. SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 2:1–10 (The Marriage at Cana).

*NIMEV*: 1843 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: ED: fols. 30r–31r; A: fols. 38r–40r; G: fols. 37r–39r; D: fols. 67r–68r (beginning lost); L: fols. 14v–15r.

**10. THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 8:1–13 (Jesus Heals the Centurion's Servant).

*NIMEV*: 1925, 2119 (Gyezi and Naaman). Manuscripts: ED: fols. 31r–32r; A: fols. 40r–42v; G: fols. 39r–41r; D: fols. 68r–69v; L: fols. 15r–15v.

**11. FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

The word *epiphany*, which comes from Greek, means “illumination” or “divine manifestation.” One of the most ancient annual liturgical celebrations, the Feast of the Epiphany was of Eastern origin. In the Egyptian calendar the winter solstice and the feast of the sun-god were both observed on January 6 and this date was originally chosen to draw Christians away from pagan celebrations by introducing a feast to celebrate Christ's birth. When Rome began to celebrate January 6 in the second half of the fourth century, it shifted to this date the remembrance of the adoration of the wise men which became the main theme of its Epiphany, while December 25 remained the day for celebrating the birth of Jesus (Martimort, *Church at Prayer*, 77–88). The sequence of Sundays following Epiphany brings the liturgical calendar to Septuagesima which begins the Easter cycle. In his homily for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, on Christ's stilling of the waves, the *NHC*-poet preaches, as we might expect after this Gospel text, on Christ's power to help those who pray to him. The poet's greatest eloquence, however, is reserved for a favorite theme which is only tangentially related to the biblical text: the oppression of the poor by the rich. The link between homily and *exemplum* is provided by the former's diatribe against the wicked rich, which prepares us for the story of a rich but repentant usurer. Yet the ingenuity of the

introduction to this *exemplum* may owe more to the poet's creative imagination than to its actual appropriateness: the sea, which represents worldly wealth, metaphorically "drowns" mankind, thereby leading them to hell. Hell, it seems, is full of "watery worms" (line 114), and it is a real worm, it just so happens, who will devour the usurer in the tale.

*NIMEV* 3021, 45. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 32r–33v; A: fols. 42v–46r; G: fols. 41r–43v; D: fols. 69v–71v (last 58 lines lost); L: fols. 15r–16v.

23–24     *Al Hali Kirc, als thinc me, / Mai bi this chippe takened be.* As Owst notes, the "nautical simile . . . has had a long and honoured career in medieval preaching" (*Literature and Pulpit*, p. 68). His chapter on Scripture and Allegory includes many citations from medieval sermon manuscripts that offer different allegorical interpretations of the ship, most often, as here, Holy Church (Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, pp. 68–76). *CA* 1.319–23 offers numerous commentaries on the scriptural text (Matthew 8:23–27): e.g., Pseudo-Origen's: "We are all embarked in the vessel of the Holy Church, and voyaging through this stormy world with the Lord. The Lord himself sleeps a merciful sleep while we suffer, and awaits the repentance of the wicked" (1.323), or Bede's: "The boat is the present Church, in which Christ passes over the sea of this world with His own, and stills the waves of persecution" (1.323–24). While it is impossible to know which collection or set of *distinctiones* the *NHC*-poet might have used, the *CA* is an excellent example of the kind of work into which the writings of the Church Fathers were gathered to gloss Holy Scripture. Gregory does not have a homily for this text and Robert of Gretham, who does, uses some of the same allegorical similes (the ship as Holy Church), but some quite different ones as well (the sea as the cross), and there is little similarity between the two homilies overall (Duncan, *Middle English Mirror*, pp. 104–11).

46     *Riht als the quale fars wit the elringe.* "Most popular of all created things in pulpit moralization were the beasts, birds and fishes of the animal kingdom" (Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, p. 195). The analogy between the rich who devour the poor and big fish who eat little ones is lightly allegorical and certainly a familiar medieval trope, yet what is most interesting here is the number and specificity of the fish named. While not coming close to the eighteen different kinds of fish enumerated in *Havelok the Dane*, the *NHC*-poet takes a similar pleasure in detail based on local knowledge. The three large fish named here (*quale*, *sturion*, *lobbekeling*) are also found in *Havelok*; of further interest, as pointed out in Smithers' edition of that poem, "the jurist Bracton reports . . . that large fish such as sturgeon and whale belong to the king," a fact which underlines the division between rich and poor and which therefore fits admirably with the moral drawn by the *NHC*-poet (*Havelok*, p. 110, line 754n). The three smaller fish (*merling*, *sperling*, *elringe*) do not occur in the *Havelok* list (too small for a serious fisherman like Grim?), but two of the three are found in *Boke of Nurture*, which contains a highly detailed listing of fish and the preparation entailed for cooking them (J. Russell, pp. 155–73). The third small fish, the *elringe*, is not found in either of these sources, but A, G, and D all substitute the more familiar *herynge*, of which *elringe* must be a Northern variant. One further demonstration of our poet's local knowledge:

- Furnivall (in J. Russell, *Boke of Nurture*, p. 173n2) comments that the *sparlyng* (*NHC sperlyng*) “is taken chiefly upon our Northern coast.”
- 107–08 *And ai the richer that man esse, / The mar him langes efter riches.* Aristotle’s attitude towards trade, which is echoed here, played a substantial role in forming the medieval arguments against usury, the subject of the *exemplum* which follows this homily. In his view, as paraphrased by Bisson, “introducing money as an exchange mechanism creates an insatiable, and unnatural, desire to acquire more, just for the sake of having more” (*Chaucer and the Late*, p.174).
- 117 *An hali man biyond se.* Tubach 5038: Usurer eaten by adders. Out of the nearly forty *exempla* listed by Tubach under the heading of “usurer,” the *NHC* item is almost the only one in which the usurer is saved, suggesting that the poet wants to encourage his audience, however sternly, to believe that no one who repents is beyond God’s mercy. Gerould lists two thirteenth-century Latin analogues of this tale, one by Étienne de Bourbon, the other found in Caesarius of Heisterbach’s very popular *Dialogus Miraculorum*. Gerould thinks the *Dialogus*, which, as he says, was certainly known in England, is the more likely to have been the *NHC*-poet’s source but, as he further notes, neither version is as detailed as this one (*NEHC*, pp. 41–42).
- 121 *That thoru kind was bond and thralle.* The fact that this knight was born to a condition of servitude from which he has escaped by clever usurious practices, expresses classic medieval disapproval of social climbers who seek to move beyond the estate to which divine justice has assigned them. Medieval estates theory defined three basic categories of individual as constituting society: those who fight, those who pray, and those who work. Drawing on Saint Paul’s theology which portrayed the human body as composed of different parts which worked together harmoniously to create a whole, social theorists took a highly conservative view of the relationship between class and social position. In the eyes of the poet, the knight’s villainy is compounded by his being a social climber as well as a usurer, but his changed status also suggests that in historical terms, English society was already beginning to experience the social fluidity characteristic of the later fourteenth century (Bisson, *Chaucer and the Late*, pp. 143–46).
- 123 *This catel gat he wit okering.* Antagonism against usurious practices, which is found early on in the writings of the Church Fathers, was influenced both by Deuteronomy 23:19: “Thou shalt not lend to thy brother money to usury,” and the words of Jesus in Luke 6:35: “But love ye your enemies: do good, and lend, hoping for nothing thereby.” The Second Lateran Council in 1139 pronounced the first explicit decree of universal prohibition against usury for clergy and laity alike and the thirteenth-century writings of Aquinas on usury were highly influential in the development of the Church’s arguments. Following the growth of commerce in the later Middle Ages, public usurers were nonetheless tolerated as a necessary evil and most, though not all, were Jews, for whom Mosaic law prohibited usury only with regard to other Jews (Buckley, *Teachings on Usury*, pp. 101–32). Typically, the practice of usury as portrayed in medieval *exempla* is rarely connected to the Jews; rather, as in this narrative, it is seen as one more

- instance of the devil's attempt to bring Christian souls to hell (Gregg, *Devils, Women and Jews*, p. 200).
- 159 *This quet, I rede thou selle me.* This clever detail is not found in either of Gerould's analogues. The picture of the usurer who repents but cannot resist falling back into his old bad ways by forcing the beggar to sell back to him the "alms" he has just given, adds a neat and delightfully ironic twist to the story as a whole.
- 171 *And toc tharfor fif schilling.* The usurer here offers the beggar what most would have considered a fair price. Between 1275 and 1325, with a few exceptions during years of famine or bad harvest, the cost of a quarter of wheat remained close to five shillings (Bolton, *Medieval English Economy*, p. 67). The beggar ends up with money in his pocket and the usurer has not made a profit; hence he is not, strictly speaking, acting in an usurious manner. But the issue seems to be, as the beggar indicates, that an act of "charity" has been turned into a commercial exchange. Canon law consistently warned, during these early stages of the profit economy, of potential sin involved in buying and selling, and it was around this time that the pictorial theme of men and apes defecating coins was first seen in the margins of manuscripts (Little, *Religious Poverty*, pp. 34–38).

## 12. FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

The text for this Sunday is the second of Jesus' well-known parables of the sower, wherein a farmer discourages his servants from pulling up weeds when they first appear among the wheat, telling them instead to wait until the time of the harvest when the weeds can be more easily distinguished and discarded. The allegorical readings of the Church Fathers identify the weeds as heretics, but the *NHC*-poet opts for a much simpler reading, first emphasizing the importance of preachers who "sow" grace in men's hearts with their words, and then listing the "weeds" of wickedness which Satan tries to plant there instead.

*NIMEV* 3740, 306. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 33v–34v; A: fols. 46r–48v; G: fols. 43v–45v; D: fols. 73r–74r (first 38 lines missing); L: fols. 16v–17v.

- 7 *Darnel.* From OE *darnel*, a weedy annual grass, occurring first as the English name for the Vulgate *zizania*. The earliest *OED* citation is the passage from *NHC*.
- 70 *A god tal Sain Jerom us schawes / Of an ermyt, an hali man.* Tubach 210: Anchorite, temptation of; 3105: Saint Macarius and devil's drink. No one has been able to find anything similar in the writings of Jerome, but the tale is a popular one, the earliest versions of which are found in the *Vitae Patrum* (PL 73.769, 981, 1027). English vernacular versions are included in *Jacob's Well* (33) and *AT* (745). Most name the hermit as Macarius, one of the Desert Fathers who joined a scattered settlement of hermits in Scete (c. 330) and was famous for his spiritual maturity and power over demons.
- 76 *leche.* The detail whereby the devil is disguised as a physician occurs only in *NHC*. By this time the word means both "physician" and "bloodsucker," and the second meaning is commonly regarded as a transferred use of the first meaning.

- According to *OED*, however, OE *lyce* ("bloodsucker") was assimilated to OE *laece* ("physician") through popular etymology.
- 80 *Asked him quidir he wald wende.* The prescience cleverly revealed in the *Vitae Patrum* hermit's greeting: "*Quo vadis, maligne?*" (*PL* 73.769) is absent from *NHC*, which nonetheless resembles the *Vitae Patrum* in its detail and drama more than it does the later and mostly briefer versions.
- 86 *housel.* The devil gives a clever ironic twist here to the conventional meaning of this word, which normally means "to administer Communion."
- 121–22 *For ilkan woned in sere celle, / Als it than til thair order felle.* In the *Vitae Patrum*, which in some form was certainly a source for this *exemplum*, we find Macarius the hermit living in the wilderness a little apart from those who have followed him and who themselves live in separate cells:

Abbas Macarius habitabat in loco nimis deserto: erat autem solus in eo solitarius. . . . In inferiore vero parte erat alia solitudo, in qua habitant plurimi fratres. . . . Surgens autem abbas Macarius, perrexit ad inferiorem eremum: quod cum vidissent fratres, acceperunt ramos palmarum et occurrerunt obviam ei. . . . Senex autem requirebat quis inter eos Theoctistus vocaretur in loco illo; et inveniens eum, intravit in cellam ejus (*PL* 73.981–82). [The Abbot Macarius was living in a very deserted place; however, he was alone in it all by himself. But in the lower part was another deserted area, in which very many brothers live. . . . Rising, however, Abbot Macarius went to the lower hermitage: and when the brothers had seen this, they took up palm branches and hurried to meet him. . . . However, the old man asked who among those in that place was called Theoctistus; and [upon] finding him, he entered into his chamber.]

In his own description the *NHC*-poet appears to have put together what he has read with what he knows or has heard about from his own experience. Given the significant number of *exempla* which revolve around hermits, it is worth pausing to reflect on what images of hermits would have been available to him, as idea or reality. The twelfth century had seen a growing discontent with the traditional forms of monastic life, one focus of which became the desire to return to primitive monastic observances such as the eremitism of the Desert Fathers. Among the new religious groups which proliferated at this time, both the Augustinian canons and the Premonstratensians, whose form of living was essentially coenobitical, nonetheless placed a strong emphasis on solitude (see the Introduction, pp. 5–6, for the possibility that the author was a member of one of these orders). "Jean Leclercq . . . has emphasized the importance of the existence of real hermits, as he put it, 'within the very heart of the traditional cenobitic institution'" (Constable, "Eremitical Forms," p. 239). Constable also notes that no form of monastic life was entirely free from the influence of eremitism at this time ("Eremitical Forms," p. 241). Benedictines, who were by far the most numerous among the monastic orders, customarily slept together in a common dormitory, but a desire for more privacy led, in the later Middle Ages, to the construction of individual cubicles within the dormitory (Dickinson, *Monastic Life*, p. 33). The Carthusians created a group hermitage in which the individual pursued a solitary life within

the context of a community: a series of independent stone cells was arranged around a covered cloister walk (Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 161). Moreover, the archaeological evidence shows that eremitical cells were often located in the vicinity or even formed part of conventual buildings of cenobitical communities (Constable, "Eremitical Forms," p. 260). Though the original fervor which had marked the twelfth century reforms may have dimmed by the time of *NHC*'s composition, and despite the growing tendency to return to more traditional forms of monasticism, Watson points out that in the late Middle Ages the term 'hermit' still covered a wide and familiar range of types, including, on the one hand, the uneducated hermits who could be found acting as bridge-builders, road-minders and vagabonds, and, on the other hand, the members of the Carthusian and other eremitical orders, some of whom were highly educated (*Richard Rolle*, p. 43).

- 125–26     *This ermyt asked yef he war oht / Fanded wit fleis liking in thoht*. Despite Gerould's claim (*NEHC*, p. 43) that the ruse by which the hermit persuades the young hermit to confess is not found in the *Vitae Patrum*, it occurs in all the versions in a very similar manner to *NHC*: the young man first denies being tempted, but then blushes even as he speaks. Then, after the older man confesses his own weakness, the younger follows suit.

### 13. PURIFICATION

The date of this feast, forty days after Christmas (February 2) commemorates the purification of the Virgin Mary and the presentation of the infant Jesus at the Temple. The number of lines given over to its description, including a good deal of repetition, suggest something of its importance for the poet. Its origins are ancient, the earliest evidence for its celebration in Jerusalem coming from the late fourth-century diary of the pilgrim Egeria. In 542 the Emperor Justinian ordered its observance at Constantinople and from there it spread throughout the East as "the Meeting of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ with Simeon the Just when the latter took him in his arms" (Martimort, *Church at Prayer*, pp. 88–89). In the middle of the eighth century, a new name for the feast appeared in the West, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A procession with lighted candles, whence the medieval English name "Candlemas," became the distinctive rite in the West, where the holiday became more Marian than Christological, providing a joyful occasion for a communal procession in which "the virgins, wives, and widows of the parish — as well as men old and young — carried lighted candles in their hands as they walked the sacred precincts of church aisles or parish streets to converge at the altar" (Gibson, "Blessing from Sun," p. 141).

*NIMEV*: 1494, 97, 2124. Manuscripts: ED: fols. 34v–36v (ending lost); A: fols. 232r–238r; G: fols. 45v–50v; D: fols. 74r–79r; L: fols. 17v–19r.

- 27–28     *We ber todaï thoru this resoun, / Our candel in processioune*. Though the *NHC*-poet expends few words on this procession, and many more on the explication of the festival's meaning, both historic and allegorical, the procession itself was surely what was most significant and memorable for medieval audiences. An example



of the “corporate symbolism of late medieval liturgical . . . theater,” which functioned as a “drama of consensus, an affecting visible display of shared conviction and creed,” the procession was further staged, quite literally, in the enactments of the York and N-Town plays of Mary’s Purification (Gibson, “Blessing from Sun,” p. 141).

54 *Moses law*. Leviticus 12:6–8:

And when the days of her purification are expired, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of the testimony, a lamb of a year old for a holocaust, and a young pigeon or a turtle for sin, and shall deliver them to the priest: Who shall offer them before the Lord, and shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that beareth a man-child or a maid-child. And if her hand find not sufficiency, and she is not able to offer a lamb, she shall take two turtles, or two young pigeons, one for a holocaust, and another for sin: and the priest shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed.

85–87 The *nunc dimittis*. See Luke 2:25–35, especially verses 29–31, where Simeon, after waiting many years, in old age receives an answer to his prayer that he might witness the advent of Christ.

173–74 *A tal of this fest haf I herd, / Hougat it of a widow ferd*. Tubach 3218: Mass given privately. Tubach does not seem to have known of the *NHC* version, which may account for the rather cryptic title he gives it. A late thirteenth-century version, quite close to *NHC* in its details, can be found in BL Additional 18.929, a collection of thirty Miracles of the Virgin (Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, 2.658.20). Gerould (*NEHC*) lists several further analogues including a very brief version in the *Legenda Aurea* (chapter 37, vol. 1, p. 150), and a slightly longer one in the fifteenth-century collection *Miracles de Nostre Dame* (Miélot, pp. 8–9, #6).

190 *a leuedy*. The *NHC*-poet capitalizes on the mysterious aspects of the dream vision by making the identity of Mary less obvious initially; at line 240, when the widow thanks “Godd and Our Lefdy,” it is evident that she understands the nature of the vision she has been granted.

290 *That was abbes of a nunrye*. Tubach 2: Abbess delivered by the Virgin. There are numerous analogues, including the version in the fifteenth-century English *AT* (13), and the two found in another fifteenth-century French collection, *Miracles de Nostre Dame*. Neither of these (which I have examined), nor, according to Gerould (*NEHC*, pp. 92–94), any of the others, includes the detail of the wicked foundling which is central to the *NHC* version.

303 *And sa wel order lufed scho*. Contextually this line seems to refer either to the nun’s love of her order, or the love of orderly behavior. A has a different line here, “And hir order well yemid scho,” which could be understood to lend support to the first of the two interpretations suggested above.

315 *For hir spense knew hir fleyslye*. According to Daichman, nuns’ lovers were drawn primarily from the clergy. Sometimes the seducer was attached to the convent

- as chaplain and even dwelt within the precincts. Others with whom nuns had frequent contact included workers, married boarders, or the bailiff of a manor; the figure of the butler joins the ranks of the men who were reported in numerous contemporary historical documents to have seduced nuns (Daichman, *Wayward Nuns*, p. 8). Daichman reports further that the punishment for these transgressions was relatively mild, the most severe punishment being reserved for apostasy (*Wayward Nuns*, pp. 10–11).
- 317–18 *Bot fair scho bar hir nohtforthye, / Als wimmen can that dos folye.* This has the ring of a proverbial (and typically misogynist) comment, but Whiting does not list it, though there are numerous examples which express a similar idea regarding women, as for instance W498: “For there thai make semblant fairest, they will bigile the altherformest” (*Seven Sages*).
- 357–60 *Bot qua sa leses fra hinging . . . nede.* Proverbial. See Whiting T67, which lists many forms of this expression, although only *NHC* includes a foundling along with the ungrateful thief.
- 395 *And on hir wambe scho laide hir hand.* This detail is missing from the two analogues which I have examined. The *NHC* differs further in having Mary confer forgiveness directly on the abbess, whereas the analogues say that she has obtained forgiveness for the abbess from her Son. Finally, it is clerks, not midwives, who examine the abbess in the analogues. Warren, whose discussion is based on the fifteenth-century *AT* version, suggests that the *exemplum*’s portrayal of maternity in the miracle might initially seem to provide a metaphor for female economic empowerment. The disappearance of the butler enhances the sense that women are in charge of the productive processes, and Mary’s aid suggests a network of women, while the bishop ends by apologizing to the abbess. Yet the fate of the male child marks a devaluation of female labor: transferred to male hands, he is then adopted by the clerical establishment and later becomes a bishop (Warren, *Spiritual Economies*, p. 75). While this analysis is possibly valid for the fifteenth century, with its changed economic circumstances, the differences between *NHC*’s earlier version and that of the *AT* also suggest a quite different significance for the former, where economic issues are of less importance than actual maternal concerns. The focus on women’s experience and even on women’s bodies, the physical “laying on of hands,” Mary’s absolute power, the women who physically examine the abbess, and the averted threat to the child’s life suggest a concern for the safe delivery of children in an age where both mother and child so often died. The fact that this story is attached to the feast of Candlemas gives it further resonance as a “woman’s story” by calling to mind the ritual churching in which all women took part after childbirth: a month after delivering a child, the new mother, often accompanied by midwives, female relatives and neighbors was brought veiled to the church porch where she presented a lighted candle that was blessed by the priest and that symbolized the woman’s own restored and purified body (Gibson, “Blessing from Sun,” p. 144). “The Virgin Mary’s intercession for wives who implored her protection in childbirth . . . was a crucial part . . . of medieval laywomen’s understanding of both the public liturgy of Candlemas and the salvific private liturgy of churching” (Gibson, “Blessing from Sun,” pp. 146–47). Not so much a proto-feminist story as a story about women (which

also includes several wicked ones), the “moral” of this *exemplum*, with regard to an erring abbess, could also have a wider meaning for the laywomen who might have heard it, for whom it might have been less cautionary than joyful in its celebration of the Virgin’s power of protection over women.

#### 14. SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

The date designated by this term is the third Sunday before the beginning of Lent and hence the ninth before Easter. “Septuagesima” (or “Seventieth”) is not a precise designation, as the Sunday indicated is in fact only sixty-four, not seventy, days before Easter. The unusually long homily, drawing on Jesus’ parable of the workers in the vineyard, shows signs of direct dependence on Gregory (*Forty*, Homily 11, pp. 77–86), as well as familiarity with Robert’s *Miroir* (Duncan, *Middle English Mirror*, pp. 120–27). The notes that follow here have tried to suggest something of the similarities and differences among the three authors with regard to structure, style, and content.

*NIMEV*: 1912, 314. Manuscripts: A: fols. 48v–54r; G: fols. 50v–55r; D: fols. 79r–83r; L: fols. 19r–21r.

- 67–73      *Cristen men that laste come / Sall be first*. On the last hired workers in the vineyard being first, see Matthew 20:16; see also Mark 10:31 and Luke 13:30 on the last being first in the world to come and at the last judgement. See also lines 322ff.
- 89–122    *God sent into this Hali Kirk . . . done*. In this section, Robert’s *Miroir* follows Gregory more closely than does the *NHC*-poet, who both changes Gregory’s order and gives more detail. Where the first two mention patriarchs, apostles, and preachers in very general terms as those who cultivate the vineyard, the *NHC*-poet lists Augustine, Bernard, and Gregory himself by name and goes on to praise them for their work in cleansing the Bible of extraneous material.
- 92          *the Alde Lawe*. The Old Law, that is, the Law of Moses.
- 107        *scorffe*. From OE *scurf*, a scaly or scabby disease of the skin, here used figuratively with considerable imaginative force.
- 123–78    *Be morne tyde may ye wele se . . . mercye*. A variety of schemes for ordering the history of the world according to a number of eras were elaborated by Aristotle, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and Gregory, among others. Such schemes were very often tied to biblical themes by Christian writers: Gregory used the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, with its division into five times of day, and his text was widely diffused in the Middle Ages. In England it was used by writers such as Bede and Aelfric (Sears, *Ages of Man*, pp. 54, 80).
- 129–30    *And fra Moyses to Kyngge Davye / Als tellis us Saynte Gregorye*. Robert’s *Miroir* follows Gregory’s division exactly but the *NHC*-poet has altered the last two eras, which in Gregory describe the fourth period as running from Moses to Jesus, and the fifth from Jesus to the end of the world. It is Augustine whose six-age division mentions David (Sears, *Ages of Man*, p. 56).

- 148–49 *Forthi me think the pape duse misse, / That will noght send prechours thaim to.* Gregory explicitly makes an equivalence between those who came to the vineyard last and the Gentiles, a passage for which there is no equivalent in Robert and no exact equivalent in *NHC*. The *NHC*-poet's comments on the Saracens may, however, have been inspired by Gregory's mention of the Gentiles, who were ignorant of God's word, and whom Gregory holds up as a standard of comparison for Christians who have "received divine preaching" throughout their lives and for whom, therefore, there can be no excuse for wicked behavior (*Forty*, Homily 11, p. 79). James Carver believes that the *NHC* passage offers important information with regard to its date and authorship ("Northern Homily Cycle and Missionaries," pp. 258–61). In 1306, the second year of his pontificate, in a message addressed to the Friars Minor, Pope Clement V removed an earlier papal prohibition of Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303) against missionary expeditions to the Saracens and other infidels. Putting this information together with the *NHC* lines which here criticize the pope for his failure to allow missionary activity, Carver concludes that "it seems reasonably certain, then, that the Northern Homily Cycle was written between January of 1295 and July of 1306, and it seems more than likely that it was written before October 1303, when Boniface died" ("*Northern Homily Cycle and Missionaries*," p. 260). Carver's arguments in support of friar authorship, elaborated in his 1938 monograph on *NHC*, are not as convincing as those he offers here about its date, which the evidence of the earliest manuscript also places around the beginning of the fourteenth century (see Introduction, p. 5). G and D retain similar versions of this passage, though only G mentions the pope. The considerably later expanded *NHC*, which is otherwise quite similar for this item, omits the passage entirely.
- 185–212 *For ilka daye hase tymes sere.* Gregory, Robert of Gretham, and the *NHC*-poet all include the familiar topos of the "ages of man," which was developed by Origen as an extension of the larger history of man cycle (Sears, *Ages of Man*, p. 82). Robert's section, however, is basically a list, without even the amount of detail found in Gregory, whereas *NHC* has more detail and is more colorful than either of the others. There is also a subtle difference in the *NHC*-poet's handling of the last three hours. For Gregory, the "sixth hour is that of young adulthood, because when we reach our full strength it is as if the sun is in the center of the heavens" (*Forty*, Homily 11, p. 79), yet the *NHC*-poet gives no detailed description of this time, saying only that it is the time of *myddel elde* (line 196). The ninth hour is old age for both writers, but where Gregory mentions the declining sun and the equivalent lack of warmth that accompanies old age, the *NHC*-poet's more positive description finds it a time of stability, when men are drawn to linger comfortably over their dinner. In *NHC* the sun begins its decline at the last hour, *ourenone* (line 212), not, as for Gregory, at the previous hour. It is difficult not to wonder if the poet's more positive picture of what we would call "middle age" corresponds to his own age at the time of writing.
- 191 *For than waxes the sonne full hate.* Burrow quotes the following Middle English verses which make similar use of this image, indicating how widely Gregory's homily seems to have been known (*Ages of Man: A Study*, p. 64):

This noon hete of þe someris day,  
 Whanne þe sunne moost hizest is,  
 It may be likened in good fay,  
 For Gergorie witnessiþ weel þis;  
 For in 3onge age man wide doon walke  
 To dyvers synnis in fele degre.

- 223–24 *For a peny es rounde and hase nane ende / Swa es the blisse where we sall lende.* Compare these lines with lines 3890–93 of Robert’s *Miroir*: “Li deners ki est tut runt / A bon entente nus sumunt. / Rundesce n’ad definement; / Nul auerat ki a Deu se prent.” [The penny which is all round / Summons us by good understanding. / Roundness has no end; / Neither will he have who commits himself to God] (Duncan, *Middle English Mirror*, p. 126). There is nothing at all like this in Gregory, which suggests most strongly that the *NHC*-poet was indeed familiar with Robert’s text, despite the evident differences. Robert goes on to elaborate the coin metaphor by pointing out that the “deners” has an image of the king on it, reminding us that God has formed us in his likeness.
- 227–56 *And in oure Gospell may we se.* The idea that it is never too late for God’s mercy to work in and for us is suggested by the following words in Gregory: “Since then one person is brought to a good life in childhood, another in youth, another in young adulthood, another in old age, another at the age of infirmity, it is as if workmen are being called to the vineyard at different hours” (*Forty*, Homily 11, p. 79). But the tenderness and the vivid sense of God’s love, here generated through the *NHC*-poet’s use of repetition and the characterization of God’s willingness to take us at any and every moment of our lives, create a very different effect from Gregory and provide some of *NHC*’s most beautiful and poetic verses. The lines which follow these (257–74), are appropriately stern in explaining the fate of those who have not hearkened to God’s many calls to them.
- 277–78 *To do penaunce than es to late / When the wayne es atte yate.* Proverbial. See Whiting C51, where many versions of this popular proverb are found from 1300–1500. The *wayne* is the vehicle that comes to take the dead body away.
- 283 *Thare he sais werkmen hyre takand.* A difficult line. G and D are similar to one another, but quite different from A. G, for example, reads: *Par he sayes werkmen er takend*. The expanded *NHC*, however, is identical, lending further support to the A reading, which makes better sense than G or D.
- 287–320 *The gude clerk Saynte Gregorye . . . daie.* The *NHC*-poet follows Gregory (*Forty*, Homily 11, p. 81) here in explaining that those who lived under the Old Law (i.e., righteous Jews) had no basis for *grucching* (line 312) over their long wait in the lower world, since they could not obtain the Kingdom of Heaven before the advent of Jesus.
- 329–30 *Bot the laste worde of oure Gospell / Burd make all men full ferde of hell.* These lines introduce the poet’s reflections on the theme of “Many are called but few are chosen.” Like Gregory, the *NHC*-poet sternly reminds his audience that no one can be certain that he will be found worthy. Yet the emphasis throughout the homily as a whole has been very much on God’s mercy and continuing desire for

- our salvation, which makes the bleakness of these words somewhat jarring. It seems that the poet himself does not wish to dwell on this gloomy prospect, for he returns as quickly as he can to the kind of exhortation to repentance and faithful service which characterizes all his preaching. He is at pains to point out that those who end in hell have deserved it through their wicked behavior (e.g., Solomon). As with Gregory, who says that “All voices shout ‘Christ’, but not everyone’s life shouts it,” the *NHC*-poet stresses the importance of continued good behavior and good deeds, rather than the mysterious unknowability as to who will be numbered among God’s elect (*Forty*, Homily 11, p. 82).
- 333      *Many er callid bot fewe er chosen*. Matthew 22:14. See also lines 347–48.
- 361      *And be aie radde als foule on twiste*. Proverbial: “to be as scared as a bird on a branch” (McIntosh, p. 207). His evidence is from Barbour’s *The Bruce* (7.188), “Tharfor he slepit as foul on twist.” Whiting F577, which includes a number of very varied proverbial sayings, gives the Barbour quotation but has nothing else remotely similar to *NHC*.
- 371      *Als we find writen of ane hermite*. Tubach 2565: Hermit enticed home. Gerould was unable to trace this *exemplum*, but it occurs as the conclusion of a longer narrative in the *Vitae Patrum* (PL 73.899) which in some form presumably provided the material for *NHC*. The basic outline of the tale is the same, though the *Vitae Patrum* version is more detailed, with the son showing reluctance to leave his hermit life until the devil persuades him that his father’s money will be distributed to men of evil life rather than given to the poor as his father wished. See also the Introduction and the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (12.121–22n) for further information about hermits.
- 386      *That thow his sectoure suld be*. That the stratagem for luring the hermit away from his cell is successful suggests not only the devil’s cunning but probably also reflects what seems to have been a widespread contemporary anxiety with regard to executors. Robert Mannyng, whose discussion of “coveitise” includes a lengthy diatribe against wicked executors, states that “Of alle false pat beren name, / False executours are most to blame” (*Handlyng Synne*, lines 6259–60).
- 415–16      *For he was callid bot never chosene, / For his dedes gert him be losene*. As in the homily, the suggestion here is that the hermit fully deserved hell because of his wicked deeds, not simply because we cannot know whether we will be chosen.

## 15. SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

The text for this Sunday, which occurs sixty days (more or less) before Easter, is the well known Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4–8). Because Jesus himself explicates the parable, the *NHC*-poet, rather than repeating Jesus’ interpretation, takes the opportunity to expand on the theme of “tholemodenes” or “patience.” This allows him to introduce the tale of Marina, whose life exemplifies the virtue of patience, but whose tale also belongs to a large and highly popular group of stories of cross-dressing female saints.

*NIMEV* 1519, 89. Manuscripts: A: fols. 54r–59r; G: fols. 55r–59r; D: fols. 83r–87r (fol. 86 lost); L: fols. 21r–22r.

- Before 1 *In illo tempore*. This is the usual form of the rubric in A which, as seen by the addition of these words, differs slightly from that of the Edinburgh manuscript.
- 29–30 *Bot other men behoves be kende / With ensawmpils to hevene at wende*. These lines offer what most would consider to be a generous interpretation of their biblical equivalent (Luke 8:4–15; see the Latin rubric, p. 93; compare Mark 4:11–12). Modern commentators acknowledge the difficulty of the passage in Luke, but the meaning is generally thought to be something along the following lines: Jesus speaks in parables in order that the truth be veiled from outsiders — the secrets of the kingdom should be given only to those who have already committed themselves to him (*International Bible Commentary*, ed. Farmer, p. 1395; C. Evans, *Saint Luke*, pp. 368, 374). The *CA* notes Bede's *Commentary on Luke*, which supports this typical reading: "Rightly then do they hear in parables, who having closed the sense of their heart, care not to know the truth" (3.269; compare *CA* 2.75–78, on Mark 4:11–12). The *NHC*-poet indicates instead that through parables those *without* faith *will* be brought to understand. Whether he has misunderstood the text or deliberately changed its meaning, his own interpretation is consistent with the urgent and positive desire to bring his audience into the community of the faithful as expressed throughout *NHC*.
- 33 *This ensawmpil that I sayde here*. In distinction to the Lucan text, I have not included lines 34–62 as part of Jesus' speech. In this passage the *NHC*-poet seamlessly interweaves a representation of Jesus' words with his own homiletic expansion of them. The poet is clearly speaking at line 63, when he says that "Bot Criste betaknes in oure Gospell," but there is no obvious break between this line and the one that precedes it, and I have therefore chosen to attribute the passage as a whole to the poet, whose voice is more akin to the commentaries than to Luke.
- 73–74 *Bot of a worde that tharein es, / That es to saye of tholemodenes*. Gregory's Homily 12 also deals with this text and also speaks about patience, but much more briefly; his *exemplum* is different, though it also illustrates patience. There is otherwise little similarity between the two.
- 137 *A ryche man be alde daies*. Tubach 3380: Monk, girl disguised as. The source for the *NHC* version, as Gerould notes (*NEHC*, p. 45), is probably the *Vitae Patrum* (*PL* 73.691). The legend of Saint Marina is one of numerous tales of holy women (other examples include Theodora, Euphrosne, and Pelagia) who disguised themselves as men. These tales were very popular in the Middle Ages, as can be seen by the more than thirty women who figure in them. Generally speaking there is little evidence to prove the historicity of these legends and their form certainly approximates more closely to romance than to history (Hotchkiss, *Clothes*, pp. 13–15). The earliest versions are set in the eastern Mediterranean; lives written originally in Greek were translated into Latin in the early Middle Ages, enjoying wide circulation in such works as Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale* and the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine (chapter 84, vol. 1, pp. 324–25).

- 165–66 *This monk eftir his doghtir yede / And cledde hir all in careman wede.* The prohibition in Deuteronomy 22:5 against cross-dressing (“A woman shall not be clothed with man’s apparel, neither shall a man use woman’s apparel: for he that doeth these things is abominable before God”) was repeated in church canons throughout the Middle Ages. Since, however, according to most medieval theologians, women were not created equal to men, female cross-dressing was tolerated, because of the assumption that such women were striving to become more male-like, and hence better persons (Bullough, “Cross-Dressing,” p. 225).
- 178 *devotabile.* The meaning is apparent, as cognate with ME *devout* (from OF *devot[u]lt*, Latin *devotus*), but as McIntosh notes this form does not appear either in *MED* or *OED* (p. 198).
- 179–80 *Hir wommanhede so wele scho hidde / That mannes maners wele scho kidde.* Although Marina’s successful assumption of a male disguise appears complete here, the events that subsequently unfold bear out Hotchkiss’ claim that the transvestite saints rarely embody masculine qualities; more often “they retain stereotypical feminine characteristics, including sexual vulnerability and sinfulness, maternal instincts, and concerns for family” (*Clothes*, p. 30).
- 213 *And Mawryne stude and hir bethoght.* Hotchkiss groups Marina with two other cross-dressing saints, Margareta and Theodora, whose disguises emerge as signs of humility, since they reflect voluntary disregard for self in favor of serving God. Their willingness to suffer for the sins of others “evokes the figure of Christ” (Hotchkiss, *Clothes*, p. 25). Marina’s conscious approximation of her “sinless suffering” to that of Christ is original to *NHC*. In the *Vitae Patrum*, and the *Legenda Aurea*, for example, she simply responds to the accusation by saying that she has sinned.
- 259–60 *And thus twa wyntir scho fedd it thare, / Right als it hir awne childe ware.* As Hotchkiss points out, the child is left with its putative “father,” but Marina’s role is more like that of an unwed mother (*Clothes*, p. 26). When she is finally readmitted to the convent she must perform menial housekeeping tasks. In other words, though she is punished for her transgression as a man, she nonetheless conforms to the model of a female sinner.
- 301 *Oute of the kirkgarthe hir to delve.* Exceptions to the expectation that a Christian would be buried in the churchyard were very unusual, according to Daniell (*Death and Burial*, pp. 95–105). Some indication of those who might be so excluded can be found in the First Statutes of Salisbury (c. 1217–1219), which listed usurers, named excommunicates, and strangers to the parish. The Statutes of London (1245–1259) excluded those who married without banns. Less formal, but closer to the abbot’s decision with regard to Marina, based on her supposed sinfulness, is John Mirk’s list, which included, among others, women who died in childbirth, lechers, and those who died suddenly.
- 313 *oghane.* *MED*: Gaelic, compare Middle Irish *ochan*, “woe!”
- 341 *He gert schroude that corse right thare.* Once Marina’s true (and sinless) identity has been discovered, the monks deal with her body in a manner that follows closely the practice of the community at Cluny. There the body was washed, clothed in



a hair-shirt and hooded habit, and placed on a bier. It then lay in the church, where the recitation of psalmody continued until the time of burial. At the grave the body was censed by a priest, sprinkled with holy water, and buried with earth cast upon it. The procession of monks then returned to the abbey to the tolling of bells (Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 31).

- 379 *warlawe*. From OE *waerloga*, a “traitor” or “oath-breaker,” but the special application to the devil was, according to *OED*, already its principal sense in OE.

## 16. QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

On this Sunday, fifty days before Easter, the Gospel text speaks of Jesus’ journey towards Jerusalem and his prophecy of what will occur there. The blind man who cries out for help along the way and will not be distracted becomes a metaphor of the need for perseverance in prayer. In the *exemplum* that follows, a peasant’s recognition of his inability to keep his thoughts from wandering as he tries to pray, as well as Saint Bernard’s acknowledgment of a similar failure, makes this one of *NHC*’s most appealingly human narratives. Gregory’s words on this subject, which may have helped to inspire the choice of *exemplum*, also suggest the universal nature of the problem: “In proportion to the tumult of our unspiritual thoughts must be our eagerness to persist in prayer” (*Forty*, Homily 13, p. 96).

*NIMEV* 2971, 3865. Manuscripts: A: fols. 59r–62v; G: fols. 59r–61v; D: fols. 87r–89v; L: fols. 22r–23r.

- 45 *Here on spekis Saynte Gregorye*. Once again the *NHC*-poet makes explicit reference to and use of Gregory. Compare the opening of Homily 13: “Our Redeemer foresaw that the hearts of his disciples would be greatly disturbed by his passion. He foretold to them far ahead both the agony of his passion and the glory of his resurrection. Then when they beheld him dying, as had been foretold, they would not doubt that he was also to rise again” (*Forty*, Homily 13, p. 94).
- 99–100 *Jericho*. This meaning of the Hebrew word, “Jericho,” comes from a work of Saint Jerome, as noted by Hurst in Gregory (*Forty*, Homily 13, p. 100n3).
- 149–54 *The folk that yede be the strete . . . blynnne*. Compare Gregory’s very similar allegorization of the scriptural text: “*And the people ahead rebuked him, that he should be silent*. What is meant by ‘the people ahead’ as Jesus comes if not the crowds of bodily desires and the uproar caused by our vices?” (*Forty*, Homily 13, p. 96).
- 179 *We find writen of Saynte Bernarde*. Tubach 3615: Paternoster, horse offered. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) was one of the most notable medieval exponents of monastic culture. As the abbot of the Cistercian house of Clairvaux, he played a leading role in promoting the newly reformed vision of the Benedictine Rule, whereby monks lived lives both literally and metaphorically apart, dedicated to prayer and contemplation (G. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, pp. 8–9). The emphasis on prayer perhaps provided this particular *exemplum*’s link with Bernard, which otherwise appears to have no historical connection to the saint. Gerould suggests

a possible affinity with one of the many affiliates of the celebrated French fabliau, “Les Souhaits de Saint Martin” (*NEHC*, p. 47). The common thread linking all versions involves the granting of a wish by a supernatural being, but without the expected positive consequences. However, apart from this very general similarity there is nothing at all like the *NHC exemplum* found among the narratives described in Bédier’s *Fabliaux* (p. 177), none of which mentions Saint Bernard. Closer analogues are found in the *Legenda Aurea* (chapter 120, volume 2, pp. 98–107), the *exempla* of Jacques de Vitry (*Die Exempla*, p. 49), and the later *AT* (113).

- 200 *Umstonte. MED*: Probably from ON, compare OI *um stund*, perhaps by analogy with ME *umbestounde*, “at times.”

### 17. FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT (NOT FOUND IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 4:1–11 (Jesus’ Temptation in the Wilderness).

*NIMEV* 1150, 29 (Placidus). Manuscripts: A: fols. 62v–79v; G: fols. 61v–80v; D: fols. 89v–102v; L: fols. 23r–27v.

### 18. SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

A forty-day fast that was independent of the Easter fast appeared in Egypt around the end of the third century. Its purpose seems to have been less to prepare for Easter than to celebrate the Lord’s fast in the desert during the weeks after his baptism. Soon, however, it took the form of a penitential preparation for celebrating the death and resurrection of Christ, making its appearance in Rome in the second half of the fourth century. The first Sunday of Lent, which began these six weeks of fasting, fell on exactly the fortieth day before the Sacred Triduum. At the beginning of the sixth century, out of a desire to have forty days of actual fasting (Sundays being non-fast days) the fast was begun on the preceding Wednesday; henceforth this Wednesday (Ash Wednesday) marked the start of Lent (Martimort, *Church at Prayer*, pp. 66–68). The homily presents a lengthy discussion of the six good qualities embodied by the Canaanite woman whose prayer to Jesus to heal her daughter was answered despite her being a Gentile.

*NIMEV* 3013, 3784. Manuscripts: A: fols. 79v–85r; G: fol. 80v (first 18 lines only); D: fols. 102v–107r; L: fols. 27v–29r.

- 13 *Helpe this wommane and late hir gange*. The disciples’ words are slightly more generous in the *NHC* rendering than the Gospel text, where the disciples simply request that Jesus send the woman away.
- 24–25 *Gode Jewes, that haldes wele thaïre laïe / Er Goddes sonnes*. Most patristic commentaries use Matthew 15:24 to justify their perception of the expansion of Christianity (“And he answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel”). See, for example, Jerome: “He says that He is not sent to the Gentiles, but that He is sent first to Israel, so that when they would not receive

- the Gospel, the passing over to the Gentiles might have just cause" (CA1.563). The *NHC*-poet's positive comment on "good Jews" follows, more or less, the distinction endorsed by Aquinas between scriptural and post-scriptural Jews. Thus Jews living before the time of Christ, though not without flaw, were seen by medieval theologians as God's chosen people (Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews*, p. xii).
- 51 *Gode clerkes that grete clergie can.* Although the *NHC*-poet does not name a particular clerk, Bede's homily on this text offers some points of comparison as seen in its opening words: "In the reading from the holy Gospel which has just been read, dearly-beloved brothers, we have heard about the great faith, patience, constancy and humility of a woman" (*Homilies*, 1.22, p. 215). The qualities which the woman is said to exemplify have been taken by Bede from Jerome, and they are also found in a number of earlier commentaries.
- 73 *legge. MED:* shortened form of *alleggen*, from OF *alegier*, "to become lighter."
- 89–104 "I hungrid sore," *schal he say. . . . For ye ne helpid me ne myne.*" These verses paraphrase Matthew 25:41–45:
- Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you covered me not: sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they also shall answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee? Then he shall answer them, saying: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me.
- 134 *a whelpe that es nyne nightes blynde.* There is of course no mention in the biblical text of the fact that puppies are born with their eyes closed and open them only some time after the ninth or tenth day. The *NHC*-poet's allusion to this fact allows him to develop the metaphor of blindness, but also indicates his familiarity with a domestic animal which, in the later Middle Ages, was valued for purposes both of companionship and hunting (Merlen, *De Canibus*, p. 143).
- 161–62 *Bot if thaire biddinges be in ylle, / We awe noght for to wirk thaire wille.* The suggestion that "prelates" are not always to be obeyed if they give bad advice has a clear thematic connection to the *exemplum* that follows, where an old hermit is so appalled by a young hermit's lustful thoughts that he advises him to abandon his religious vocation (lines 279–80). The need for a wise and good clergy who serve the interests of parishioners, and their failure at times to do so, is a theme to which the poet recurs on several occasions, notably in the homilies on the Third Sunday in Lent (20.139–240) and on the Second Sunday after Easter (A: fols. 120r and 120v) where he makes use of Jesus' portrait of the "good shepherd" (John 10:11–16) to describe the duties of prelates: not all live up to these duties, for some are so won over by bribes (*giftis*) that their hands are "smeared," and, instead of telling the sheep how to live godly lives, the bishop "covers over" their sins and runs away when he sees the "spiritual wolf" who slays men's souls, rather than

helping these men to amend their sorry condition. See also Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*, whose advice, with regard to priests at least, is more conservative:

Lewed man, þou shalt cursyng doute, *fear*  
 And þy prest þou shalt nat stoute. *defy*  
 Be he wykked or be he gode,  
 Þou shalt to hym be polemode. (lines 10929–32)

183 *For truthe is ded withoute good dede.* A variant on James 2:17: "So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself."

205–08 *Lyve we than so in dede and worde . . . telles.* These words have probably been drawn from a scriptural passage such as that found in John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth." This idea is expressed more than once in the epistles of John, who was considered to be identical with John the Evangelist.

247–48 *This wommane that thus made hir mane, / Betaknes ilk a synfull mane.* Unlike the *NHC*-poet, Bede suggests that the woman signifies the Church. While both texts then figure the daughter as a soul sickened by sin, Bede's list of sins is large and varied, with only a passing reference to "uncleanness of the body" (*Homilies*, 1.219). The *NHC*-poet, however, focuses exclusively on lust and lechery, with their obvious link to the forthcoming *exemplum*. Beginning in the thirteenth century, the increased emphasis on the importance of confession that followed Fourth Lateran's requirement that it take place annually gave rise to a great number of manuals intended to assist priests with the task of confession. That a preoccupation with sex "is endemic" to these manuals is persuasively illustrated by Payer ("Sex and Confession," pp. 126–42). In pondering the question as to why this was so he notes that Robert Grosseteste had justified the use of canons on sexual sin "because miserable mortals are more frequently wounded by these sins," and goes on to offer the following tentative suggestion: "Christianity had been unsuccessful in realising its sexual ethic. When a renewed commitment to confession arose, attention was focused on the area of human behaviour which had always been resistant to the strictures of the orthodox morality" (Payer, "Sex and Confession," p. 137).

261 *To wilDIRNES yode a yonge man.* Tubach 346: Arrow shot at monk. The source for this tale is the *Vitae Patrum* (PL 73.874–75). It is also found in the *Sermones Vulgares* of Jacques de Vitry, the *Alphabetum Narrationum* attributed to Etienne de Besançon and its English translation *AT* (2), as well as the French and English versions of *Handlyng Synne* (where it is incorrectly attributed to Gregory). The latter work includes the tale in its discussion of the seven deadly sins (specifically lechery). See also the Introduction, p. 6, and the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (12.121–22n) for further discussion of hermits.

263–64 *And he was fandid swa fellie / With lust and likinge of his bodie.* The narrative emphasizes both the unavoidability of sin (especially the sin of lust), and the understanding that no sin is so bad that it cannot be atoned for through confession and penance, a message which would certainly have resonance for a lay audience, especially as developed in this account. Though the tonality is stern with regard

- to the wickedness of lust, there is also a good deal more tender exhortation and encouragement not to despair than in other versions.
- 269 *unlevene*. The *MED* lists this word under the heading for *unlef* (2.2b), with *NHC* as its only citation having this form and meaning. McIntosh thinks that the form of *unlevene* is more difficult to explain than *unleve* (line 332) which, he says, would be an acceptable form of *unlefe* (p. 207).
- 289 *With yllir wane*. *MED*: Compare *OI illr*, “wicked, harmful”; *wane*, “misfortune, adversity.” McIntosh suggests “with the poorer expectation” as the literal sense, with a provisional meaning of “despite the (bad) consequences” (p. 200). He says further, “The phrase has a Norse ring but seems to be unrecorded in Icelandic” (p. 200). *L* retains the phrase, but *D* substitutes “With good wil,” which makes little sense.
- 302 *seclere*. Compare *D*, *L*, and *V*: *world*. Cited only as an adjective, “of or belonging to the world,” in *MED*, but the comparison with *D*, *V*, and *L* makes clear that “the secular world” is here implied. Compare also the following phrase from the *Vitae Patrum*: “ad saeculum redibat” (*PL* 73.875).
- 315–16 *Bettir es me here some joye to make, / Than to pyne here and never joye take*. In no other version does the young hermit speak in this way. That his words would probably have conveyed an aura of irrefutable logic for the *homme moyen sensuel* (why be miserable both here *and* in the hereafter?) shows considerable psychological insight in leading the audience first to agree with this point of view and then to understand its limitations.
- 332 *unleve*. See line 269n.
- 351 *Lorde that heryed hell*. See First Sunday in Advent (1.122n) for a discussion of the Harrowing of Hell.
- 358 *Aperteli he sawe the fende*. Most other versions further distinguish the devil as being an Ethiopian (*PL* 73.874), a “little blak felow like a man of / Ynde” (*AT* 2.21–22), or simply as black (Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, line 8516). Athanasius’ widely disseminated *Life of Antony* may be partly responsible for this curious but widespread medieval tradition of the devil as a small black imp, stating that “it was in the visage of a black boy that [the devil] afterwards manifested himself” (pp. 34–35).
- 384 *seclere*. See line 302n.
- 385 *To take me wif*. The word *wif* could mean either “woman” or “wife” in Middle English, but in this context is more likely to be the former.

## 19. ANNUNCIATION

The feast of the Annunciation (March 25) is of Eastern origin, and was introduced at Rome in the late seventh century. The date was chosen in relation to that of Christmas, but also because of an ancient tradition that the creation of the world, the Incarnation, and the

Passion of Christ also occurred on that date. Although the Annunciation is, strictly speaking, a feast of Our Lord, the growing veneration of the Virgin in the Middle Ages resulted in its being celebrated as a Marian feast. Different manuscripts of *NHC* position the feast of the Annunciation differently, owing to the movable date of Easter. Sometimes, as here, it follows the Second Sunday in Lent, while at other times it comes after the Third or Fourth Sunday in Lent, or Palm Sunday, presumably in accordance with the calendar current at the time of each manuscript's transcription. The homily celebrates the miraculous paradox of Mary's being both virgin and mother, which leads naturally to an account of one of the many miracles of the Virgin which were so popular in the later Middle Ages.

*NIMEV* 2084, 1641. Manuscripts: A: fols. 79v–89r; G: (missing); D: fols. 110r–113r; L: fols. 29r–30r.

- 41 *Jacob house here callis he.* Compare this line, and those following, to Bede: "Now the house of Jacob refers to the universal Church" (*Homilies* 1.3, p. 23).
- 60 *Hase gane with childe, this es the sext monethe.* Awkward hypermetric line. Compare D: *þat þi cosyn Elizabeth hap gon wit chelde / now vi moneþ & sche is of gret elde.*
- 61 *yelde.* *MED* (*yeld*): "of an animal: ? incapable of producing offspring." The entry for *geld*, however, gives the meaning that is appropriate for this context: "of a woman: sterile, barren." Neither entry cites *NHC*.
- 73 *The maistir sais apon this spell.* Gregory does not include a homily for this feast in his collection but Bede's homily on the Annunciation has some points of similarity to *NHC* (*Homilies* 1.3, pp. 19–29).
- 82 *Als fihsse es tane with hoke and baite.* See First Sunday in Advent (1.92n).
- 88 *Gromonde.* Metathesis of *gormond*, from *OF gormant*, "translation." As an epithet for Satan, *Gromonde the gredie* has a proverbial ring, but Whiting does not list it.
- 110 *Goddes strenghe.* This etymology appears in the writing of the Church Fathers and Bede also reproduces it: "Now Gabriel means 'strength of God'" (*Homilies* 1.3, p. 20). The angel Gabriel appears on four occasions in the Bible, each occurrence being linked in some way with the coming of the Messiah.
- 123 *For als the sonne passis thorghe the glasse.* According to Breeze, "the image of the sunbeam through glass for Christ's incarnation is a product of the late Latin culture of North Africa. It expresses the idea that, as light shines through glass, but the glass remains perfect and undamaged, so Mary's virginity remained perfect and entire after she had conceived her son" ("Blessed Virgin," p. 19). Originating in a fifth- or sixth-century sermon falsely attributed to Saint Augustine, the simile became popular during the later Middle Ages both in Latin and a variety of vernaculars; Breeze provides an extensive listing ("Blessed Virgin," pp. 19–29). The Sarum Breviary made use of it in the Sixth Lectio of the Third Sunday in Advent, suggesting that the liturgy could well have been the *NHC*-poet's source here (*Breviarum ad Usum*, 1.cvi). Napier gives a fuller listing of versions in Middle English, including the following excerpt from *NHC*'s near-contemporary, *Cursor Mundi* (lines 11.28–32): "Right also thou seis the sun beme / Gais thoru the glas and cums again / Wituten brest [breaking], right sua al plain,

- / Bot flesheliker he com and yede, / Saufand his moder hir maiden hede" (*History of the Holy*, pp. 81–83). Greene's more recent *Early English Carols* records many carols with the image (see especially the note on p. 348). The second half of the fourteenth century saw its incorporation by Bromyard (drawing, no doubt, on verses used by the school of Anselm) into his *Summa Predicantium*, whence it passed into the sermons of many English preachers. Both the fifteenth-century Wakefield Annunciation (*Towneley Plays*, p. 87, lines 35–38) and the N-Town play of Christ and the Doctors (*N-Town Plays*, p. 170, lines 97–100) also make use of the image, showing its incorporation into works of popular culture. I have not seen any other example, in Latin or the vernacular, which includes *NHC*'s lovely image of the glass lending its color to the light that shines through it as a simile for Christ's human nature.
- 127–28     *So come the Sonne of rightwisnes / Into oure Ladie clene flehsse*. Compare Bede's similarly punning usage in *Homilies* 1.3, p. 25: "But that same sun, that is, the divinity of our Redeemer, cloaked itself with the covering of human nature as with a shade, and by this means a virgin's womb was able to bear him."
- 132         *stekil*. *MED*: Northern only; perhaps from *steken*. Compare Early Modern Scottish *stekill*, "a latch."
- 143–44     *For Marye will on Ynglihsse mene / Sterne of the se that oft es sene*. The image of Mary as *stella maris* ("star of the sea") originated in a scribal error: Jerome's work on the interpretation of Hebrew names explains the Old Testament Miriam's name as "drop of the sea" (*stilla maris*). But *stilla* became *stella* and the error was widely perpetuated (*Dictionary of Biblical Tradition*, p. 735). In his homily on the Annunciation Bede similarly writes that Mary's name "has the meaning 'star of the sea,' and like an extraordinary heavenly body among the storms of this tottering world she shone brightly with the grace of her special privilege" (*Homilies* 1.3, p. 21).
- 171         *It was a knight beyonde the se*. Tubach 5115: Virgin, Blessed, comes to devil instead of his victim. The probable source for this *exemplum* is the *Legenda Aurea*, which includes it in the feast for the Assumption of the Virgin (chapter 119, vol. 2, pp. 85–86). The chief difference between the two versions is the *NHC*-poet's greater emphasis on the wife's devotion to Mary, and the added detail of the husband's impatience with his wife's wish to stop and pray on the way to their meeting with the devil. The only other English version, according to Gerould, is found in three of the unprinted manuscripts (MS Harley 2277, fol. 61v; MS Cotton Cleopatra D.9, fol. 148r; and MS Cotton Julius D.9, fol. 302v) of the *South English Legendary* (*NEHC*, p. 54).

## 20. THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

The *NHC*-poet must have been familiar with the centuries-old tradition of anti-clerical satire with its stinging attack on corruption in the church and its clergy, and this homily echoes many of its themes. Monks and friars, more often than priests, were the targets of this tradition, but the abuses mentioned most often (with the exception of simony) were similar:

lechery, laziness, avarice, gluttony, the accumulation of wealth, the absence of teaching, and the failure to give a good example through the cleric's own life. The *NHC*-poet departs somewhat from the tradition, at the very least in terms of the strength of feeling expressed, in his recurring emphasis on the consequence for parishioners of clerical malfeasance. Though the poet may be speaking to the clergy in this case, his real concern is, as ever, with the laity and with his attempt to set their feet on the path to heaven.

*NIMEV* 2968, 3288. Manuscripts: A: fols. 89r–94r; G: (missing); D: fols. 107r–110r; L: fols. 30r–30v.

- 8            *Beelzebub*. A name used interchangeably in the New Testament for Satan, the prince of demons.
- 10           *faystere*. Attested only in its verbal form, *faistren* (“to bring up”) by *MED*. For the noun form as it appears in this line of the Ashmole manuscript, McIntosh suggests the meaning “fosterer, boss” (p. 198).
- 62           *Youre sonnes*. Jesus, according to Luke (11:14–28), makes the point that since “your sons” (i.e., other Jews) cast out demons, these accusations should also be leveled against them. The *NHC*-poet expands on Luke’s “they shall be your judges” by categorizing these “sons” as good Jews who, along with Jesus, will judge the others on Doomsday and banish them from the joys of heaven (Luke 11:19–20).
- 104          *este and nythe*. See Third Sunday in Advent (3.27n). *Este* and *eft* are evidently the same word, both occurring only in the expression *este/eft and nythe*. See also Eleventh Sunday after Trinity for a further occurrence of the expression (46.294). Compare L: *yst & nyth*. D: *onde & nyþe*.
- 123–24      *He that es noght with me, / Agaynes me forsothe es he*. Cp. Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23: “He that is not with me is against me.”
- 138          *Fra rightwisnes to wrange gates*. Here *NHC* breaks off before the conclusion of the Gospel pericope; what follows is not so much an explication but a lengthy and strongly worded diatribe against bad clergy, inspired by Jesus’ condemnation of those who do not “gather souls to God.” Neither Gregory nor Bede has a homily for this date, but Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* was probably an influence (see line 164n). Twelfth-century Anglo-Latin satires against corruption in the church and its clergy provided a rich source for the subsequent vernacular preaching of satire and complaint, as seen in the *Speculum Stultorum*, the *Apocalipsis Goliae*, and the work of Walter Map and Walter of Châtillon. Robert Mannyng, writing in the vernacular and a close contemporary of the *NHC*-poet, voices similar concerns in *Handlyng Synne* (see line 158n). Owst, in *Literature and Pulpit*, devotes two chapters to this topic, with pages 241–86 focusing chiefly on complaints against the clergy. As Kerby-Fulton points out, most of the anti-clerical satire which flourished in the monasteries and schools was written by clerics and for clerics; the *NHC*-poet’s intended audience, however, is the laity, with the result that he returns again and again to the consequences for the parishioners of the priest’s failure to teach them the right way (“Piers Plowman,” p. 531).



- 158 *Thus God for slewthe sall thaim tyme.* Compare Robert Mannyng's words in *Handlyng Synne*: "A persone ys slogh [negligent] yn holy cherche / Pat on hys shepe wyl nat werche" (lines 4821–22).
- 161 *Thaire parihssenes for to teche.* The words found in 2 Timothy 4:2 were often cited in exhorting priests to this duty: "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine."
- 164 *And lates thaire sawles in synne rust.* This popular figure is based on Lamentations 4:1: "How is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed, the stones of the sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street?" Gregory's *Pastoral Care* (2.7), with which the *NHC*-poet was likely to have been familiar, quotes the scriptural text as part of the exhortation that priests not neglect their duty to parishioners. Compare also Chaucer's later and famous portrayal of the Parson, in the General Prologue of *CT*:
- This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.  
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,  
And this figure he added eek therto,  
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?  
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,  
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;  
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,  
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep. (*CT* I[A]496–504)
- 179 *give to howse.* The meaning of this phrase is by no means clear, but compare the *MED* citation from lines 1003–04 of *King Horn*: "Ant yshal do to house / Thy dohter wel to spouse," with the meaning "bring home." There is nothing comparable in either D or V; G has lost the pages containing this item.
- 223–24 *And think that all thaire mete and drink, / Comes of thaire parihssen swink.* Compare the words of the twelfth-century Latin satirist, Walter Map, who similarly criticizes the abuse of tithing: "They buy themselves manors with the goods of the poor" (quoted in translation in Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*, p. 58).
- 239 *That mai we se be Saynte Bede.* Tubach 542: Bede, preaches to stones. There is, alas, no evidence that this charming anecdote has any authentic connection to the Venerable Bede (d. 735), about whom very little is known beyond what he himself reports in the last chapter of his *History of the English Church and People*. His life, from the age of seven, was spent in the monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow in the north of England, so the detail of Bede's walk over the moors adds a pleasingly authentic touch. Gerould notes the probable source in *Legenda Aurea* (chapter 181, vol. 2, p. 375), as well as a version in the *Alphabetum Narrationum* (*NEHC*, p. 55). Neither of these (nor the version in the later English *AT* [637]), includes the moor or the birds who, along with the stones, respond to Bede's sermon.
- 256 *marstire.* This spelling is not attested by *MED*, but the meaning seems obvious.

- 273        *This mirakel have I tolde yow here.* Following this unusually short *exemplum* the poet returns to the theme of priests and preaching, which occupies him for a further twenty lines.
- 280        *And vikars als with thaire brade crownes.* *MED* provides the following definition of *vikar*: “One appointed to act as priest in a parish in place of the real parson, a parish vicar.” All *MED* citations are much later than *NHC*. Given the criticism of priestly avarice and luxurious living in lines 205–10, this may be a further criticism, this time of a broad-brimmed hat as an illustration of pride and ostentation. There is little contemporary information regarding appropriate attire for the secular clergy, but the many allusions to their wearing of secular attire were probably intended as an index of spiritual laxity (Mayo, *History of Ecclesiastical*, pp. 47–48). The broad-brimmed hat featured in the Ellesmere portrait of the monk was particularly associated with clerical fashion in the fifteenth century; though this is too late for *NHC*, the proposed sumptuary law of 1402 which would have forbidden any cleric, with certain exceptions of rank, from wearing any hat “‘passing the points of the shoulders’ in the breadth of its brim” suggests an attempt to legislate against an offence which may well have begun earlier (Mullaney, “Language of Costume,” p. 41).
- 293        *Yitt es a worde in oure Gospell.* The *NHC*-poet now returns to the concluding verses of the Gospel pericope (Luke 11:24–28), turning his attention away from the priests who teach God’s word and towards those who receive it.
- 294        *almos.* This appears to be the noun *almos* used with an adjectival meaning, though no such form is listed by *MED*.
- 302        *For in weete stede findes he moste reste.* Springs, wells, and streams are among the favored habitats of the devil (J. Russell, *Lucifer*, p. 71). The idea that the devil prefers wet places could also have been influenced by English folkloric traditions. The monsters of *Beowulf*, for instance, inhabit misty moorlands, and Grendel’s mother lives behind a waterfall (e.g., *Beowulf*, ed. Klaeber, lines 1258–61, 1357–62). Guthlac, the seventh-century saint, who goes to live in the marshy fens of East Anglia, is much abused by the demons who live there (*Felix’s Life*, pp. 89, 103).
- 313        *He comis and findis his chaumbir swepid.* Bede explains that the house is “swept and garnished, that is, purified by the grace of baptism from the stain of sin, yet replenished with no diligence in good works” (*CA* 3.408).
- 324        *sevene fendes.* For medieval writers, the number seven often suggests the seven deadly sins, as indicated by the next line: “That es to saie with synnes all.” Compare Bede: “By the seven evil spirits which he takes to himself, he signifies all the vices” (*CA* 3.408).
- 349–50    *This er the wordes of oure Gospell / Als man with Yngliss tonge mai tell.* Our author has been so warmly energized by his subject matter on this occasion, that he has abandoned his usual orderly sequence of Gospel paraphrase, homily, and *exemplum* with the result that this couplet occurs just a few lines from the end of the entire item.

**21. FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 6: 1–15 (Feeding of the Multitudes).

*NIMEV* 2934, 1643 (Piers Toller). Manuscripts: A: fols. 94r–101r; G: (missing); D: (lacking); L: fols. 30v–32v.

**22. FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT/ PASSION SUNDAY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 8:46–59 (Jesus Insulted by Jews).

*NIMEV*: 2936, 288 (The Hermit and the Thieves). Manuscripts: A: fols. 101r–104v; G: (missing); D: fols. 113r–115v; L: fols. 32v–33v.

**23. PALM SUNDAY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 21:1–9 (Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem).

*NIMEV*: 1518, 46 (The Man in the Devil's Leash). Manuscripts: A: fols. 104v–108v; G: (missing); D: fol. 115v (rubric only); L: fols. 33v–34v.

**24. EASTER SUNDAY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Mark 16: 1–7 (The Empty Tomb).

*NIMEV*: 2999, 416 (Saint Martin and the Naked Beggar). Manuscripts: A: fols. 108v–112v; G: (missing); D: fols. 117r–119r (one folio missing, begins at line 99); L: fols. 34v–35v.

**25. EASTER MONDAY**

Easter, the central liturgical season of the church year, includes not just Easter Sunday, the celebration of Christ's Resurrection, but also the fifty days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost, commemorating the appearances of the risen Christ to his disciples, his Ascension, and finally the sending of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the *NHC* paraphrase of Jesus' encounter with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, we are told that since this account is itself both sermon and tale, as well as being very long, there will be no explication apart from the last lines, which describe Jesus' breaking of bread. This action and the recognition of its significance by Jesus' disciples, stands for all obedient men who come gladly to hear God's preaching; both homily and *exemplum*, however, are primarily given over to vivid illustrations, evidently drawn from contemporary life, of parishioners who may be present in body, but who, if they are not fast asleep, are nonetheless far away in spirit.

*NIMEV* 2970, 290. Manuscripts: A: fols. 112v–115r; G: (missing); D: fols. 119r–120v; L: fols. 35v–36r.

- 4        *To a castell that Emaus hight.* The exact location of the village of Emmaus is unknown. From the fourth century on, pilgrim texts took it to be Nicopolis (today Khirbet Imwas), which is seventeen miles from Jerusalem, although modern scholars have generally agreed that this is too far for a day's journey (Freedman, *Anchor Bible*, 2.497). As Douglas Sugano has observed:
- Christ's appearance to the two apostles on the road to Emmaus is described in Luke 24:13–22, where Emmaus is called simply a village. Emmaus is generally identified as Latrun, the legendary burial place of the “good thief” crucified with Jesus. The alteration from village to castle adds feudal associations but was also a point of fact in the Middle Ages: the construction of the crusader fortress Toron des Chevaliers at Latrun gave rise to an automatic association between Emmaus and castles. In describing the environs of Jerusalem, for example, Mandeville describes the location variously as ‘þe castel of Emaux’ or ‘þe castel of Cheynay’ (*Defective Version*, ed. Seymour, pp. 39, 52, 54). (*N-Town Plays*, p. 337, line 465n).
- 14        *the tane.* Northern form of *the ton(e)*. From an incorrect analysis of *that on(e)*.
- 74        *And schewid to Symon sythen he rase.* The *NHC*-poet, in what follows, correctly understands Luke's potentially unclear statement that Simon Peter had already seen the risen Christ, before His appearance on the road to Emmaus (see 1 Corinthians 15:5, where Paul states that after Jesus' death and resurrection “he was seen by Cephas [Peter]; and after that by the eleven”). Bede recognizes the need for clarification when he says, “It seems that our Lord appeared to Peter first of all those whom the four Evangelists and the Apostle mention” (*CA*, 3.781).
- 75–76    *This Symon of wham I mene, / Was Sainte Petire als I wene.* Simon the fisherman is among the first to be called by Jesus to discipleship; subsequently he is called Simon, Peter (Jesus' name for him), or Simon Peter. See further the note to line 79.
- 79        *For Petir on Ynglihse stane es saide.* The poet interprets Peter's name by explaining Jesus' pun on *petros*, the Greek word for “rock,” in Matthew 16:18: “And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church” (emphasis added).
- 85–86    *That ylke man forsothe hight Lucas, / That sawe Jhesu Criste with Cleophas.* In giving a name to the unknown disciple who, along with Cleophas, encountered Jesus on the road to Emmaus, the *NHC*-poet concurs with a tradition reported by Theophylactus in the *CA*: “Some say that Luke was one of these two, and for this reason concealed his name” (3.773). D, however, evidently confused by the earlier allusion to Simon, reports: “þat ylke Symound forsothe it was / þat saw Crist wip Cleophas.”
- 92        *And lange withall.* Gregory's words at the beginning of his homily on this text suggest a similar awareness of its length: “I have determined to examine the meaning of the Gospel reading summarily and not word by word, lest an over-long explanation be a burden upon your kindness” (*Forty*, Homily 23, p. 176). Gregory's theme, summarized as “Receive Christ at your tables,” bears some

- resemblance to that of *NHC*, but the similarity could also be accounted for by the nature of the Gospel text itself.
- 110 *Bothe the Alde Lawe and the Newe. Alde Law* is understood as Mosaic Law, most importantly the Ten Commandments. Christians consider that Christ's coming did not cancel this Old Law, but embodied its true fulfillment, as expressed through the term "New Law."
- 123 *On werldes welthe som men thinkes so mikil.* This line and those following describe parishioners whose minds are on their worldly affairs, and not on the sermon to which they should be attending. They have an interesting parallel in one of the *exempla* found in the collection known as *Jacob's Well*, whose source is in fact the same *Vitae Patrum exemplum* as *NHC* (see line 147n). As will be seen, the *NHC*-poet gives a very spare rendering of the *exemplum* itself, but the homily here includes further details not dissimilar to some of those found in the *Vitae Patrum* and *Jacob's Well*. Compare *Vitae Patrum* (PL 73.766A): "Before another they appeared as if they were building and carrying something or doing several different things; and whatever the devils had produced as if playing, those in prayer turned these things in the thought of their hearts"; and *Jacob's Well* (37): "A-fore summe þe feendys drouyn beestys, & þanne þei thouȝtyn on here bestys. A-forn summe þe feendys teldyn nobelys, & þanne þo men settyn here thouȝt on here tresoure. A-fore summe feendys komyn as merchauntys, þanne þo folk thouȝtyn all on bygyng & selleng . . . & on here wordly good."
- 135 *lykehouse.* L: *lyk hous*; D: *at lyche wake & synful plawes*. For *lychwake* (from OE *lic*, "body" and *waeccan*, "to watch"), *MED* gives the following quotation from John Mirc lending support to the idea that wakes were occasions for unseemly revelry as well as mourning: "Art thou iwont at lychwake / Any pleyes for to make" (*Instructions for Parish*, lines 1353–54). The seventeenth-century antiquarian John Aubrey offers the following fascinating glimpse into this custom, from an eyewitness account of the early seventeenth century: "At the funeralls in Yorkeshire, to this day, they continue the custome of watching and sitting-up all night till the body is interred. In the interim some kneel downe and pray (by the corps), some play at cards, some drink and take Tobacco: they have also Mimicall playes and sports" (*Remaines of Gentilisme*, p. 30).
- 143 *forworthinnes.* *MED* cites only the verb form. Compare D: *foul slouþe*.
- 147 *Herebi ligges a litil tale.* Tubach, 4448: Sleeping potion given by devil. This brief anecdote comes from the *Vitae Patrum* (PL 73.765), where Abbot Macarius sees a number of demons running about the church in the form of small black Ethiopian boys, performing a variety of mischievous activities: "Some quite little black Ethiopian boys were running about the whole church hither and thither . . . and if they had pressed together the eyes of any one of them with two little fingers, he immediately fell asleep; but if they had dipped a finger into anyone's mouth, they made him yawn." The *exemplum* can also be found in the *Alphabetum Narrationum* ascribed to Etienne de Besançon, and its later English rendering in the *AT* (59), as well as in Bromyard's *Summa Predicantium* (*NEHC*, p. 60). Once again, *Jacob's Well* (37), includes more of the *Vitae Patrum*'s very entertaining details

than does *NHC*: “dyuerse feendys smale as chylderyn, blewe as men of Inde, rennyng al abowte in þe cherche . . . & puttyng here fyngerys to þe eyzen of summe, and þei sleptyn, & whenne þei awokyn þe feendys greycyd here lyppes wyth here oynementys in here box, & þanne þe folk iangelyd, & telde talys.”

## **26. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 20:19–31 (Jesus’ Appearance to Thomas and the Disciples).

*NIMEV* 2941, 3298 (Saint Edmund and the Devil). Manuscripts: A: fols. 115r–117r; G: (missing); D: fols. 120v–122v; L: fols. 36r–36v.

## **27. SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 10:11–16 (The Good Shepherd).

*NIMEV* 2938, 1645 (Theobald). Manuscripts: A: fols. 117r–121r; G: (missing); D: fols. 122v–125r; L: fols. 36v–37v.

## **28. THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 16:16–22 (Jesus Foretells His Death).

*NIMEV* 2927, 47 (Good Monk). Manuscripts: A: fols. 121r–123v; G: (first 11 lines missing) fols. 81r–82v; D: fols. 125r–127r; L: fols. 37v–38v.

## **29. FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 16:5–14 (Jesus Foretells the Coming of the Holy Spirit).

*NIMEV* 2926 (no exemplum). Manuscripts: A: fols. 123v–125r; G: fols. 82v–84r; D: fols. 127r–128v; L: fols. 37v–38v.

## **30. FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 16:23–30 (Jesus Says, “Ask and you shall receive”).

*NIMEV* 2936 (no exemplum). Manuscripts: A: fols. 125r–126v; G: fols. 84r–85r; D: fols. 128v–129v; L: fols. 38v–39r.

## **31. ASCENSION DAY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Mark 16: 14–20 (Jesus Taken up into Heaven and Disciples Proclaim the Good News).

*NIMEV* 3933, 32 (Carpus). Manuscripts: A: fols. 126v–128v; G: fols. 85r–87r; D: fols. 129v–131v; L: fols. 39r–39v.

### 32. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

The Ascension marks the final historical departure of Jesus from his disciples as recorded in Luke 24:50–51: “And he led them out as far as Bethania: and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, he departed from them, and was carried up to heaven.” Although no time frame is mentioned here, in Acts 1:3, Luke adds the information that Jesus “shewed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God,” thus providing a basis for the medieval celebration of this feast as occurring forty days after Easter.

*NIMEV* 3741, 348. Manuscripts: A: fols. 128v–130v; G: fols. 87r–88v; D: fols. 131v–132v; L: fols. 39v–40r.

- 31 *Gode gasteli lare als think me.* Gregory’s homilies on the Gospels do not include one on this text, and Bede’s is unrelated.
- 45 *Als I finde writen of a kinge.* Tubach 4994: Trumpet of doom (Sword of Damocles). This *exemplum* belongs to a widespread and quite varied family of tales whose central theme is the familiar philosophical topos: count no man happy until he is dead. See Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* 1.2021–2257, which circulated widely. One central branch of the topos is an anecdote from *Barlaam and Josaphat*, a Christianized version of the story of the Buddha; the other is the *Sword of Damocles*, told by Cicero in *Tusculan Disputations V*, regarding Dionysius, the fourth-century BCE king of Syracuse, and his attendant Damocles. The source for this particular version, according to Gerould (*NEHC*, p. 69), is probably the thirteenth-century *Summa Virtutum ac Vitiorum* of Paraldus.

### 33. PENTECOST

The feast of Pentecost denotes the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Christ, when the Holy Spirit descended on his disciples: “And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak” (Acts 2:1–4). The English name, “Whitsunday,” is said to derive from the white robes worn by the newly baptized on that day (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*). In listing the gift of tongues which is bestowed on the apostles by the Holy Spirit, the poet places a touchingly anachronistic emphasis on the languages and dialects which are known to him as part of the medieval world.

*NIMEV* 3592, 289. Manuscripts: A: fols. 130v–133r; G: fols. 88v–90v; D: fols. 132v–134v; L: fols. 40r–40v.

- 7 *Grewē.* *MED*: from OF *griew*, *greu*, *griu*, “the Greek language.”

- 8        *Sarzenay*. What precisely the poet meant by this term is unclear. It could well have included both the Arabic language and anything spoken by Muslims or non-Christians. With respect to all the “languages” named by the poet in lines 7–10, it seems likely that he is thinking, in part, of groups of people rather than specific languages, about which his knowledge was probably very limited.
- 9        *Pikardie*. Picardy is a region in northern France and can also refer to the dialect of French spoken there.
- 10       *Gascoyne, Toskayne, and Lombardie*. These terms refer to the dialects spoken respectively in Gascony, a region in the southwest coastal area of France, Tuscany (central Italy), and Lombardy (northern Italy).
- 24       *This Gaste will give us sevene giftis*. Although the early fathers did not speak clearly of seven special gifts, subsequently Augustine and Gregory, among others, cited the number seven and developed allegorical meanings for them. In particular, Gregory’s *Moralia* 2 furnished the foundation for the theology of the gifts which was developed in the later Middle Ages. As Aquinas explained it, the tendencies in the soul that result from the action of the Holy Spirit are called his gifts; they are wisdom, understanding, knowledge, piety, fortitude, counsel, and fear of God (*New Catholic Encyclopedia* 7, pp. 47–49).
- 33       *conandschipe*. *MED* lists under *conningshipe*, “moral sense, morality?” The only citation is from *Cursor Mundi*, where the word is also found as part of a discussion of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is unclear why *MED* appears not to have recognized the context in which the word occurs, and which makes its meaning clear.
- 37–38   *The sext gift . . . poverté*. The *e* at the end of *poverté* is likely meant to be silent. Pronunciation of the word in this manner would retain the couplet’s rhyme, despite there being a lack of an *e* in *hert*.
- 55       *For Criste saise, “Whoso lufis me*. Lines 1–54 are a part of the homily for this Gospel text; the Gospel paraphrase does not actually begin until line 55.
- 114      *And some undoyngé aie ymell*. The poet here accurately notes the fact that along with his paraphrase of the Gospel, which stays unusually close to the original text, he has mixed in occasional explanatory comments of his own.
- 140      *Duse that youre prelates biddes you*. The *NHC*-poet reiterates this exhortation on several occasions but for different advice; see Second Sunday in Lent (18.161–62n).
- 147      *Ane ermite woned in wildirnes*. Tubach 316: Apples borne by dead tree. The *exemplum* is found twice in the *Vitae Patrum*: *PL* 73.823, and *PL* 73.948. Later English versions include the *AT* (568), Bromyard’s *Summa Predicandium*, and Caxton’s *Vitas Patrum*.



**34. MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 3:16–21 (Christ the Light of the World).

*NIMEV* 2937, 3547 (Thais). Manuscripts: A: fols. 133r–134v; G: fols. 90v–91v; D: fols. 134v–135v; L: fols. 40v–41r.

**35. TRINITY SUNDAY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: John 15:26–27; 16:1–4 (Coming of the Holy Spirit).

*NIMEV* 2301 (Baptism of Christ). Manuscripts: A: fols. 134v–135v; G: fols. 91v–92v; D: fols. 135v–136v; L: fol. 41r–41v.

**36. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 16:19–31 (Dives and Lazarus).

*NIMEV* 3683 (no exemplum). Manuscripts: A: fols. 135v–137r; G: fols. 92v–94r; D: fols. 136v–137v; L: fol. 41v–41v.

**37. SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 14:16–24 (Parable of the Great Dinner)

*NIMEV* 3739, 1464 (The Hemit and the Angel). Manuscripts: A: fols. 137r–139v; G: fols. 94r–95v; D: fols. 137v–139v; L: fols. 41v–42r.

**38. THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 15:1–10 (Parable of the Lost Sheep).

*NIMEV* 3791, 485 (Creation). Manuscripts: A: fols. 139v–141v; G: fols. 95v–97v; D: fols. 143v–145r; L: fols. 42r–43r.

**39. FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 6:36–42 (On Judging Others).

*NIMEV* 1118, 3816 (Harsh Monk). Manuscripts: A: fols. 141v–143v; G: fols. 97v–99r; D: fols. 149v–151r; L: fol. 43r–43v.

**40. FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 5:1–11 (The Great Catch of Fish).

*NIMEV* 2976 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: A: fols. 143v–145v; G: fols. 99r–100v; D: fols. 151r–152v; L: fols. 43v–44r.

**41. SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 5: 20–24 (The Ten Commandments) (Luke in rubric).

*NIMEV* 3708 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: A: fols. 145v–147r; G: fols. 100v–102r; D: fols. 152v–153v; L: fol. 44r–44r.

**42. SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Mark 8:1–9 (The Feeding of the Four Thousand).

*NIMEV* 3003 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: A: fols. 147r–148r; G: fols. 102r–103r; D: fols. 153v–154v; L: fol. 44r–44v.

**43. EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 7:15–21 (Beware of False Prophets).

*NIMEV* 3708 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: A: fols. 148r–149r; G: fol. 103r–103v; D: fols. 154v–155v; L: fols. 44v–45r.

**44. NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 16:1–9 (Parable of the Dishonest Manager).

*NIMEV* 2967/2969 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: A: fols. 149r–150v; G: fols. 103v–104v; D: fols. 155v–156v; L: fol. 45r–45r.

**45. TENTH SUNDAY AFTER (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: Luke 19:41–47 (Weeping over Jerusalem; Cleansing of the Temple).

*NIMEV* 1657 (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: A: fols. 150v–154r; G: fols. 104v–107v; D: fols. 156v–159v; L: fols. 45r–46r.

**46. ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

The parable of the proud Pharisee that comprises this Sunday's Gospel text provides an apt parallel for the charming though apocryphal story of the hermit who decided to test his holiness against that of Oswald, the seventh-century king of Northumbria who achieved sainthood as a result of his piety and early death in battle.

*NIMEV* 1136, 1482. Manuscripts: A: fols. 154r–158v; G: fols. 107v–111r; D: fols. 159v–162v; L: fols. 46r–47r.

- 4        *pigase*. As McIntosh explains, “The word is undoubtedly OF *pigace*. . . . The basic sense seems to be ‘point’ . . . [but] OF does not appear to preserve anything corresponding to the phrase under discussion. It may mean ‘He considers that nobody reaches even . . . as high as the point of his shoes,’” a suggestion supported by the reading in Huntington Library MS HM 129: “That no man rechyth to his pygas” (p. 203). McIntosh also notes that nearly all the other manuscripts avoid what is clearly an obscure word.
- 49        *Sainte Bede*. The *NHC*-poet has made use of Bede’s Commentary on the Gospel of Luke for this homily. See line 211n for a particularly close parallel.
- 63        *In Yngelande be alde dawes*. Tubach 2560, 2894: Hermit and King, King and Hermit. Gerould has compiled an extensive listing of the many and ancient analogues of this tale (“Hermit and the Saint,” pp. 529–45). The oldest variant yet discovered comes from the Sanscrit epic *Mahābhārata* (fifth century BCE). Five later versions, attached to a variety of desert hermits, are found in the *Vitae Patrum*, but the closest analogue to *NHC*’s version is a French fabliau, “Du Prevost d’Aquilée ou d’un hermite que la dame fist baignier en aigue froide” (*Nouveau Recueil*, pp. 187–201).
- 67        *That hight Oswald that saynte es now*. Oswald, who came to power in Northumbria in 633 during a period of conflict and unrest, was famous for both his military valor and his piety. In 635 he won an important victory against Cadwalla in what came to be called the “battle of Heavenfield,” his saintly nature demonstrated, among other things, by his having supposedly set up a cross before joining battle. He was defeated and slain in 642 by Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, but not before he had sent for Aidan, a monk of Iona, to come as a missionary to the Northumbrians (Godfrey, *Church in Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 103–06). The story told of him in *NHC* is not found in any of the lives of Oswald, but according to Gerould it did have popular currency, as seen by the fifteenth-century summary in the *Promptuarium Exemplorum* of the Dominican John Herolt (“Hermit and the Saint,” p. 542). The number of unusual and/or Northern forms occurring in this *exemplum* may suggest a local connection to Oswald’s Northumbria.
- 70        *Woned ane hermite that hight Godeman*. See the Introduction and Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (12.121–22) for information about hermits.
- 99        *Bawmborghe*. Bamburgh was the royal residence of the kings of Northumbria.
- 157       *And made buskinge to lepe oloft*. In this version Godemon, like the hermit in the French fabliau, apparently tries to resist the queen’s overtures on the first occasion. Not so in D or L, however, and D, in particular, uses an unusual phrase to suggest the hermit’s susceptibility: *And made busking to pley on grene*. McIntosh has found a similar usage of *grene* in *Havelok*, tracing it to ON *girna* (“desire, lust”), and concluding that in both texts the phrase means “to indulge in wanton amorous play” (“Neuere Yete,” pp. 189–93). The fact that L reads *He made buskyng to ly hyre by* raises the further possibility that the reading in A is a mistake.

- 159      *hoscid.* An unusual form of *askid* (*MED*). McIntosh reads this word as *hostid* ("coughed"), which is certainly possible, but makes less sense (p. 200). Also, D and L substitute *cride/asked*, respectively, both of which are closer in meaning to *hoscid*.
- 171      *All ye wote wele what I mene.* Perhaps an expression of discomfort over the euphemism for sexual intercourse in the preceding lines.
- 174      *flom Jordane.* Although Whiting has one citation for this phrase (J56), it is not especially suggestive, as here, of extreme cold: "A better stede non there es / From hethen to flem Jurdanne" (*Ipomadon* A.93.3214–5).
- 191      *Bot haylewaite of thi gestinnge.* McIntosh offers the following translation of these words: "but thank you for your hospitality." He notes further that the phrase is altered in B, D, and M; and L, "very unusually, leaves a space between *bot* and *of*" (p. 199). The *MED* entry for *heil* (s.v. *heil* adj.) "cites the form only in the name *Simon Hailewait* . . . But the compound is perhaps rather to be connected with *heil* sb. (ON *heill*) and with either *wait* 'wait upon, attend', or ON *veita* 'sustain': 'may good fortune wait upon/sustain (you)'" (McIntosh, p. 199). It seems possible to me that the hermit's words have a slightly sarcastic ring, given his experience of this "hospitality," an idea which is supported by D's reading, *for litil I þanke the of þis gestning*.
- 211      *For thrinnefalde pride, als saise Sainte Bede.* Bede's influence on these lines can be seen in the following excerpt from his commentary on Luke: "There are four forms by which every swelling of proud people is shown, when either they judge that they have the Good by themselves alone or, if they believe that it has been given to them from above, they think that they have received this on account of their own merits, or surely when they boast that they have that which they do not have, or when all others have been disdained, they seek to appear uniquely to have that which they do have" (*Bedaе Venerabilis*, p. 324. My own translation).
- 243      *ogert.* An unusual Northern form of *angard*. According to McIntosh, "Forms with *o-* and without *n* seem to be recorded only from Scots" (p. 202). Compare G: *grete*.
- 302      *For this life es noght worthe a leke.* See Whiting L185 for many examples of this common proverb.
- 333      *hir sange.* The poet alludes here to the *Magnificat*, the title commonly given to the Latin text of the Canticle (or Song) of Mary, which begins, according to the Vulgate, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum" (My soul doth magnify the Lord). Luke's text continues:

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me; and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear him. He hath shewed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy: As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever (Luke 1:46–55).

**47. TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: 12: Mark 7:31–37 (Healing of the Deaf and Dumb Man).

*NIMEV* 3002, (no *exemplum*). Manuscripts: A: fols. 158v–161r; G: fols. 111r–113r; D: fols. 162v–164v; L: fols. 47r–48r.

**48. THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)**

Gospel Pericope: 13: Luke 10:23–37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan)

*NIMEV* 3738, 25 (Theophilus). Manuscripts: A: fols. 161r–174r; G: fols. 113r–120v (ending lost); D: fols. 164v–174v (fol. 166 lost); L: fols. 48r–51v.

**49. FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Christ's commandment in Luke's Gospel text, that a group of lepers should "show themselves" to the priests, offers the *NHC*-poet a golden opportunity to develop a lengthy homily on the medieval practice of confession. The requirement, following the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, that all Christians make a yearly confession to their parish priests resulted not only in the heightened emphasis on this practice, but also in the composition of penitential books both in Latin and the vernacular, which advised priests in very precise terms on the interrogation of their parishioners. The subject of confession arises frequently throughout *NHC*, but the practical details of how to go about it are nowhere else given such sustained emphasis.

*NIMEV* 2978, 291. Manuscripts: A: fols. 174r–179v; G: (missing); D: fols. 181v–186r; L: fols. 51v–52v.

31        *The maistir that spekis of this Gospel*. Neither Gregory nor Bede has a homily for this Gospel text; though the parallel to Bede's commentary on the Gospel of Luke (*In Lucae*) is very general, he is perhaps the most likely candidate for the *maistir* referred to here.

57        *A hali man was parihssse preste*. Tubach 2682: Host taken away. Tubach lists a great variety of *exempla* here, but Gerould (*NEHC*, p. 80) cites only the *Manuel des Pechiez* and *Handlyng Synne* as analogues. Robert Mannyng's *exemplum*, which is drawn from the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great (4.33), depicts a man who sins with his god-daughter, but he is not a priest and because he never confesses his sin, God takes vengeance on him after his death by causing fire to erupt from his grave, devouring his body. The *NHC* version in fact bears a much closer resemblance (particularly with reference to the mass wafers which miraculously reappear after the priest has confessed his sin) to the version found in the twelfth-century *De Miraculis* of Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny (*PL* 89.853–54).

166–67    *synne mai noght forgiven be, / Bot if he it in schrift saye*. The "moral" of this *exemplum*, that contrition and private penance are not sufficient to win God's forgiveness,

reflects the growing emphasis on confession in the years following the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215:

The theological basis for the priest's role in confession lay in Matthew 16:19, where Jesus said to Peter, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth will be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven'. Theologians attempted to define the conditions under which a confession was properly carried out. Penitents had to be in a mental state of contrition, which is sorrow for their sins; they had to confess candidly to a priest; and they had to perform satisfaction for the sin, which was the penance that the priest imposed on them. If penitents fulfilled those conditions, the theologians taught that they were forgiven. (Lynch, *Medieval Church*, p. 287)

178 *And how that he suld schrive him right.* The qualities which make for a good confession as enumerated in lines 178–416 parallel those found in the many manuals of instruction which appeared following Fourth Lateran, including among others: Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*, the *Lay Folk's Catechism*, the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, the *Clensynge of Mannes Soule*, and Myrc's *Instructions for Parish Priests*. Robert Mannyng lists twelve rather than fourteen qualities but is very similar in overall content.

197 *And saise the preste smale synnes oute.* William of Auvergne (d. 1249) gives the following advice on the size of the sins confessed:

Neither should you worry about the size of the sins. On the contrary, the bigger the sin, the bigger the success when you've destroyed it. . . . But for those people who confess only their least and most trivial sins, it is as if they assert a victory only over dead fleas or flies. Ancient Rome had a ruling that victory celebrations could only be held if you had killed more than seven thousand of the enemy. Similarly, you should want to show your success by confessing huge monsters of sin: elephants of pride, whales of avarice, lions of anger, wolves of rapacity and bulls of indiscipline. (Smith, "William of Auvergne," p. 102)

232 *When the wayne es atte gate.* Proverbial. See Whiting C51.

262 *And Abyron and Golyas.* This line is omitted by D and V, perhaps indicating the obscurity of these names; Cain and Judas are of course well known. For *Abyron* see Numbers 16:1–2: "And behold Core . . . and Dathan and Abiron . . . rose up against Moses, and with them two hundred and fifty others of the children of Israel." After Moses speaks, the earth opens and swallows the rebels. The first three figures named fit neatly enough into the category of traitor. The fourth, *Golyas*, is the Vulgate spelling for Goliath, the giant slain by David and considered by medieval writers to be the type of wickedness and diabolical evil. This interpretation was popularized by lections from the breviary derived "ultimately from a sermon attributed to St. Augustine, though actually by Caesarius of Arles" (Whicher, *Goliard Poets*, p. 3).

305–06 *Forthi if thou will schrive thee right / To mani prestis of thi plight.* William of Auvergne indicates that if one confesses half of one's sins to one's parish priest and half to

- an outsider, that might not be enough since “two halves of a story do not make a whole: ‘I got married secretly to Peter’, told to one priest, and ‘I got married secretly to John’ to another, is a case in point! Furthermore, surely grace, like marriage, cannot be partial. One cannot be in part a sinner and in part a saint, or else you would be able to leave your legs in hell when your arms are in heaven” (Smith, “William of Auvergne,” p. 103).
- 312 *rim.* *MED* cites only *NHC* under this word. According to McIntosh, there are no other examples until the seventeenth century (p. 205). D’s alternate wording confirms the general sense: *Wherof is neyther breche no rifte*.
- 330 *yst.* The *MED* notes the literal meaning for this word as the yeasty froth from the top of fermenting ale, or barm. All the citations, with the exception of the *NHC* entry, fit this meaning well, but I have used McIntosh’s “swill” as more appropriate to the context here (p. 199).
- 411–12 *Als sorie suld he be within, / When he him schrives of his synne.* These words seem to express the *NHC*-poet’s wish to balance what has been seen by modern critics as a tension between the Church’s attempt to exercise control over its subjects through the public act of confession and the individual and interior expression of contrition. See Root for a good discussion of these tensions as reflected in the development of the practice of medieval confession (“*Space to Speke*,” pp. 47–83).

## 50. FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 6:24–33 (God and Mammon).

*NIMEV* 2414, 993 (The Thrifty Gardener). Manuscripts: A: fols. 179v–187r; G: (lost); D: fols. 186r–189v; L: fols. 52v–54r.

## 51. SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Luke 7:11–16 (Widow’s Son Raised to Life).

*NIMEV* 750, 1822 (Dying Monk Sees Dragon). Manuscripts: A: fols. 187r–192v; G: (lost); D: fols. 189v–192r; L: fols. 54r–55r.

## 52. SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

This day’s homily expands on Jesus’ healing of the man with dropsy with an extended reflection on the spiritual manifestations of this disease: covetousness, gluttony, and lechery. Once again the *NHC*-poet takes the opportunity to attack the rich men of his day and in so doing offers the reader a rare and colorful glimpse of their living habits. The *exemplum* focuses specifically on the sin of lechery with its account of Saint Pelagia, the repentant courtesan.

*NIMEV* 1648, 1469. Manuscripts: A: fols. 192v–202r; G: fols. 129r–133r (begins line 102); D: fols. 192r–194r (tale omitted); L: fols. 55r–57r.

- 79        *maistir*. Probably a reference to Bede's *In Lucae*. See below, line 109n.
- 109        *Ydropesi es a sekenes*. Dropsy is a condition of swelling caused by water retention, known today as "edema." The allegorical explanation which here follows probably derives at least in part from Bede, as seen from the following passage ascribed to him in the *CA* and doubtless drawn from *In Lucae*: "Mystically, the dropsical man is compared to him who is weighed down by an overflowing stream of carnal pleasures. For the disease of dropsy derives the name from a watery humour" (*CA* 3.503). The *CA* also quotes an excerpt from Augustine: "Or we rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man. For as the former, the more he increases in unnatural moisture the greater his thirst; so also the other, the more abundant his riches, which he does not employ well, the more ardently he desires them" (3.503).
- 129        *Aboute catele he sytes and spares*. G and V also have the rare *sytes*. *MED* gives the derivation as ON (compare OI *syta*), "to be concerned or anxious about." The only citation comes from *Cursor Mundi*.
- 132        *prinnes*. *MED* suggests a possible derivation from OF *prendre*, "to take." The *NHC* line is the only citation for what is evidently a rare word. McIntosh confirms its rarity by pointing out that B, D, L, M, and H all substitute a different word (p. 204).
- 133        *name*. This line is difficult to construe, and I suggest a possible though by no means certain meaning. The idea that he is willing to perjure his good name for as little as a penny seems to make the most sense in the context. See textual note.
- 149        *hell es ylle to fill*. McIntosh comments that this expression is proverbial, but provides no evidence (p. 199). Whiting offers modest support for McIntosh's assertion under T12: "Four things are never full." Two expressions are there quoted which list hell as one of the four things that can never be filled.
- 162        *glotonye*. Lines 162–92 offer a fascinating glimpse into the diet of the rich. There was much preaching against gluttony as seen in the following quotation from MS Harley 45, castigating those who "spende more peraventure in deyntee in a day than myghte of comoun mete, as profitable for the sustenance, be i-now for an hondred pore men" (Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, p. 447). Most memorable perhaps are the words of Chaucer's Pardoner against gluttony:
- O, wiste a man how manye maladyes  
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,  
He wolde been the moore mesurable  
Of his diete, sittinge at his table.  
Allas, the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,  
Maketh that est and west and north and south,  
In erthe, in eir, in water, men to swynke  
To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drynke! (*CT* VI[C]513–520)
- 163        *burgese*. *MED*: "A freeman of a town, usually used of city merchants and master craftsmen in the guilds."



- 170–71 *wodecokkes and pertrikes, / Snypes, mawlarde and thir telis*. As indicated by Rucquoi, birds, rather than meat or fish, were considered to be the food of the rich (“Alimentation des riches,” pp. 297–312).
- 185 *Of venysoune, gose, and grise*. According to Pleij, “by the thirteenth century . . . in courtly circles, banqueting had become the preeminent means of social distinction” (*Dreaming of Cockaigne*, p. 133). Rucquoi notes that ninety-five percent of accounts of banquets mention “graisse” (here *grise*, “fat”) as an important component of the meal (“Alimentation des riches,” p. 304–05).
- 186 *Blamanger, dariols, tartes, and rise*. Rice pudding was the dessert most frequently served at the end of banquets, as further noted by Rucquoi (“Alimentation des riches,” p. 304).
- 241 *In Antyoche beyonde the se*. Not listed by Tubach, presumably because the narrative fits the model of a saint’s life better than that of an *exemplum*.
- 243 *Dame Pelagie*. The legend of Pelagia, a courtesan supposed to have lived in fourth-century Antioch, is told by Jacobus Diaconus in the *AS* (October, vol. 4, pp. 261–68). Later versions are many and varied, and include those found in the *Legenda Aurea* (chapter 150, vol. 2, pp. 230–32), Caxton’s *Golden Legend*, and the *Scottish Legendary*. Pelagia belongs to a group of repentant prostitute saints which also includes Thais, Afra of Augsburg, and Mary Magdalene, and she is further characterized, along with Marina, Theodora, and Euphrosne, as a woman who disguises herself as a man. According to Delehaye, the popular romance of the repentance of Pelagia is the starting point of a whole group of imaginary saints (*Legends of the Saints*, p. 203). See also Hotchkiss for a discussion of Pelagia and other cross-dressing saints, as well as the notes on Saint Marina in Sexagesima Sunday (15.135n, 177–178n, 211n, 257–58n, 299n, and 339n).
- 306 *tuffid*. According to *MED*, this is a Northern form of *tiffen*, “to dress oneself up, to adorn,” from OF *tifer*, *tiffer*.
- 470 *Margarite*. From OF *margarite*, “a pearl”; figuratively, “that which is precious.”
- 479 *ripe*. *MED* has no meaning that fits this context, but McIntosh links it to *OED ripe*, v.2, from OE *rypen* (sense 4) “to examine thoroughly,” after OE only in Northern and Scottish use (p. 205). The *OED* also gives a quotation from *Cursor Mundi*, with a similar meaning of the word: “Cums his freind ripand his state.”
- 504 *uggli*. *MED* cites one example of the adjective *ugli* used as a noun in the *AT*: “Þe kepers of þe kurk ran, and saw ii vglie” (702.10). Compare V: *Thei herde a gost goule and grete*.
- 506 *yamerynge*. *MED* *yomering*, ger., from OE *geomrung*, “wailing.” The *ya-* spelling is Northern.
- 526 *cauenard*. *MED* *cainard*, *cauenard*. Probably AF; compare 16th c. F *cagnard*: A sluggard, a slob. McIntosh, p. 197, notes the *NHC* spelling *cauenard* in *Havelok*, and suggests the meaning “scoundrel” which better fits the *NHC* context. Compare the Wife of Bath’s famous abuse of her husbands in Chaucer’s Prologue to the Wife of Bath’s Tale: “Sire olde kaynard, is this thyn array?” (*CT* III[D]235).

- 529 *ploghe*. The word can stand for a plough animal as well as a plough (*MED* *plough* n.2).
- 546 *auerlye*. MS. There is no way to be certain whether the word intended here is *auerlye* or *anerlye*. I have opted for the first, on the assumption that it is a variant or mistaken spelling of *MED* *arghli* (also spelled *arwely*), meaning “wickedly, cowardly.” V has *Lefte his lord trayturl*, which gives modest support to this reading.
- 553–54 *In riche purple and in scarlette, / In blewe of Ypire and in bornette*. Colors and colored clothing were perceived as carriers of social meaning in the Middle Ages. Scarlets, in particular, were worn by royalty, and blue was also a marker of wealth and class. Brown (*bornette*), was the only dark color that was similarly valued. So significant was scarlet as a class marker that sumptuary laws attempted to forbid it to tradesmen and the bourgeoisie in the Savoy Statutes of 1430 (Piponnier, *Dress*, pp. 71, 84). Colored garments also conveyed a moral meaning, so that Pelagia’s rich attire not only signals her social pretension but also, in the case of scarlet, suggests her status as a prostitute (Koslin, “Value-Added,” p. 236). The value of the blue cloth made in Ypres (*blewe of ypire*) is underscored in lines describing Chaucer’s Wife of Bath, who in the General Prologue, “passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt” in her cloth-making ability (*CT* I[A]448).
- 613 *To the Mounte of Olivete*. The Mount of Olives is the highest point in the range of hills to the east of Jerusalem, said to be the place from which Jesus ascended to heaven forty days after the resurrection (Acts 1:2–12).
- 692 *putt*. *MED* does not include the meaning “to open” for this word, but McIntosh compares it to OED *put* v.1 sense 53, “to raise” (p. 204).

### 53. EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 22:34–46 (The Two Greatest Commandments).

*NIMEV* 1922, 994 (Knight who Forgave the Slayer of his Father). Manuscripts: A: fols. 202r–206v; G: fols. 133r–136v; D: fols. 194r–195v (fol. 196 lost); L: fols. 57r–58r.

### 54. NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew’s account of the healing of a paralyzed man is both a testament to the faith of those who bring the man to Jesus and an acknowledgment of the tension between Jesus and the local authorities. The *NHC*-poet takes the scriptural text in rather different directions by first developing the metaphor of sin as a form of spiritual paralysis, and then elaborating on five reasons that God may deliberately visit humans with illness as a means of chastising or testing them. The first of the two very popular *exempla* that follow illustrates, through the story of Gregory’s prayers for the emperor Trajan, the power of Christian faith. The second, a demonstration of faith on the part of Alexander the Conqueror, is one of the most overtly anti-Semitic narratives to be found in *NHC*.

*NIMEV* 1521, 286; Manuscripts: A: fols. 206v–212v; G: fols. 136v–141v; D: fols. 197r–200r (begins line 55); L: fols. 58r–59v.

- 35 *a clerk*. There is no apparent use of Gregory or Bede for this homily, but the metaphor of the sea as the world and the ship as Holy Church was widely familiar. As Owst notes, “This developed nautical simile . . . has had a long and honoured career in medieval preaching,” adding that it is found at least as far back as the eleventh century in the preaching of Saint Anselm (*Literature and Pulpit*, p. 68).
- 42 *wafulté*. Cited in *MED* under *wofulte*, “misery, wretchedness,” where the only citation is from *NHC*. McIntosh suggests the meaning “woe,” noting further that it is not found in the *OED* and that *woefulness* is not recorded until 1513 (p. 208).
- 101–04 *Dedes slye / Suld noght ger me bere me to hye; / My pride full wele chastisid es, / With prickinge of myne awne flehsse*. These words are drawn from 2 Corinthians 12:7–9, where Paul alludes to the chronic physical ailment which afflicted him: “And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for *power is made perfect* in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (emphasis added).
- 121 *Moysees sistir*. “And Mary and Aaron spoke against Moses” (Numbers 12:1). Mary (called Miriam in the modern Bible) is indeed punished by God with leprosy for her act of rebellion; when Aaron beseeches Moses, who subsequently prays to the Lord on Mary’s behalf, God replies by saying that she must be separated for “seven days without the camp” (Numbers 12:14). Mary is further identified in Exodus 15:20 as Aaron’s sister and a prophetess.
- 138 *Jobe*. Satan, in the Book of Job, complains that Job is good only because God has protected him from harm: “But stretch forth thy hand a little, and touch all that he hath, and see if he blesseth thee not to thy face. Then the Lord said to Satan: Behold, all that he hath is in thy hand: only put not forth thy hand upon his person” (Job 1:11–12).
- 145 *Saynte Thobie*. “And as he was sleeping, hot dung out of a swallow’s nest fell upon his eyes, and he was made blind” (Tobias 2:11). The Book of Tobias, now found in the Apocrypha, characterizes Tobias as a good man who is persecuted as an example for posterity of patience. He makes the mistake, initially, of angering King Sennachedrib by burying the bodies of Israelites whom the king has slain. After being blinded, Tobias is supported by his wife Anna who “went daily to her weaving work” until, eventually, Tobias’ sight is restored along with everything else that had been taken away from him by the king.
- 173 *Saynte Lazere*. The raising of Lazarus can be found in John 11:1–45.
- 209 *reevelie*. This odd spelling could be taken to denote *reuli*, “sorrowfully,” or *ryfly*, “commonly.” Since G has *ryfly*, “commonly” and D has *comonly*, the second meaning seems more likely.

- 213 *Erode*. The story of Herod's ghastly end is told at some length by Josephus, but is also briefly noted in Acts 12:21–3: "And upon a day appointed, Herod being arrayed in kingly apparel, sat in the judgment seat, and made an oration to them. And the people made acclamation, saying: It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God: and being eaten up by worms, he gave up the ghost."
- 223 *hoghyle bones*. Not found in *MED* as such. McIntosh compares it to *hough* n. (2), "hip" and *hokebon*, "hip" (p. 200).
- 287 *Ane empoure was wonand in Rome*. Tubach 2368: Gregor, Pope, and Trajan. According to Gaston Paris (Whatley, "Uses of Hagiography," p. 25n2), the ultimate classical source for the famous tale of Gregory's compassion for the pagan emperor Trajan may have been Dio Cassius. In any case the narrative was fixed in its basic form by the eighth century, and it is already found at that time in England, in the earliest life of Gregory by a monk of Whitby. The many medieval versions include those of John the Deacon, Peter Abelard, John of Salisbury, Dante, Langland, and Wyclif, each with its own very different interpretation. Some of these focus on Trajan's justice as emperor, while others emphasize Gregory's power and compassion, and still others express admiration for the pagan past. Some versions also bring Trajan back to life so that he can repent and believe. For Dante, Langland, and Wyclif the tale becomes a complex meditation on Christianity, set against the background of the "just pagan." The *NHC*-poet not only eschews any of this complexity, he omits the entire first part of the story, in which Trajan is accosted by a tearful widow demanding justice for the murder of her son. In the poet's hands the *exemplum* becomes a simple demonstration of the value of *trouthe* or "faith," and, unlike some of the above-mentioned versions, Trajan's salvation, as a consequence of Gregory's prayer, is not in doubt. For the above information as well as further insightful commentary on the Gregory/Trajan material, see Whatley ("Uses of Hagiography").
- 329 *God of Hevene a folk him chese*. Tubach 147: Alexander, walls in Jews. This *exemplum* is descended from pseudo-Calisthenes' legendary Greek history of Alexander (c. 200 CE), which reports on Alexander's building of an iron gate to shut in the tribes of his enemies, Gog and Magog, variously identified throughout history with Turks, Huns, Tartars, and Mongols, among others (the names are also found in the Old Testament books of Genesis and Ezechiel). The account found in Peter Comestor's twelfth-century *Historia Scholastica*, which replaces Gog and Magog with the tribes of Israel, proliferated in many forms throughout the Middle Ages, including the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, as well as such later works as Higden's *Polychronicon* and Mandeville's *Travels*. As Christendom increasingly came under threat in these later times, the story's power and popularity doubtless derived in part from the assurance of a final victory over its perceived enemies and the might of the Anti-Christ (see Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, passim).
- 416 *theine*. According to *MED*, a Northern form of *thine*, "from that place," and a shortened form of the adverb *thethen*.
- 421 *Antecriste*. Details regarding the figure of the Antichrist occur chiefly in post-biblical literature, although the book of Apocalypse abounds in images sugges-

tive of the time of the Antichrist. The name itself occurs only in the epistle of John, as, for example: "Little children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that Antichrist cometh, even now there are become many Antichrists: whereby we know it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18).

## 55. TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 22:2–14 (Parable of the Marriage Feast).

*NIMEV* 2308, 1821 (Gregory's Aunts). Manuscripts: A: fols. 212v–216v only (217r–223v are lost); G: fols. 141v–146v; D: fols. 200r–203r; L: fols. 59v–60v.

## 56. TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

This segment comes from D; it has been lost from A, and G has only the homily. The *exemplum* of the nun despised for her ugly looks is the third instance of a hermit taken to task for thinking himself more holy than others, in particular, those tested by worldly temptation and/or suffering (see the *exempla* of the Harsh Hermit, pp. 113–17, and King Oswald, pp. 147–50). The *NHC*-poet here expresses once again his sensitivity to and sympathy for his audience, who must deal with the temptations of everyday life: the reclusive hermit whose "holiness" is shown up by comparison with the ascetic life of King Oswald reveals the poet's sense of humor; even more significantly, the experiences of the young hermit assailed by physical desire and the nun scorned for her ugliness strike a note that would surely have resonated with the experience of ordinary layfolk.

*NIMEV* 2935, 2859. Manuscripts: A: (missing); G: fols. 146v–147v (homily only); D: fols. 203r–206r; L: fols. 60v–61r.

- 34        *But herof I wile sumthing telle.* Though Gregory's homily on John's text is not cited, it is similar in theme and emphasis (*Forty*, Homily 28, pp. 221–25).
- 87–88    *But in this world is many a man / That mekil werldli wisdom can.* Compare Gregory: "We do not respect in people their nature, made in God's image, but their riches and reputation. When we consider what is important about them we scarcely regard what they are within. We pay attention to what is physically displeasing about them and neglect to consider what they are" (*Forty*, Homily 28, p. 222). The last sentence also parallels the theme of the *exemplum* which follows, concerning a nun whose physical appearance is loathsome but whose soul is pure and beautiful.
- 108      *That love these fayre men and white.* This line, along with its marginal annotation, *love faire whit men*, reminds us of one of the most important components of the medieval ideal of beauty. As Curry notes, "[W]hite is very commonly used to describe beautiful women and children and handsome men as well" (*Middle English Ideal*, p. 80). Isolde "of the white hands," Blanche-flur, the eponymous heroine of *Floris and Blanche-flur*, and Chaucer's Blanche, who is evoked through

- a pun, “And goode faire White she het” (*Book of the Duchess*, line 948), suggesting the link between whiteness and beauty, are just a few of the many examples found throughout medieval literature (Curry, *Middle English Ideal*, pp. 80–81). Interestingly, the religious symbolism which frequently associates white with religious virtue and purity is absent; here white marks only the external beauty which is to be shunned (Lampert, “Race, Periodicity,” p. 401).
- 123     *Seynt Basil tellith sothfastli*. Tubach 3504: Nun, worthiest. The *exemplum* comes from the *Vitae Patrum*, where it is found in several different places: *PL* 73.1140, *PL* 74.299, attributed to Heraclides Paradisus, and *PL* 73.984, attributed as in the *NHC*, to Saint Basil. Middle English versions include the *AT* (322), and *Jacob's Well* (12).
- 134     *And callid hire oule and outcasting*. All versions of this *exemplum* are very similar, but *NHC* contains a good many more colorful details than the others regarding the nun's appearance and the other nuns' treatment of her.
- 138     *yeste*. This word also occurs in Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity (49.330). Here, as there, the meaning “pig-swill,” as suggested by McIntosh, fits the context better than the *MED* definition, “the yeasty froth from the top of fermenting ale, or barm” (p. 199).
- 159     *For an ermyte wonid ther beside*. See the Introduction, p. 6, and Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (12.121–22n) for general information about hermits.
- 229     *foul sage*. Ordinarily a *sage* is a wise person, but must here (as *MED* notes with reference to the term *fol sage*, though *NHC* is not cited), mean something else: “one who feigns or pretends to wisdom.”

## 57. TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 18:23–35 (Parable of the Talents).

*NIMEV* 1932, 53 (Backbiting Monk). Manuscripts: A: fols. 224r–227r (beginning lost); G: fols. 147v–151r; D: fols. 206r–209r; L: fols. 61r–61v.

## 58. TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

Gospel Pericope: Matthew 22:15–21 (Render unto Caesar).

*NIMEV* 1931, 1311 (Esther). Manuscripts: A: fols. 227r–231v; G: fols. 151r–154v; D: fols. 209r–212r; L: fols. 61v–62v.

## 59. TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (NOT INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION)

This is the final item in the chronological sequence of Gospel pericopes; the poet has included only the beginning lines because, as indicated in the concluding couplet, the text is the same

as that for the Fourth Sunday in Lent. A miscellaneous set of texts follows these words, between fols. 232r–257v (the last page of the manuscript). These items (*Purification, Vigil and Birth of John the Baptist, Legend of Saint Alexis, Peter and Paul, Simon Magus*) are not tied to the liturgical year (except for Purification which appears outside its normal calendrial position on February 2), but are evidently considered to be part of the overall collection, since the following words appear at their conclusion: *Expliciunt evangelia dominicalia totius anni in vulgari lingua exposita* (“[Here] end the Sunday Gospels for the whole year, related in everyday speech”). Immediately preceding these words are written the initials “W. S.” The Catalogue of Ashmolean manuscripts says the following: “Whether this W. S. were the author or only the transcriber is uncertain” (Black, *Catalogue*, p. 64).

Gospel Pericope: John 6:5–15 (Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes).

*NIMEV* 1849. Manuscripts: A: fol. 231v (first 10 lines only); G: fol. 154v (first 8 lines only); D: fols. 215v–219r (said to be text for the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity, but identical to other manuscripts for the Twenty-fourth. Unlike the others, however, D prints this text in full because it does not appear in its expected position, the Fourth Sunday in Lent. This must be related to the calendrial order for the year in which D was first compiled; because Easter is a moveable feast, there are some years which do not have a Fourth Sunday in Lent.) D’s text for the Twenty-fourth Sunday in Lent (fols. 212r–215v) begins with Matthew 9:18–26 (Healing of the dead girl, and the woman with a flux of blood), and follows this with the *exemplum* of the Wise Son. A further curiosity with regard to D, is its inclusion, following the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity, with the text for Palm Sunday, which is also missing (or lost) in its expected position in the manuscript. After this comes the narrative *exemplum* of “Piers Toller,” followed, on fol. 225v, by words similar to those in the other manuscripts quoted above, indicating the end of the collection and, in this case, its author or transcriber: Staundone R. L: fol. 63v (first 12 lines only).



## TEXTUAL NOTES

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**ABBREVIATIONS:** see Explanatory Notes.

### PROLOGUE

- 1 I have marked the scribe's practice of leaving space for large initials by indention. Most of these initials, as here, were never filled in. In the present case, the scribe has simply left the three-line blank (extending through line 3) blocked out and written *ff*, very small, in the left margin to indicate that a capital *F* is to be inserted in the space. Though most blanks are treated in this way, the scribe has occasionally omitted even the guide letters.
- 1–3 The opening lines of the Prologue are written continuously across the page without deference to the line breaks. Beginning at line 4, however, the scribe begins to observe the verse endings, starting a fresh line for each verse. He does not deviate from this practice again.
- 5 *biginning*. MS: *beginnige*.
- 8 *forthe*. So A. MS: *fope*.
- 17 *this*. MS: *pi*.
- 25 *thee*. So A. MS omits.
- 38 *lewde*. So A. MS: *laud*.
- 42 *aght*. So A. MS: *au*.
- 45 *all*. So A. MS omits.
- 59 *god es*. MS: *godes*.
- 98 *God*. So A. MS omits.
- 102 *that*. So A. MS: *pa*.
- 115 *biginninge*. MS: *beginnige*.
- 124 *sendschipe*. Small: *scendschipe*. Small has either misread or silently emended this word but the form as given in the manuscript is noted by *MED* (using this citation) as being a northern or early form.

### RATIO

- 1 *Ar*. MS: *r*. This is a rare instance where the scribe has failed to pencil in a tiny letter at the beginning of a line, to mark where a capital letter was to be inserted.
- 40 *murninge*. MS: *murnige*.



## 1. FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- 1        *Sayn*. MS: *ayn*. Space for capital letter left blank.
- 11       *thee*. So A. MS omits.
- 41       *in water*. MS: *in* written at end of line, with a caret before *water* to indicate point of insertion.
- 51       *falles to a mihty king*. MS: *falles mihty to king*, with a caret before and after *mihty* to indicate repositioning of *to*. MS also omits *a*, which I have supplied from A.
- 57       *witnes*. So A, G. MS: *wittes*.
- 73       *us*. So A. MS omits.
- 76       *Cristes tocuminges thre*. Small has added *poyntis* to this line, enclosed in square brackets, following *tocuminge*, but without indicating the source of this emendation in his notes. He has in fact taken it from G, the source of most of his emendations, but I see no reason to follow him here as ED makes sense without the emendation and is close to the reading in A: *Of iesu cristis comynges thre*. The idea of Christ's three appearances was an expansion of the original idea of Christ's "advent" or birth, to include the idea of a triple coming: the birth of Christ, the Second Coming (Last Judgment), and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, i.e., the kingdom "within" (*New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, p. 55).
- 106      *other*. So A. MS: *ope*.
- 112      *fisc*. MS: *fisc*.
- 128      *al*. MS: *fra* canceled following.
- 133      *Nou*. MS: *ou*. Space for capital letter left blank.
- 142      *siker*. So A. MS: *sike*.
- 147      *beginne*. So A. MS: *biginnig*.
- 159      *Werldes*. MS: *erldes*. Space for capital letter left blank.  
MS: *Notanda relatio* is written in red letters at the edge of the left margin. There is also a cross just to the left of the space left for the capital letter *W* (not written), which is the scribe's customary method for noting the beginning of the exemplum.
- 166      *hir*. MS: *hio*.
- 173      *nane*. So A. MS: *man*.
- 180      *That burd*. So A. MS: *par brd*.
- 200      *grete*. So A. MS: *grete* (?). Small transcribes this word as *grede*, and this is a possible reading. However, I think it more likely that the *t* of *grete* has been carelessly written, with a more curved ascender than in the case of the other three rhyming words. *Ad* seems unlikely, given both the meaning of *grede* ("to yell" or "cry out") and the fact that lines 199, 201, and 202 all end in *-ete*.
- 211      *This*. MS: *his*. Space for capital letter left blank.
- 216      *this*. MS: *his*.
- 220      *thoght*. So A. MS omits.
- 221      *said*. MS: *said said*, with second occurrence canceled.
- 232      *thaim*. So A. MS omits.
- 234      *stez*. The *MED* lists this, along with the slightly more usual spelling *stece*, as the only occurrence of this word, meaning "force, compulsion." A: *strife*. G: *stryue*.

- 239 *Thou havis.* MS: *Pou havid.* A: *has.* Small emends or misreads *Pou* as *You*, and leaves *havid* unaltered. That *Pou* is intended is confirmed by A's reading, as well as by the use of the second person singular pronoun throughout this passage. I have accordingly adjusted the ending of *havid* to conform with the second person singular as ordinarily written in ED.
- 243 *this.* MS: *þit.*
- 247 *Thou.* MS: *Pou.* Once again Small has transcribed this as "You," which is clearly wrong.
- 271 *us.* MS: *til* canceled before.

## 2. SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- 9 *duin.* Later scribes have replaced *duin* with a more readily recognizable word. A: *ffor folk sall fall for dynne of þe se.* Nevanlinna (p. 159) replaces *duin* with *dy*, "die." Small notes the connection with Old English *dwinan*, "to pine or waste away" (p. 176). The modern English cognate is "dwindle."
- 21 *byinge.* So A. MS: *bing.*
- 22 *was.* So G. MS: *wa.* A's version is slightly different here.
- 29 *takeninges.* MS: *takeniges.*
- 57 *sal.* MS: *sa.*
- 58 *schouand.* MS: *schouad.* Compare A: *sowande.*
- 60 *bers.* A has *burd*, G replaces with the more familiar *aght*. See explanatory note.
- 63 *This baret prinnes pouer pride.* The MS reading *prinnes* is potentially supported by L, which reads: *Þis baret prines prud pride*. The intended sense seems to be that strife humbles pride, but why pride is described as "poor" is not entirely obvious, which may be why L reads *prud* instead. Small reads *pinnes* which is also possible; the stroke above the letter *p* could be an abbreviation either for *i* or *ri*. I give the full line readings for the various manuscripts below:
- G: *Þis berret makys pore pryde*  
 D: *This baret bringiþ in pore pride*  
 A: *Þis barette pynes pure pride*  
 L: *Þis baret prines prud pride* [*prines*: pierces, humbles]  
 Nevanlinna: *Swilk baret makes oft pouer pride*
- 79 *takeninges.* MS: *takeniges.*
- 95 *ful.* MS: *fur.*
- 97 *se.* So A. MS omits.
- 99 *takeninge.* MS: *takenige.*
- 102 *takeninges.* MS: *takeniges.*
- 114 *and.* MS: *ad.*
- 159 *herbis.* MS: *istis.* Small's emendation.
- 161 *quia.* MS: *que.* Small's emendation.
- 172 *Ossa iterumque* etc. MS: line omitted. Small has followed the suggestion of the Rev. Mr. Power in adding this line "as suitable for the purpose" (p. 180).
- 193 *takeninge.* MS: *takenige.*
- 197 *To bind thaim sal be ful snelle.* MS: *þe* added before *þaim*.
- 200 *welle.* Small, p. 180: AS *weallan*, "to boil" or "rage."

- 201 *And endeles* etc. A and D both omit this line, presumably because it makes for an uneven number of lines (7), ending with the rhyme *-elle*.
- 215 *taking*. So G. MS: *taing*.
- 227 *him*. So A. MS: *thim*.
- 243 *bon*. Small, p. 180: ON *bôn*, “prayer.”
- 246 *slapand*: Small emends to *slepand* but *slapand* is an attested Northern form.
- 250 *tald*. MS: *tand*, canceled before.
- 262 *thou*. MS: Inserted at end of line with caret following *Quen*.
- 279 *meld*. Small, p. 180: *meld*, “to betray”; OE *meldian*, Danish *melde*.
- 283 *was*. MS *wae*.
- 301 *and*. MS *ad*.
- 304 *rounge*. Small, p. 180: Anglo-Norman “to gnaw.” The *MED* lists the following meanings for this word: “to consume by gnawing; to inflict torment.” The line from the *NHC* is cited with a question mark before the meaning “to be tormented.” The passive construction is admittedly odd, but it must mean something along these lines.

### 3. THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- Rubric *audistis*. MS: *audisti*.
- 26 *sclaunderd*. MS: *schaunderd*.
- 29 *Forthi*. So A. MS: *for*.
- 33 *Swilk*. So A. MS: *slk*.
- 36 *drauwe*. MS: *drwe*.
- 50 *welthe*. MS: *wethe*.
- 61 *quether*. MS: *quer*.
- 64 *stalworthe*. So A. MS: *stalwoht*.
- 79 *watir*. So A. MS: *fir*.
- 84 *fals dede*. So A. MS: *fairhede*.
- 85 *riche men*. MS: *riche* added at end of line with caret to indicate point of insertion.
- 89 *med*. Compare A: *gode and moke*, where *moke* (“muck”) is a figurative expression for wealth.
- 93 *it was*. So A and G. MS: *to wat*.
- 103 *snibbed*. MS: *snbbid*.
- 110 *Forthi*. MS: *Fopi*.
- 122 *drank*. So G. MS: *drak*.
- 127 *hir*. MS: *his*.
- 133 “If thou.” So A. MS: *pou pou*.
- 146 *And said*, “Sir, this. MS: *And sir þis said* with carets to mark point of insertion.
- 152 *he herd*. MS: *he* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.
- 160 *this*. MS: *þit*.
- 167 *snibbed the king*. MS: *snibbed* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.
- 182 *be*. So A. MS omits.
- 195 *whether*. So A, MS: *quer*.
- 200 *wald*. So A. MS: *wal*.

- 213 *And*. Small omits, following A's reading. A makes better sense, in that *And* is awkward grammatically as an introduction to Gregory's ideas, but the meaning is clear enough without emendation.
- 223 *he fandēs fleis*. MS: *fandes* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.
- 231 *schroutes*. So A. MS: *schoudes*.
- 236 *oure pride to fell*. So A. MS: *in our godspel*.
- 257 *he said*. MS: *he said he said*.
- 271 *than*. So A. MS: *and*.
- 280 *of*. So A. MS omits.

#### 4. FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

- 27 *thou ert*. So A. MS: *ert*.
- 49 *es*. MS omits.
- 70 *Bot he amende hym ore he wende*. So G. MS omits and A has two quite different lines.
- 112 *heuin*. MS: *heui*.
- 125 *full evene*. So A. MS: *til heuin*.
- 141 *gerne*. So A. MS: *ger*.
- 150 *men ware sorow es ay*. So G. MS: *til waharmes aye*. Small, who let the MS reading stand but provided G's reading in his notes, evidently could find no good meaning for *waharmes* (p. 182). The *MED* does not list it and it is not found in any of the other MSS.
- 178 *Saynte Jame that*. So A. MS: *sain jac* (a nickname for James) or *sain jat*.
- 185 *that he Sain*. MS: *he* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.
- 187 *For to be*. So A. MS: *For be*.
- 210 *for his sinnis*. MS: *his* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertions.
- 219 *wend*. MS: *wend wend*.
- 242 *right*. So A. MS omits.
- 264 *this*. So A. MS: *tis*.
- 277 *Sathanas*. So A. MS: *Satenans*.
- 316 *and*. MS *ad*.

#### 6. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

- 1–240 So A. These lines are missing from ED. Three folios have been lost from the Edinburgh MS, covering most of the *Nativity*, and about half of the *First Sunday after the Nativity*.
- 12 *toke*. MS: *nge* crossed out following *to*, with *ke* written above.
- 44 *So*. MS: written above the line.
- 57 *that*. MS: *par*.
- 67 *sayde Saynt Symeon*. MS: *saynt sayde symeon*.
- 90 *fle*. MS: *folow*, canceled, *fle* written above.
- 91 *reeuelye*. Very odd spelling of this word, but D: *ryuely*, makes clear what is meant.
- 160 *Bot if thou helpe*. MS: *Bot help if pou helpe*, with first *help* canceled.
- 170 *Dede mon . . . daye*. MS: The scribe skipped this line and inserted it in the margin.
- 178 *that*. MS: *pi*, with *i* canceled and *t* added above the line.

- 199 *did his*. MS: *p*, canceled between.  
 241 *Sa stithelic igain him ras*. ED begins with these lines on fol. 25r.  
 249 *he*. So A. MS omits.  
 254 *for*. So A. MS omits.  
 289 *wele*. So A MS: *wer*.  
 331 *the*. MS: *he*.  
 332 *penanz*. MS: *penaz*.  
 338 *to filth of sin*. MS: *to sin of filth of sin*.  
 351 *ne might*. So A. MS: *moht moht*.  
 360 *And ger the bisschope come thaim till*. So A. MS omits.  
 367 *chaungid*. So A. MS: *chanded*.  
*ouri*. The *MED* suggests the following derivation for this unusual word: [?ON; cp. OI *uriger*]. The *NHC* passage is the only example of it cited in the *MED*, with the following meanings suggested: “shabby, wretched, poor in appearance.” These fit the context of the *NHC* passage well, but A, G, and D all replace *ouri* with a more familiar word. A: *ouere*; G: *owen*; D: *sori*.  
 379 *gert*. So A. MS: *gret*.  
 394 *wain*. Small’s note: “Probably from AS *winnan*, to strive with” (p. 184). Both A and G have *warne*, “to refuse.”  
 410 *slic*. MS: *sli*.  
 418 *er of me*. MS: *er* written at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.  
 430 *turn*. MS: *tur*.  
 435 *pray*. So A. MS: *prayed*.  
 454 *kynde*. So A. MS: *hind*.  
 486 *cunnand*. MS: *cunnad*.  
 499 *Prai*. MS: *pri*.

## 11. FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

- 10 *forfare*. So A, G, and D. MS: *fofare*. Small reads *sofare*. It is often difficult to differentiate scribal *f* and *s*, but in this case the biblical text makes the intended meaning clear.  
 12 *And said*. MS: *said* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.  
*fered*. MS: *feped*.  
 19 *Qualkin man mai*. MS: *man* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.  
 32 *That gladli Goddes will will wirc*. So A. MS: *Pat goddes wil gladli wille wirc*. The placement of a caret following *gladli* indicates the scribe’s intention to change the word order in some way, but there is no second caret to indicate a point of insertion; I have therefore adopted A’s reading which is metrically smoother.  
 38 *bare*. A, G, and D all change what is evidently an obscure word. It comes from ON. Compare OI *bara* and is cognate with modern English “bore,” which means “a tidal wave.”  
 70 *Thou*. Small emends this to *thoh* (though without noting it as such), but I have retained the manuscript reading as an acceptable variant.  
 86 *swilc*. So A. MS: *silc*.

- 92        *Wote*. So A. MS: *Quat*.  
 96        *biseninges*. MS: *bseninges*.  
 98        *to ger yow fle*. So A. MS: *pis werldes welt do fle*, with *yow* omitted and *to* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.  
 124       *corsing*. The *NHC* passage is the only *MED* citation for this word, but the noun *corser*, from Medieval Latin *cursor*, for “trader,” is more frequently found and lends support to the meaning given here.  
 135       *yef he walde tac*. MS: *yef walde he tac*, with carets around *walde* to indicate change of position.  
 149       *quat he wald haf*. MS: *wald haf quat he*, with carets to mark point of insertion.  
 185       *on a rase*, So A. MS: *sa ras*.  
 197       *Thou*. See note to line 70.  
 201       *okerer*. MS: *okeres*. *MED* lists this form as an error for *okerer*.  
 205       *said*, “*Lef fader*. MS: *said* added at end of line with caret to mark point of insertion.  
 214       *borne*. So G. MS: *bor*.

## 12. FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

- 125       *oht*. An initial *h* has been scraped away from *hoht*.  
 128       *lathe*. MS: *lahe*; *lahe* added at end of line with caret to show point of insertion.  
 132       *fleis fra*. MS: *ti* canceled between these two words.  
 138       *am*. So A. MS: *haf*.  
 157       *nane*. So A. MS: *man*.

## 13. PURIFICATION

- 4        *cald Cristes meeting*. MS: *cristes cald meeting*, with carets to show need for repositioning.  
 20       *in him Goddes miht*. MS: *goddes in him miht*, with carets around *goddes* to show need for repositioning.  
 23       *Bot*. So A. MS: *Rob*.  
 24       *bitakenesse*. The expected spelling for the 3sg.pr. of this verb would be *betaknes* or *betakenes*, as in A and G. Small prints it as two words: *bitaken esse*, but the scribe has written it as one word, and two words make no sense grammatically, since lines 23–24 call for an active verb. The two lines are corrupt in some way, and I have taken what I believe to be the best path in emending them.  
 67       *daie*. So A. MS omits.  
 78       *habad*. Compare A: *bade*. The *h* is unusual but is listed in *MED* as one of the forms for this word.  
 103       *mankind*. MS: *makind*.  
 110       *With Crist and*. MS: *crist* added at end of line with caret to show point of insertion.  
 115       *thred*. MS: *trhed*.  
 156       *we*. So A. MS omits.  
 158       *hastines*. So A. MS: *hastiwes*.  
       *lethe*. So A. MS: *wrethe*. In lines 65–66 of the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, *wrethe* and *brother lethe* also occur, making doubly clear that the repetition here of *wrethe* is an error.

- 185 *hir chapel*. MS: *chapel hir*, with carets to show correct order.
- 228 *steece*. The only citations for this word in *MED* come from the *NHC*. The suggested derivation is OF *estrece*. A: *strenge*.
- 229 *god*. MS: *ged*. A reads *with god* whereas D has *wip good wil*. The meaning seems clear but I cannot be certain whether “will” has been mistakenly omitted in ED and A, or instead, that *with god* is an unusual expression for “willingly” (the *MED* does not list this meaning under either the noun or adjective forms of the word).
- 277 *wyse*. MS: *wsse*.
- 278 *sysel*. A replaces this unusual word with *stedfaste*.
- 301 *lufid*. So A. MS: *lifed*.
- 303–04 *And sa wel . . . do*. MS: The order of these two lines is reversed in the manuscript.
- 307 *lufid*. So A. MS: *lufd*. What looks like a tiny minim between the *f* and the *d* of *lufd* could be meant to stand for an *i*.
- 311 *For*. Although Small has *Bot*, and the capital does indeed look more like a *B* than an *F*, the possibility that *For* is intended here is supported by the fact that A, G, and D all read *For*.
- 314 *wrechelye*. Small transcribes this as *wrethelye*, but since A, G and D all have something very close to *wrechelye*, I believe that the medial consonant is a badly written *c*, rather than a *t*. The *MED*, which has consulted only Small’s printed text, lists *wrethelye* as an error for *wreccheli*.
- 323 *a*. MS: *to*.
- 329 *haf*. MS: *has*. The scribe has forgotten to add the bar to indicate an “f.”
- 336 *ne*. So A. MS omits.
- 344 *schawe*. So A. MS: *scwe*.
- 352 *Do it of daw*. Compare A: *Do it awaie* and D: *Don it to ded*.
- 355 *hir*. So A. MS: *him*.
- 368 *forthoght*. So G. MS: *forsoht*.
- 373 *And wit thair letteres prayed thaye*. This is the last line of the Edinburgh manuscript. The conclusion of the tale (as well as the rest of this edition) follows MS Ashmole 42 which, unusually, positions Purification near the end of the manuscript.
- 450 *sinfull schamid*. MS: *sinfull may schamid* with *may* canceled.

#### 14. SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

- 110 *and*. So G. MS: *ad*.
- 169 *oure dedes*. MS: *oure medes dedes*, with *medes* canceled.
- 174 *He maye be sikir to blisse to wende*. MS: There is an imperfection in the vellum here which has caused the scribe to begin writing a little farther into the page.
- 203 *owrenone*. McIntosh cites Bosworth-Toller: OE: *ofer-non*, “the latter part of the day” (“Some Words,” p. 202).
- 228 *yof*. So G. MS: *of*. *MED* lists *yof* as a northern form of *thogh*, “although.”
- 348 *foue*. The *MED* lists this as a variant spelling for *fewe*.
- 355 *folk*. So G, D. MS: *flok*.
- 365 *Dubita*. MS: One of the infrequent Latin annotations in this manuscript, written at the right margin in a different hand. Evidently an abbreviation either for

*dubitamus* (we doubt) or *dubitandum* (there must be doubt). Probably a general response to this section of the text which reflects on our inability to know for certain whether we will be one of the “chosen” or not.

376 *Agayne him.* MS: *hym* written above the line following *Agayne*.

399–400 *And his fadir full fayre him callde; / Than to his fadir all he talde.* So G, D. A has mistakenly reversed the order of these lines.

407–10 *He toke him wife als wight unwise,* etc. These lines are written very close to the left margin. At line 411 the scribe has moved to the right, back to his normal position.

410 *Maye.* MS: Something has been canceled following *Ma*, possibly *ll*.

### 15. SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

Before 1 *Cum turba . . . Et cetera.* The scribe seems to have skipped over this line, only to insert it in the right margin.

37 *mannes.* MS: *mann*, followed by erasure, then *es*.

40 *foules:* MS: *foules* &, with ampersand canceled.

42 *That oute.* MS: A crease hides part of this line, partially obscuring the first and second words. The first is almost certainly *Pat*, identifiable by the blurred but just visible *P* followed by a small *t* written above the line. The *ou* and the *e* of the second word can be made out, and by analogy with G and D, which both have *oute*, the third letter, which is hidden by the crease must be a *t*.

46 *schakes* MS: *tak schakes*. The scribe evidently began to write *takes*, the rhyme word from the previous line, and then realized his mistake, though the letters have not been canceled.

50 *ryche.* So G. MS: *wricchid*.

113 *hill.* The *MED* lists this as an alternate spelling for *ill*. G, D have *ill/ille* respectively.

117 *God.* MS: *gon god*, with *gon* canceled.

200 *oft.* So G. MS omits.

203–04 *And askid wha had bi hir lyne / And scho talde tham that monk Mawryne.* These lines, the last two on fol. 56v have been recopied at the top of fol. 57r.

290 *wesshe.* MS: *wehsse*.

### 16. QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

9 *schenschip.* *MED*: Northern form of *schendschip*.

43 *of todaye.* MS: *ol*, canceled, between *of* and *todaye*.

44 *Als man in Ynglisse tonge mai saye.* MS: *Als man etc.* This phrase, often abbreviated in this manuscript, has been expanded here, following fol. 31v (Epiphany), where it is written out in full.

127 *ille.* So D. MS: *will*.

147–48 *With rightwisnes ageyn the fendis, / That rightwismen wit schame schendis.* So D. MS: *With rightwisnes agaynes the fende; / For rightwis men thaim schameli schende.*

154 *And biddes us of oure prayers blynn.* MS: Written as two half lines at the ends of lines 152 and 153.

228 *tele.* So D. MS: *stele*.



**18. SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**

- 3           *Tyri*. This follows the Gospel text, but D substitutes *jewerye* here.
- 37           *Thir smale*. MS: These catch words are written in the bottom right hand corner, to indicate the first words at the top of the following page. This practice is followed very occasionally throughout the manuscript.
- 75           *menne*. MS: *mentie*.
- 89           *"I hungrid sore," schal he say*. So D. MS: *Me hongrid sal sare jhesu saie*.
- 99           *Wele ye witte*. MS: *wez*, canceled, followed by *wele ze witte*.
- 171          *aght*. MS: *azt*, preceded by *hizt*, canceled.
- 183          *For truthe is ded withoute good dede*. So D. MS: *For trowthe mai nathinge us auaille*.  
The scribe seems to have realized that he has mistakenly repeated line 181 here, because he has left the following line blank, perhaps with the intention of making the necessary correction.
- 338          *servis*. MS: *sevis*, with the *s* and *e* superimposed.
- 348          *Unto*. MS: *C*, canceled, followed by *Vnto*.
- 386          *floght*. Both citations from the MED are from the NHC: MED *flouht* corresponds to Old Scottish *flocht*, OI *flotti* (akin to OE *flyht*): "a state of agitation."
- 403          *I praie thee, praie God*. MS: *praie* has been inserted above the line, between *þe* and *god*.

**19. THE ANNUNCIATION**

- 31           *sede*. MS: *fede*. Compare D: *for þu schalt conceyven & bere*; L: *Thu sall consaue sedes bere*. The meaning is clear enough but neither A nor L is completely logical in grammatical terms.
- 41           *Jacob house here callis he*. MS: *Aye to Criste co*, canceled, followed by the correct line. Scribe has jumped to line 79: *Aye to crist come* before realizing his mistake.
- 98           *Whan he saw him on the rode hange*. So D. MS: The scribe has left a blank space where this line should be.
- 104          *unloken*. MS *loken*, canceled, followed by *vnloken*.
- 149          *yeme*. So D. MS: *him*.
- 160          *might*. MS: *mizght*.
- 192          MS: *Bot he moght* written in lower right hand corner as catch words.
- 229–30       *For more than he was wont to do, / Mo menne he festid and callid thareto*. Compare D's clearer syntax: *for mor þan he was wonid to do, / made he feste & callid men þer to*.

**20. THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT**

- 17           *slightis*. MS: *mightes*, canceled, followed by *slightis*.
- 259          *fayr*. So D. MS: *full*.
- 331          *For*. MS: *W*, canceled, followed by *Ffor*.

**25. EASTER MONDAY**

- 90           *Als man . . . tell*. Expanded according to previous occurrences.
- 96           *With Lucas and with Cleophas*. D: *of symound & of cleophas*.

**32. FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION**

- 30 *Als man . . . tell.* Expanded according to previous occurrences.  
 73 *I. MS: h i, with h canceled.*

**33. PENTECOST**

- 30 *skyll.* So G. MS: *will*.  
 59 *no.* MS: written above the line between *haues* and *lufe*.  
 80 *sight.* MS: The ligature between the first two letters of this word could signal either the combination *si*, or *fi*. Unfortunately, in this case, D and G merely add to the confusion: D: *pat he ne dredip fighten azen his faas*; G: *pat he ne dredys sight na fase*. I have opted for *sight* as offering the clearest reading.  
 129 *forsakes.* Two indistinguishable letters have been crossed out between the s and the a with a line drawn to connect the two letters and indicate that it is, in fact, one word.  
 143 *we.* MS: following this word the beginning of the letter *w* has been canceled.  
 155–56 *Full ferre the watir focchid he, / And watrid it yeres thre.* So G. MS: the scribe of MS A has unintentionally omitted these lines, which should follow line 154. They appear instead following line 180: *Thare he to God was unbousome*. There are editorial markings in the margins of MS A at both points, indicating the necessary correction.  
 189–90 *Praie we forthi the Hali Gaste / That he oure flehssli willis waste.* Following the first five letters of *forthi*, a small hole in the manuscript hides the last letter, the word that follows, and the end of the word *flehssli* in line 190. But compare G, which is nearly identical: *Pray we forþi þe holy gaste / þat he oure fleschly wylles waste*.

**46. ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

- 10 *That es rule of all gudeness.* MS: *That es of all gudeness heuede*, with *heuede* canceled, followed by *rule*, and with a caret to indicate point of insertion.  
 48 *Als man . . . tell.* Expanded following earlier occurrences.  
 192 A letter, most likely an *n*, has been cancelled preceding *lange*.  
 257 *is.* So D. MS: *hase*.  
 292 *ogert.* Compare G/D: *wratthe*.  
 294 *este and nythe.* See Third Sunday in Advent (3.27n). This obscure form is replaced in several manuscripts as follows: L and G: *yre or nythe*; D: *enuye*.

**49. FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

- 30 *Als man . . . saye.* Expanded according to previous occurrences  
 31 *The maistir that spekis of this Gospel.* MS: *EXPO (expositio)* written at the right hand margin in slightly larger letters.  
 57 *A hali man was parihsse preste.* MS: *A Tale*, written in the right hand margin, framed by a crown.

- 66 *A maiden childe or thai leste wend.* Possibly corrupt. D reads: *a mayde child or þei out of þe world wente.*  
 206 *to.* Written above the line between *And* and *all*.  
 330 *swyn.* So D. MS: *swe*.  
 353 *thee.* MS: *þe* written above the line between *schriue* and *to*.  
 386 *war ne.* MS: written as one word. The repetition in this line is awkward but the sense is clear as seen by a comparison with D's reading: *if it ne were for doule of pask day.*

## 52. SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

- 58 *sall.* MS: Two strokes abandoned following *sall*.  
 68 *Uppermor bidde thee come.* So D. MS: *Rise ouermare to sette [thonn]e come.*  
 78 *Als man . . . tell.* Expanded according to previous occurrences.  
 133 *name.* MS: *mane*. G, D, and V read as follows: G: *He sweres hys name for o peny*; D: *forswere his mone for a peny*; V: *He swereth muchel for a peny / And or while for an half peny*.  
 140 *of.* MS: *on*, with *n* canceled, and *f* written above.  
 272 *suld.* MS: *fu* canceled, followed by *suld*.  
 277 *Cled.* The scribe apparently forgot to write "cled" at the beginnig of the line and, to correct the error, wrote it adjacent to the line in the left margin.  
 298 *And saide to thaim be him gon sete.* MS: following *thaim*, the scribe has written *with wordes swete*, canceled, followed by *be him gon sete*. Eyeskip has led scribe to begin writing line 363 before realizing his mistake. The line is still odd, and G gives a slightly better reading: *And sayd tyl many þat þare gan sylte*.  
 330 *have.* The scribe appears to have first written a *d* and then attempted to correct his error and change it to an *h*.  
 497 *callid.* MS: followed by *þ*, canceled.  
 517 *servise.* MS: *f* canceled, following *servise*.  
 550 *For to my foo thou takes thee.* MS: *Pou wote þat*, written as catchwords following this line in the lower right margin.  
 567 *auerlie.* See the explanatory note to line 546. G has omitted much of the preceding passage, including line 546 (*auerlye*) but here follows A: *Scho had hym left so arowly*, with *arow* as an attested variant of *argh*, "cowardly, wickedly."  
 589 *Hatid.* MS: *hwitid*.  
 612 *Jesu.* MS: *e*, canceled, before *iesu*.  
 626 *And Pelagius men hir callde.* MS: *Now es etc.* written directly beneath this line as catch words for the next page.  
 632 *womman.* MS: *careman*, with *care* canceled and *wom* written above it.  
 640 *qwik.* MS: preceded by *w*, canceled.  
 686 *To loke what Pelagie wald saie.* MS: the line following this one is canceled: *He lithid 3erne if he might raike knawe*.

## 54. NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

- 34 *Als man . . . saye.* Expanded according to previous occurrences.

- 69 *sinfull*. D adds *man* after this word, which is slightly better metrically, but the meaning of A's line is clear without emendation.
- 90 MS: Two lines resulting from eyeskip have been canceled following this line:  
*The tother resoun whi sinfull mane / Es oft with seknes gasteli tane*, with *gasteli* replaced at end of line by *greteli*. See lines 107–08.
- 94 MS: *Forthi es gude*, written as catchwords at lower right margin. *gude* is an unusual spelling for *God*, which is the intended meaning as line 95 makes clear.
- 102 MS: A second *noz*t has been canceled following the second *me*.
- 221 *full*. So G. MS: *foule*.
- 228 *Als he toward his dede drewe*. MS: Following this line the scribe has canceled a line mistakenly repeated from line 219, above: *He was so roten and stinkand*.
- 250 *The tother es sinne for to wreke*. MS: *Be toper es ffor to wreke.sinne*, with a caret to indicate the proper position of *sinne*.
- 287 *A tale*. MS: written in the right hand margin, possibly in a different hand.
- 327 *Yit will I more of trouthe yow tell*. MS: there is a large paragraph marker at the left margin, not a common practice of this scribe, presumably to indicate the beginning of a second *exemplum*.
- 360 *paynim*. MS: *payni*. Compare D, line 356: *pat ferth bezonde payneme is*. G reads *Surry* instead of *paynim*.
- 446 *Amen*. Slightly larger and in a different hand.

## 56. TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

- 40 *Myght*. The scribe has omitted either the last half of the *m* or the first stroke of the *y*.
- 42 *For his Godhed knew he nought*. D contains many marginal notations in a different hand (italic, probably late sixteenth century) throughout the entire manuscript. Their purpose is chiefly to draw attention to what the annotator considers to be the most important aspects of the text; here, the notation reads:  
*he knew not his godhead*.
- 62 *have*. MS: *have had*, with *had* canceled.  
*seyd* is written above *in*.
- 77 D distinguishes major transitions in the text by beginning the line with a large capital letter in blue or red. I have indicated this by indenting the lines where these letters occur.
- 108 Marginal notation: *love faire whit men*.
- 111 Marginal notation: *yf a man might see the likeness of the trinitie in the soule of man how he would worshyp it*.
- 122 Marginal notation: *St Basill*.
- 123 Marginal notation: *Narracio* (in yet another hand).
- 124 Marginal notation: *A nunnerie*.
- 127 Marginal notation: *A nun*.
- 159 Marginal notation: *Protormes an Hermite*.
- 165 *thou*. So V. MS: *now*.
- 261 *worldis*. MS: *wlorldis*, with a cancellation mark under the initial *l*.





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## GLOSSARY

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**a** *one*

**abaiste** *abashed*

**abote** *abbot*

**aght** *ought*

**aghtild** *destined*

**aht (haht)** *owed*

**ai(e)** *forever*

**alloute** *completely*

**almis, almous** *charity, alms*

**als qua say** *in other words, as if to say*

**amende** *correct*

**-and** *-ing*

**and** *and, if*

**an(e)fald** *onefold, unified*

**anerli** *solely*

**aperteli** *clearly, openly*

**are** *before; mercy, grace, honor*

**areli** *early*

**asise** *judgment*

**autere** *altar*

**aw(e)** *owe; ought*

**awnes** *the beard on the grain*

**ay, aie** *always, ever, forever*

**baithe** *both*

**bale** *harm, evil, pain, misery, fire*

**balie, balye** *dominion, domain*

**ban** *slayer; (v.) curse*

**band** *bound*

**bande** *bonds*

**banes** *bones*

**baret** *strife*

**baundoune** *power*

**bayne** *ready, obedient*

**be** *be; by*

**bedd** *offered*

**bede** *prayer, supplication*

**bedene, biden(e)** *indeed, immediately; entirely; together*

**beho** *must, be necessary*

**beid** *ought*

**beld(e)** *courage, strength, happiness, support, help, protection*

**b(e)live** *quickly, immediately*

**bem(e)** *trumpet*

**benisoune** *blessing*

**ber** *noise*

**beres/bird(d)** *ought*

**berne** *child, man*

**bers** *ought*

**bes(e)** *is*

**beteche** *entrust, bestow*

**betes** *beats*

**bet(t)e** *make amends for, cure; beat, strike*

**bide** *await*

**biging** *home*

**biing, biynge** *redemption, purchase*

**bird, burd** *ought*

**birland** *offering*

**bisen** *symbolize, liken; example, lesson*

**biteche** *entrust, bestow*

**biwist** *dwelling*

**blin(n)(e), blynne** *cease*

**blotned** *dried*

**bodword** *announcement, news*

**boln** *swell*

**bo(o)n(e)** *prayer, request*

**bore** *hole*

**borwe** *borrow, obtain the release of*

**bot** *only, if, but*

**bote** *remedy, help*

**bo(u)ht** *redeemed*

**boune** *ready, prepared*

**bowsom(e)** *obedient*  
**bowsomnes** *obedience*  
**brem(ly/li)** *fierce(ly)*  
**breu** *brew, stir up*  
**brin(ne)** *burn*  
**buse** *be needful*  
**by/bie** *pay for, redeem*

**can(ne), kan(ne)** *know, be able to*  
**careman** *man*  
**carpe** *speak*  
**carre** *wagon*  
**catel(e)** *possessions, goods, wealth*  
**caytive** *wretch*  
**challenge** *claim, challenge*  
**chappemen** *merchants*  
**charre** *change,*  
**chastie** *chastize*  
**cher** *expression, demeanor*  
**chesoun** *reason*  
**clergie** *learning*  
**clettis** *burdock*  
**combir** *afflict*  
**conteke** *strife*  
**corn** *grain*  
**costis** *moral qualities*  
**couthe** *known*  
**covaitys** *avarice*

**dede** *death*  
**dees** *dais*  
**defaut** *lack*  
**dem(e)** *judge*  
**der(e)** *dare*  
**derf** *strongly*  
**ders** *harms*  
**derworthi** *precious*  
**derworthi(nes)** *precious(ness)*  
**din** *noise*  
**do(g)htines** *strength*  
**dom(e)** *judgment*  
**domesdaie** *judgment day*  
**douf** *dove*  
**doute** *fear, awe*  
**drey(e), drie, drye** *suffer*  
**driht** *lord, ruler*  
**dro(g)he** *drew*

**drury** *treasure*  
**dubbed** *made*  
**duin** *pine, waste away*  
**dwale** *error, delusion*

**ebbir** *outright*  
**eftsones** *immediately, again*  
**enchesoun** *reason*  
**ensaumpil** *example*  
**er, are** *before, ere, previously*  
**ermite** *hermit*  
**ert(e)** *constrain, draw*  
**even** *straight, just(ly); fellow*  
**everilk(an)** *every (one)*

**fa, faas** *foe(s)*  
**fain(e), fayn(e)** *glad*  
**falles** *is fitting, appropriate*  
**fande** *attempt, tempt*  
**fandinge, fondinge** *temptation,*  
*experience*  
**fange** *seize, receive*  
**fatte** *tub*  
**fayne** *glad*  
**fayster** *teacher, fosterer*  
**fare** *behavior, events, apparel*  
**fel(e)** *many*  
**fele** *conceal*  
**fel(l)(e)** *happened; destroy*  
**fel(le)** *hill; evil; skin*  
**feloun** *criminal*  
**fend** *devil*  
**fere** *healthy, strong; companion*  
**fered** *afraid*  
**ferforthe** *as far as*  
**ferli, ferly(e)** *marvel, marvelous*  
**fest** *fastened*  
**fihssse** *fish*  
**flehssse** *flesh*  
**fleis** *flesh*  
**fle(i)s** *flesh*  
**flem(e)** *banish*  
**flikir** *waver*  
**flom** *river*  
**fonde** *foolish, deranged; attempt*  
**for** *because*  
**forbisin, forbisnis** *example*

**forlorn** *lost*  
**forluke** *foresight*  
**forlyes** *forfeits, loses*  
**forsothe** *truly*  
**forthi, forthy** *therefore, thus*  
**forthinke** *regret, be grieved by, repent*  
**forworthiness** *sloth, damnation,*  
**fulthe** *fulness*

**gabbe** *be deluded, jest, lie*  
**gadir** *assemble, join together*  
**gainli** *suitably, quickly, very*  
**gamen** *joy, mirth*  
**gan, gon, gun** *did; began*  
**gast(e)** *soul, spirit*  
**gast(e)li** *spiritually*  
**gate** *way, path*  
**geld** *castrate*  
**gent** *beautiful, noble*  
**gern(e)** *eager/eagerly*  
**ger(r)(e)** *make*  
**geste** *take one's lodging; poem*  
**gestind** *entertained, lodged*  
**gestnes** *entertains*  
**gil** *guile*  
**gleu,** *joy*  
**god** *good*  
**godhede** *divinity*  
**gom(e)** *man*  
**graithe, graythe** *ready; (v.) prepare*  
**grate** *cry; complain*  
**grave** *dig*  
**graytheli** *quickly, readily, truly*  
**grede** *cry/cry out*  
**greme** *shame, anger*  
**grete** *cry*  
**grimly** *grim*  
**grise** *fear, frighten, quake*  
**grisli** *gruesome*  
**growe** *tremble*  
**grucche** *complain*

**haire** *furs*  
**hals** *embrace*  
**halwe** *saint*  
**har** *here; hear*  
**hatereden** *hatred*

**hawe** *fruit of the hawthorn, a trifle*  
**haythen** *heathen*  
**helding** *holding or bending*  
**hel(e)** *health, salvation; (v.) hide*  
**hend(e)** *polite, gracious*  
**hendelaic** *politeness*  
**her** *her; here*  
**herid** *harrowed*  
**hete** *promise*  
**hetheli** *scornfully, contemptuously*  
**hethen** *hence*  
**hethinge** *scorn*  
**hevenrik** *heaven(ly)*  
**hi(g)ht** *promise; be named*  
**holde** *faithful, kind*  
**ho(o)ve** *baptize*  
**horde** *treasure*  
**hougat** *how, in what manner*  
**housel** *administer the Holy Sacrament*  
**hove** *moderation, discretion*  
**hye** *high; haste; quickly, hastily; in hye*  
*quickly, in haste*

**igain** *against, to, again*  
**ilc, lk(e)** *each, every, same; such*  
**imange** *among*  
**inlate** *entrance*  
**inwardlye** *internally, intently, earnestly*  
**ithenlye** *busily (Scots)*  
**iwis(se)** *certainly, truly*

**jolyté** *gaiety*

**kase** *fetter*  
**kaytefes** *wretches, captives*  
**kele** *grow cold*  
**kelinge** *codfish*  
**kende** *taught*  
**ken(ne)** *know, make known, teach*  
**kid** *known*  
**kid, kithe** *make known, show*  
**kidd** *showed*  
**kind(e)e kind(e)** *family, nature,*  
*lineage*  
**kinric** *kingdom*  
**kirc/kirk** *church*  
**kithe** *people, family*



**knave** *servant*  
**kovenand** *covenant*  
**kyndeli** *according to human nature*  
  
**laie** *law, religion, faith*  
**laik** *play*  
**laithelie** *dreadfully*  
**lam** *clay*  
**langare** *earlier*  
**lar(e)** *teaching*  
**late** *allow*; **late hetheli** *scorn*  
**late** *pay attention to*  
**lates** *behavior; pretense*  
**lathe** *reluctant*  
**laued, lawde, lawed** *lay, ignorant, laity*  
**Lauerd** *Lord*  
**laythe** *loathsome*  
**leche** *physician, healer*  
**lede** *land, people, speech*  
**leete** *leave*  
**leeve** *beloved*  
**le(e)ve** *omit, fail*  
**lef** (n.) *permission*; (adj.) *dear*  
**legge** *relieve*  
**lele** *loyal*  
**leme** *beam, ray, gleam*  
**lemmane** *lover*  
**lend(e)** *dwelt, enter*  
**lene** *grant*  
**lere** *teach, learn*  
**lered** *learned*  
**les** *lies*  
**lesing(e)** *lying*  
**les(se)** *release, untie*  
**lethe** *misfortune*  
**lett(e)** *prevent, hinder*  
**lever** *rather*  
**lewed** *ignorant, uneducated*  
**lewté** *loyalty*  
**lift** (n.) *air*; (v.) *raise up, exalt*  
**ligge** *lie*  
**likinge** *lechery, pleasure, desire*  
**liste** *listen to*  
**lithe** *hear, listen to*  
**livelad** *behavior*  
**lof** *praise*  
**loove** *praise*

**loue** *praise*  
**loute** *honor, submit to, bow*  
**love** *love*  
**lovid** *praised*  
**lowkid** *enclosed*  
**lufe** *love*  
**lufreden(e)** *love, goodwill, friendship*  
**lutt(e)bie** *lover*  
**lykehouse** *tomb*  
  
**maistri** *superiority, mastery*  
**mak** *equal, companion*  
**mar(e)** *more*  
**mas** *makes*  
**mawggre** *despite*  
**mawkes** *maggots*  
**med(e)** *reward*  
**meesis, mees, mese** *dishes*  
**meet, mete** *food, meal*  
**mekil** *great, much*  
**meld** *betray*  
**mele** *speak*  
**member(s)** *penis, testicles*  
**mene** *remember; mean*  
**mengid** *mingled*  
**mensk(e)** *honor*  
**menskelie** *graciously*  
**menye** *household*  
**mersuine** *dolphin*  
**mesel** *leper*  
**methe** *temperance, restraint*  
**mikel** *many, much*  
**mint, mynte** *intention*  
**mirknes** *darkness*  
**missefare** (n.) *misfortune*; (v.) *go wrong*  
**missetake** *sin*  
**mister** *need*  
**mod(e)** *mind, heart*  
**molde** *earth*  
**mon** *shall*  
**mone, mene** *moan; lament, complaint*  
  
**na forse** *no matter*  
**nais** *ashamed*  
**nam** (v.) *took*; (n.) *name*  
**nangat** *in no way*  
**nees** *kinswoman*

**nefen** (v.) *name*  
**neh** *approach*  
**nithe, nythe** *envy, malice*  
**nit(t)e** *deny*  
**no** *nor*  
**no(g)ht** *nothing*  
**noghtforthi** *nevertheless*  
**nomen** *taken*  
**nonekin** *no kind of*  
**nouther** *neither*  
  
**obak** *back*  
**of(t)sithes** *often*  
**ogert** *arrogant; arrogance*  
**o(g)ht** *any, anything, at all*  
**okerer** *usurer*  
**okiryng** *usury*  
**omageoure** *servant, vassal*  
**onane** *at once*  
**ongart** *arrogant; arrogance*  
**ophaldes** *upholds*  
**or** *or, before*  
**ospringe** *offspring*  
**our aller** *all of our*  
**overilkane** *each one*  
**overlop** *omission*  
**oys** *use*  
  
**paien, payen** *reward, satisfy*  
**palmare** *pilgrim*  
**par charité** *for the sake of charity*  
**parihssenes** *parishioners*  
**parlesy** *palsy*  
**parti** *part; a parti* *in part*  
**pas** *section, step, way*  
**penis** *pence*  
**penndanz** *testicles*  
**pigase** *equal*  
**pin** *pain*  
**plai** *pleasure*  
**plette** *turned*  
**pliht** *condition, sin*  
**plihtful** *sinful, guilty*  
**pousté** *power*  
**prive(lye)** *secret(ly)*  
**priveté** *secrecy; divine mystery*  
**prove** *examine*

**prowe** *test; reward*  
**publiene** *publican*  
  
**qua** *who*  
**quac** *quake*  
**quaim, quaym** *whom*  
**quaint, quaynt** *cunning*  
**quaintis** (n.) *cunning*  
**qualle** *whale*  
**quarof** *whereof*  
**quas** *whose*  
**quat** *what*  
**quatkin** *what kind*  
**quek** *alive*  
**quem(e)** *agreeable*  
**quen** *when*  
**quether** *which*  
**qui, quye** *why*  
**quider** *whither*  
**qwayntise** *cunning*  
**qwik** *alive*  
**qwYTE** *requite, acquit; free, acquitted*  
  
**ra** *deer, roe*  
**radde** *ready, frightened*  
**rapli** *hasty*  
**rase** (n.) *speed; (v.) rose, arose*  
**rathe** *quick/ly*  
**rawe** *row; a rawe* *in a row, one behind*  
*the other*  
**rayk** *deviate*  
**red, rad(de)** *afraid*  
**red(e)** *counsel, decision; advise*  
**rednes** *terror*  
**reft(e)** *deprive*  
**reuli, rewli** *cruelly, sorrowfully*  
**reve** *steal*  
**rewe** *repent, have pity on*  
**rewthe(ful)** *pity (pitiful),*  
*compassion(ate)*  
**rif** *tear apart*  
**rife, ryf** *well-known, common, public*  
**rifli, rivelic** *frequently, quickly, readily,*  
*commonly*  
**rike** *kingdom*  
**ripe** *grope, examine; come to maturity*  
**ris** *rise up*

**rivere** *robbery*  
**ro** *peace*  
**rode, rude** *cross*  
**rohly** *roughly*  
**rosing** *boasting*  
**rounge** *be tormented*  
**route** *snore*  
**ruse** *boast*  
**rynnand** *running*  
  
**sa** *so*  
**sake** *sin*  
**sal(l)** *shall*  
**samen(e)** *together*  
**sande** *sending, message, mission*  
**sar(e)** *sorrowfully, greatly*  
**sau, sawes** *saying*  
**sauel** *soul*  
**sayne** *cross*  
**schathe, scathe** *harm*  
**schauing** *revelation*  
**schawe** *forest*  
**schen** *show*  
**schende** *destroy*  
**schendinge** *harm*  
**schen(d)schipe** *destruction*  
**schene** *lovely*  
**schent** *shamed, destroyed*  
**scher(e)** *cut*  
**schift** *fate, destiny*  
**scho, sco** *she*  
**schon** *shoes*  
**schop** *create(d), shape(d)*  
**schrift** *confession; penance*  
**schrive** *confess, administer the sacrament*  
*of penance*  
**scurn** *quail, shrink*  
**seclere** *secular, world*  
**sekenes** *sickness*  
**seker, siker** *certain*  
**selcouthes** *wonders*  
**sembland** *appearance*  
**sene** *since*  
**ser(e)** *different, many*  
**site** *sorrow, regret*  
**sithe** *times*  
**sithen** *then*

**skatirs** *wastes*  
**slak(e)** *diminish*  
**slas** *slay(s)*  
**slic, slik(e)** *such*  
**slightis** *tricks*  
**slye** *clever*  
**smer** *anoint*  
**smersles** *ointment*  
**snelle, snellik** *quick(ly), eager(ly),*  
*fierce(ly)*  
**snibbe** *criticize*  
**son(e)** *at once; son*  
**soth(e)** *truth*  
**sothefast** *true, enduring*  
**spare** *give away, fail, hesitate, hold onto*  
**spede** *succeed*  
**spere** *close*  
**spir(e)** *ask*  
**stane** *stone*  
**stede** *place; (v.) place*  
**stekil** *barrier*  
**stemme** *stop*  
**sternes** *stars*  
**steven, stevin** *noise, voice*  
**stez** *stress, compulsion*  
**stie** *path*  
**stiffe** *staunch, resolute*  
**stint** *cease*  
**stithe, stythe** *strong*  
**stounde** *a while, short space of time*  
**strenketh** *strength*  
**stye** *ascend*  
**sua** *so*  
**suare, sware** *speech*  
**suel** *died*  
**suet** *sweat*  
**suld** *should*  
**sundered** *separate*  
**swere** *slothful*  
**swik(e)** *treachery; betray*  
**swilk** *such*  
**swith(e)** *quickly*  
**syte** *sight, insight*  
  
**taite** *eager*  
**taking/tak(e)ning** *sign, token*  
**tal** *tale, story*

- talde** *accounted*  
**tan** *taken, overtaken*  
**tas** *takes*  
**tase** *toes*  
**tele** *cheat, betray, deceive*  
**tende** *tithe*  
**ten(e)** (n.) *harm; (adj.) angry; (v.) anger*  
**thain** *warrior*  
**thar** *need, be necessary*  
**thede** *country*  
**thewes** *habits*  
**thight** *whole, intact*  
**thir** *the, this, there*  
**thof(e)** *although, though*  
**thol(e)** *suffer; allow*  
**tholemode(nes)** *patient (patience)*  
**thrall** *slave*  
**thrawe** *time; suffering*  
**thuanges** *thongs*  
**thusgate** *in this way, accordingly, in the aforesaid manner*  
**til(le)** *to; (v.) persuade*  
**tilward** *toward*  
**tine, tyne** *lose*  
**tite, tyte** *quickly*  
**tithand** *news*  
**tocom(ing), tocuminge** *coming, appearance*  
**tome** *empty; idle; idly*  
**tother** *next, another*  
**trace, trase** *path*  
**traie, traye** *suffering, deceit, wickedness, betrayal*  
**tre** *cross*  
**treye** *discover*  
**trou, trow(e)** *believe*  
**trouthe, trowthe** *faith, belief*  
**turtel** *turtledove*  
**tyne** *lose, destroy*  
  
**um(b)tho(gh)t** *reflected*  
**umlowke** *encompass*  
**umstont** *sometimes*  
**umthoght** *reflected*  
**umwhile** *sometimes*  
**unceli** *miserable*  
  
**undo** *expound*  
**unhende** *rude, unkind*  
**unleve(ne)** *unsympathetic*  
**unnethis** *scarcely*  
**unsele, unseli** (adj.) *miserable; (n.) misery*  
**unskilfull** *unreasonable*  
**unthewe** *bad habits*  
**upbrayd, uppebraide** (v.) *complain; (n.) reproach, scorn*  
  
**verraymente** *truly*  
**vertue** *power*  
  
**wafulté** *misery*  
**wair, warre** *careful, wary*  
**wake** *wake up, remain awake, keep a vigil*  
**wandreth/ht** *sorrow, terror*  
**wanhop(e)** *despair*  
**wannetrouthe** *lack of belief*  
**ware** *were*  
**wariste** *healed*  
**warlawe** *devil*  
**warne** *refuse, admonish*  
**waste** *dispel*  
**wawe** *wall, wave*  
**wed(e)** *mad; clothing*  
**welde** *reign, possess*  
**welk** *walked*  
**wend(e)** *go*  
**wen(e)** *think*  
**wenyng** *thinking, imagining*  
**werd** *world*  
**werd(es)** *word(s); world(ly)*  
**wer(e)** *war, conflict*  
**werid** *cursed*  
**wes** *washed*  
**weved** *severed*  
**whilk** *which, whom*  
**whylome** *at times*  
**wight** *creature, man; bold*  
**wilie, wylie** *cunning*  
**will** *wild, astray*  
**willare** *wilder*  
**win(ne)** *joy; (v.) gain*  
**wirye** *kill*

**wisse** *guide*

**wist** *knew*

**wit** *with*

**wite, wyte** *blame, guilt; (v.) reproach*

**witerlye/witirlye** *certainly*

**wit(t)(e)** *know; wither*

**wlate** *be disgusted by; despise*

**wod(e)** *insane, angry*

**woh** *blame; woe, melancholy*

**wonand(e)** *dwelling*

**won(e)**  *dwell; accustomed*

**wormes** *serpents, monsters*

**wote** *know*

**wrake** *vengeance, ruin*

**wrathe** *angry*

**wrech** *make angry*

**wreke** *avenge*

**wrenk** *trick*

**wrethe** *anger*

**wrye** *accuse*

**yar(e)** *ready; readily, quickly*

**yed(e), yod(e)** *went*

**yeld** *give*

**yelde** *barren*

**yem** (n.) *heed*

**yem(e)** (v.) *protect*

**yerne** *eagerly*

**yrk** *reluctant*